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Introduction

Digital marketing is mainly referred to as the promotion of brands to get connected with the possible customers, using the internet along with other forms of digital communication. Digital marketing tools that are being used by the organisation to get connected with the customers include email, social media and web-based advertising(Bala & Verma, 2018). This report will be examining about the implication of digital marketing within the retail business firm to grow their operations and productivity. A company has been chosen for the same purpose that is UK based retail organisation Next Plc. During the report, the global market of the online retail industry and offline retail industry will also be explained within the report. As the report will progress it will subsequently discuss the digital assets Next Plc owns, along with explaining the internal communication and external communication contributing to the structural flow of Next Plc. Critical appraisal and analysis of how a retail business organisation is represented digitally and making use of digital marketing will also be identified within the report. As the report will progress it will subsequently discuss the impact of AI-based predictive tools for digital marketing that will be helping Next Plc by giving them valuable insights into customer behaviour and preferences.

The global market of the online retail industry

The online retail industry is known to be the process of selling the products and the services across different geopolitical borders from where the products and services are sold into non-native markets via online sales and marketing. The pieces of evidence gathered from Shopify, (2021), explain that the global online retail industry is anticipated to increase at the rate of 16.8%. Global expansion of the online retail industry paves the path for the organisation in easily expanding their business into foreign markets, quicker brand building to the international presence and easier-to-find product-market fit. The global online retail industry is expected to grow by \$ 5.55 trillion in the year 2022(Statista, 2021). Last year the online sales recorded in the global business market was 17.8%, whereas in the year 2022 that online sales in the retail industry are expected to grow by 21%. Whereas, the growth is expected to continue reaching 24.5% by the end of the year 2025. Latin America saw overall sales of \$ 85 billion in their online retail industry during the year 2021, whereas in the UK the online retail industry saw growth of 20% during the year 2021(Statista, 2021).

Growing in the online retail industry in the UK and the global market provides opportunities for the organisation in growing their business. The factors that have contributed to the growth of the global online retail industry comprise supply chain resilience that helps in carrying out low-cost supply to make resources available to the organisation(Mckinsey, 2021). Growth in mobile shopping and social commerce also contribute to the growth of the global market of the online retail industry.

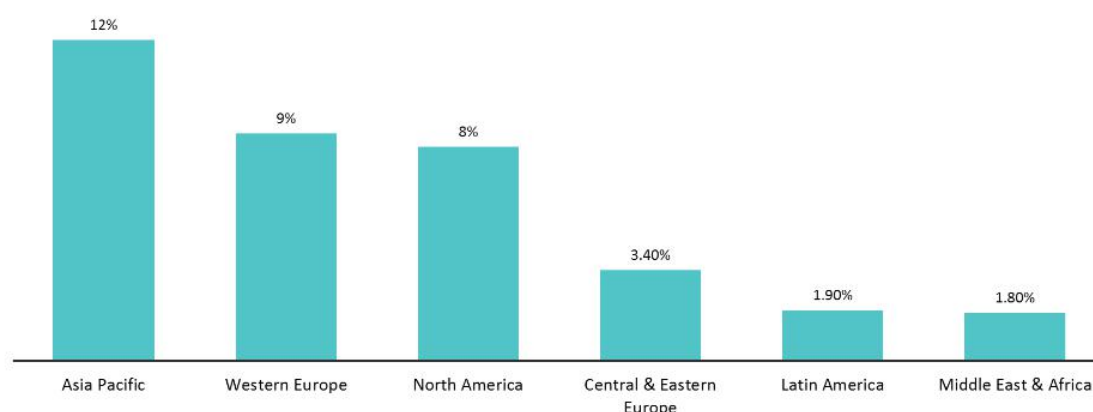


Figure 1: Global online retail sales in countries, Source: (Mordorintelligence, 2021)

The global market of the offline retail industry

The global market of the offline retail industry is expected to grow by 4.5% from the year 2021 to 2026, the global offline retail industry is valued at \$ 23 trillion in the year 2020(Mordorintelligence, 2021). The factors that are contributing to the growth of the offline retail industry comprise of growth of purchasing capability among the employees making it easier for them in making their decisions. The global market of the offline retail industry is predictable to raise at a CAGR rate of 7.7% during the year 2021 to reach \$ 29,446.2 billion in the year 2025(Globenewswire, 2021). Although the global market offline retail industry has faced different challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and poor social lifestyle of people has increased the challenges for the retail industry in attracting the attention of customers. Examining the global market of the offline retail industry, it has been identified that it supports internal and external performances with consistently high-quality data investigation(Forbes, 2021). The offline retail industry is growing in the global market due to providing personalised and using digital technologies that help them in attracting the attention of customers towards the offline retail sector. A personalised digital experience that is being offered to the customers helps the offline retail

industry is growing its status and reputation among the customers. 27% to 36% of the customers while visiting offline retail industry offers a variety of augmented and virtual reality experiences that help in providing better instore experiences to the customers turning them into loyal towards the establishment(Jung & tom Dieck, 2018).

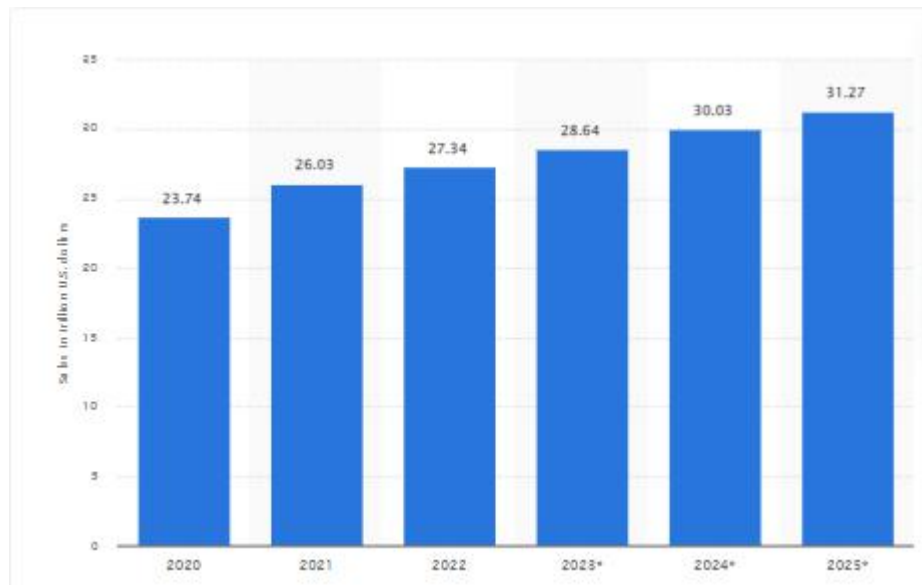


Figure 2: Total offline retail sales worldwide from 2020 to 2025, Source: (Statista, 2021)

Background of Next Plc

Next Plc is a British multinational clothing, footwear and home products retailer that has its headquarters situated in Enderby, England. Currently, the firm has more than 500 stores across the UK and 200 stores across Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Next Plc is the largest clothing retailer by sales in the UK, having overtaken M&S in early 2018 and 2019(Next, 2021). Examining the financials of the organisation, it has been noticed that revenue earned by Next Plc in the year 2021 was GBP 3.28 billion and operating income of GBP 444.5 million in the same year(Nextplc, 2021). The total number of employees working within the organisation is 41,547 as of the year 2021.

How Next Plc make use of digital marketing within the wider social sphere

Next Plc through their online sales has made GBP 4 million profit for the retailers during the third quarter of the year 2021, considering the growth in online sales Next Plc has taken up the decision of increasing its investment in digital marketing to grow

their business operations. Through the online platform, Next Plc in the year 2021 has made overall sales of GBP 14 million, a profit of GBP 4 million with the expected sales anticipated to grow by 14% by the end of the year 2025(Campaignlive, 2021). Next Plc has decided of investing GBP 36 million in its digital marketing to grow its operations and increase its productivity. Furthermore, Next Plc has also taken up the decision of developing their online marketing and website system to offer better accessibility and flexibility to the customers. Improving their digital marketing within the wider social sphere includes focusing on providing personalised and better search engine optimisation to the customers to provide a better user experience. Next Plc has also taken up the approach towards developing its mobile application by integrating AI and Machine learning practices that accounts for 70% of online customer visits and 55% of online sales(Appsruntheworld, 2021). Next Plc to operate in the wider social sphere includes purchasing HCL commerce that helps the organisation in storing database and customer insight along with contextual information that increases the overall digital process of the retail organisation. Next Plc has taken up the initiative towards using digital marketing within the wider social sphere comprises of building a digital image factory to improve customer satisfaction. Next Plc has taken up the initiative of implementing new Digital Asset Management to improve the aptitude to use and manage its risingcapacity of digital assets that are including photos and videos(The marketingblog, 2021). Digital Asset Management will be helping the retailers to bring their products to life on the eCommerce website to make a more immersive satisfaction for the customers.

Next Plc also uses digital marketing technology in form of Evolving Media Solutions within the task related to developing and applying the new platform that will be created using Woodwing's digital asset administration system. This digital marketing technology enables Next Plc in providing a tailored and unique set of features contributing toward the overall development of the organisation(Screenmedia, 2021). EMS digital technology integrated with Next's IT systems ensures more flexible retail operations for Next Plc as they can upload more digital assets and speed up their eCommerce website that contributing to the growth of the overall organisation(Nextplc, 2021). The pieces of evidence gathered also explain that DAM as the digital marketing in the wider social sphere provides a more fluid workflow that

will comprise automatic procedures to perform different types of tasks that being including uploading pictures, resizing and colour balancing.

Digital marketing for Next Plc within their operations includes expanding its online fulfilment capability with the help of KNAPP's innovative system solution. The new online distribution centre will associate a shuttle system with advanced pocket sorter technology that aims towards providing rapid lead times and supreme elasticity (Knapp, 2021). This technology has been designed in a way that simplifies complexity along with reducing the processing time for custom orders. AutoPocket technology used in the Next Plc precisely drops goods off anywhere in the warehouse, without slowing down or ending. Knapp digital marketing techniques are being used by (Knapp, 2021) Next Plc within the operations management because it helps them in all phases of the project that is including designing to commission and application of the entire system.

Next Plc has transformed its social media platform to improve its overall business operations that being including developing its search engine to provide a better and improved online user experience. Developing the SEO optimisation benefits the organisation in providing better reach and flexibility to the customers to get access to the information helping the people in making up their minds to purchase decisions regarding the retail products that are being offered by Next Plc (Business-live, 2021). Social media webpage are also being developed by Next Plc where they use data analytics to measure the footfall of the customers along with determining their purchasing habits and intentions. Next Plc is also focused on personalisation and developing a new search engine in terms of improving the online user experience (Marketingweek, 2021). Using digital technology in social media helps Next Plc in growing its business operations along with mitigating the overall risk that contributes to the growth of the overall establishment.

Digital assets Next Plc owns

Digital assets are mainly referred to as any form of digital material that is owned by an enterprise including text, graphics and videos. Digital assets for the organisation help them in storing the information that is being used for future business purposes. The digital assets for the Next plc include documents, presentations and spreadsheets that are being used by the organisation to store their digital file

saved(Ahmad & Murray, 2019). Digital assets owned by Next Plc help them in gaining meaningful insight and information that help them in making better decisions contributing towards the overall growth of the establishment. Spreadsheets as the digital asset for Next Plc help them in identifying the performance of the organisation year by year, gathering data about the amount of profit, revenue and growth earned by the firm(Wiśniewski, et al., 2019). Spreadsheets analysis helps Next Plc in comparing past data and gathering information that is being used to make their organisational decisions. Spreadsheets stored in the digital form are easier to modify, manipulate and analyse data as a result of which it grows the ability of the organisation in improving its overall business operations. One of the disadvantages that Next Plc might face while undertaking spreadsheets comprise of user bias such as that only the info that the user opts for investigation is comprised in this presentation, therefore other relevant information that may inspire decision making might be omitted, inadvertently(Serra, et al., 2018). For the analysis, companies use Tableau and Qlik instead of replying solely in the spreadsheets which also turns out to be challenging for the organisation in drawing out fake data that decreases the ability of the organisation in making correct decisions.

Photos and videos are also considered the digital assets for Next Plc as it helps the organisation in promoting their retail products among the customers through the online platform, billboards and advertisement. Videos and images as digital assets are being promoted among the customers where they are being informed about the different retail products and services that are being offered to the customers by the organisation helping in gaining their trust and loyalty towards the organisation(van Erp, 2019). Video ads create a long-lasting image on the mindset of the customers as a result of which influences their behaviour to make up their purchasing decisions. Digital assets in form of presentation are also being used by the Next Plc that help them in presenting their new product idea among their investors and shareholders benefiting them in generating higher revenue and profitability(Sverdlova, 2021). Moreover, it has also been noticed that presentation as the digital assets help the organisation in marketing their products to the customers and make them aware of the product benefits and specifications. Presentations as the digital asset for next Plc help them in recording their annual and monthly growth in form of graphs, charts and line bars helping them in analysing and comparing the data sets as a result it

benefits them in making a conclusive and better decision that contribute towards their overall development(Beyer, 2018).

The pieces of evidence gathered from Pellegrini, et al., (2019), explain that digital assets within Next Plc help them in performing activities on time and grow the organisational effort. Digital assets such as spreadsheets and presentation often turn out to be the most valuable asset for the Next Plc as it helps them in saving their time and effort in carrying out the activities and achieving the result that contributes toward the overall growth and productivity of the establishment(van Erp, 2019). Digital assets for Next plc also turn out to be important because they help them in identifying the past and present trends in the global retail market and take decisions accordingly. The data in the spreadsheets in form of digital assets that are being stored benefits the organisation in comparing and measuring the performance of the organisation and based on that undertaking decisions accordingly contributing towards the overall growth and productivity of the establishment(Michels, et al., 2021). Digital assets for Next Plc in form of pictures, videos, PDFs and spreadsheets help the organisation in taking the decision that generates the best result for the organisation. Therefore, digital assets for Next plc help them record information and data that are being used by the management for future business prospects increasing the overall productivity of Next Plc.

Internal communication structural flow of Next Plc

Internal communication structural flow is mainly denoted as the group of processes or tools that are responsible for maintaining effective information flow and collaboration among the participants within the organisation. Internal communication structural flow for the organisation helps them in maintaining workplace productivity and collaboration that increases the chances of earning high growth and effectiveness. Pieces of evidence gathered from Yue, et al., (2021) explain that 44% of the employees believe that internal communication structural flow within the establishment increases employee productivity, teamwork and employee experience. Internal communication structural flow within Next Plc is referred to as the group of processes that are mainly responsible for maintaining effective information flow along with maintaining collaboration among the participants within the organisation. The structural flow of internal communication within Next Plc is being maintained through the proper exchange of information among the top management,

management and the employees(Lee & Li, 2020). The internal communication within Next Plc helps them in maintaining day-to-day operations along with cross-departmental collaboration that increases the potentiality of the firm in operating their business successfully contributing towards the overall growth and productivity of the establishment. The structural flow of internal communication among the top-level management and the employees helps in making informed decisions contributing to their overall growth and productivity(Zainun, et al., 2020). Whereas, the limitations that are associated with internal communication within the organisation is that 35% of the employees believed due to poor salary structure the attrition rate of the employee's increases(Weareopen, 2021).

Evidence gathered from Wolf, et al., (2022), explains that the internal communication structural flow of Next Plc enables the managers to explain the company goals and how the employee's role fits in the organisation. It becomes necessary for the employees to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities that influences the company's success. Internal communication develops the structural flow by encouraging a two-way communication process that ensures managers and the employees are aligned with the common goal of the company(Men, 2021). The top-level management of Next Plc needs to tackle four internal communication challenges that being including changing top-down only information flow to inter-departmental. Resolving the employees' issues by analysing their feedback to develop the overall internal communication process. Next Plc needs to measure the internal communication efforts regularly so that better internal operations and effectiveness can be maintained.

External communication structural flow of Next Plc

External communication flow within the organisation is mainly known as the process when the organisation communicates with the people or organisation outside the business. Next Plc is a retail organisation therefore the person involved with the external communication are customers, dealers, authorities and government officials(Reilly & Larya, 2018). External communication helps Next Plc in developing the structural flow of their communication process as the relationship development among the suppliers, clients and authorities help in strengthening the overall business process that contributes towards their overall growth. A different form of external communication for Next Plc includes of website, live events and

conferences, email and social media the proper flow of communication is being maintained amongst the management of Next Plc and other shareholders helping them in achieving the result that adds to their overall growth and effectiveness(Harjes, 2018).

A strong external communication strategy for Next Plc helps them in promoting the brand, increasing its reputation and positively shaping the public's perception of the brand drives more sales and revenue for the organisation. The main objective of external communication for Next Plc includes collecting information from outside the organisation, processing the information and using them to achieve the organisational goals that contribute toward their overall growth and effectiveness(Mohamed-seghir & Laoudj, 2020). External communication turns out to be important for Next Plc as it helps them in interacting with the suppliers and retailers to know about the current retail market along with identifying the changes in the behaviour of the customers. Based on the information gathered from the retailers and the suppliers Next Plc draws out their strategies accordingly that help them in achieving the organisational objectives contributing towards their overall development(Safar, et al., 2018). External communication for Next Plc also helps in maintaining structural flow as it benefits them in interacting with the government authorities and knowing about the policies and guidelines related to the work activities enabling the UK based retail organisation in performing their activities systematically in the competitive business market. Different type of external communication methods is being used by Next Plc such as website, content, social media and conferences.

Information architecture and effective strategies of Next Plc

Information architecture within the organisation mainly focuses on organising, structuring and labelling content effectively and sustainably. Information architecture is considered to be important for Next Plc because it forms the basis of a website's user experience. Information architecture used by Next Plc help in deriving useful content structures that help the UK based retail firm in navigating systems from complex sets of information(Alshaheen, 2018). Information architecture helps Next Plc in developing their web information that provides product details and specifications helping the customers in making their purchasing decision. In retail organisation information architecture mainly focuses on developing four key

components that being including organisation systems, labelling systems, navigation systems and searching systems(Resmini, et al., 2021). Next Plc has undertaken the multi-channel retailing strategy that allows the customers in browsing and purchase products. Multi-channel retailing strategy for Next Plc helps them in improving the overall customer perception that grows their trust and loyalty towards the organisation(Nextplc, 2021). Furthermore, the multichannel retailing strategy for the organisation also helps in increasing the overall sales and maintaining enhanced productivity contributing to the growth and effectiveness of the retailing firm. An effective strategy of multi-channel retailing for Next Plc is consistent and provides added value to the organisation.

Digital marketing promotions of products and services for Next Plc

Digital marketing promotions for Next Plc related to their products and services help them in growing their operations contributing towards the growth of the establishment. Digital marketing promotions for the UK based retail organisation contributes to their overall growth as they help them in gauging the taste and preferences of customers and offering products and services that match the expectations of the customers(Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube ads are being created and promoted among the customers to make them know about the retail product and services that are being offered by Next Plc. Instagram and Pinterest are being used as platforms to upload pictures regarding the latest clothing and apparel grabbing the attention of customers towards the organisation(Desai, 2019). Next Plc also regularly update its news feed and information through Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest making the people updated with the products that are being offered by the organisation to its customers.

Next Plc in their digital marketing platform enjoys a high number of customer profiles such as there are 276.600 thousand followers on their Twitter. 2.8 million followers on Instagram and 1.8 million Facebook followers(Instagram, 2021). Digital marketing promotions for Next Plc benefit them in engaging the customers helping Next Plc in promoting the brand awareness along with increasing the website traffic for the organisation. The pieces of evidence gathered from Brighton, (2021), explain that digital marketing promotions for Next Plc help them in developing the company's website by 91% benefiting the organisation in growing its revenue and profitability. YouTube ads are being created by Next Plc to promote the clothing and apparel of

the organisation to gain the attention of the customers of the organisation. Digital marketing promotional activities for Next Plc comprise content marketing where interactive content is being designed for Next Plc to attract their attention towards the organisation.

Explain the implication of predictive artificial intelligence in digital marketing

Evidence gathered from Nyagadza, (2021), explains that predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing help in transforming the overall business operations contributing to the growth of the establishment. Predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing also helps in optimising along with speeding up many different marketing tasks helping in improving the overall customer experiences along with driving conversions. The implication of predictive artificial intelligence in digital marketing can hyper-personalise the overall customer experience by analysing their profiles(Ballestar, et al., 2019). Predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing accesses the information of the customers and analyse the same to determine their tastes and change buying behaviour. The data gathered from different sources of the digital platform helps the organisations in speed up the production process enabling them in designing and developing clothing and apparel that matches the expectations of the customers(Murgai, 2018). Predictive artificial intelligence implied within the digital marketing activities helps the organisations in deciding what content to create and when to distribute it in terms of growing the efficiency of the firm.

Poor integration of predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing makes it difficult for organisations in quantifying a large amount of data along with making up accurate predictions based on the patterns that emerge from it. Moreover, the poor implication of predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing fails the firm in making an accurate prediction regarding the customer behaviour along with identifying their nature(Schweyer, 2018). Failing to make an accurate prediction regarding the customers changing behaviour and nature decreases the ability of the organisation in designing clothing and apparel that matches the expectations of the customers(Rosenkrans & Myers, 2018). Digital marketing activities are being performed with the help of predictive artificial intelligence because it lets the organisation in setting up dynamic pricing, customer service chatbots along with

using search engine optimisation that lets the organisation in connecting with their targeted customers and achieving their desired results.

Explain how predictive artificial intelligence help in predicting future trends of digital marketing

Predicting artificial intelligence benefits in changing the future of digital marketing as it allows in gaining new opportunities contributing towards the growth of the establishment. Predictive artificial intelligence benefits in predicting the future trends that being including growing the productivity of the retail firm such as Next Plc by 80% will automatically boost the overall performance of the organisation contributing to their overall development(Shrestha, et al., 2019). Predictive artificial intelligence will be helping in analysing data that are available benefiting Next Plc in drawing out future research directions enabling the organisation in growing their operations along with contributing towards their overall development. Predictive AI will also be helping the retail organisation such as Next Plc in storing the purchasing history of the customers which will be benefiting the organisation in drawing out information and designing their products accordingly that matches their expectations(Kumar & Garg, 2018). Predictive future trends in digital marketing activities embrace a customer-centric approach helping the organisation in transforming the overall business operations and contributing to the growth of efficiency for the retail business firms.

The implication of predictive artificial intelligence benefits in predicting future trends by eliminating the challenges such as poor inventory management and the high cost of supply chain operations. Inventory risk for the organisation increases the capital expenditure for the establishment as a result the operational effectiveness of the organisation decreases(Miklosik, et al., 2019). Therefore, predictive artificial intelligence is being used in inventory management such as segregating the stocks according to their SKU units and monitoring them regularly so that risk of inventory loss can be minimised(Lee & Cho, 2020). Predictive artificial intelligence implied within the digital marketing also helps in allocating the budgets for the Next retail Plc benefiting them in optimally utilising the capital so that investment can be made accordingly that benefits in retaining high operations of the organisation.

Discuss how predictive artificial intelligence help in predicting customer behaviour for buying products

Predictive artificial intelligence help in predicting customer behaviour to buy the products that are including gathering the data regarding the customer's past purchase behaviour from social media and websites. The information gathered from different sources related to the customers is being examined to identify the changing behaviour of the customers and offer them similar products that fulfil their excitement(Akerkar, 2019). Personalised goods and services are also being offered to the customers to determine their acceptance of the products that are being offered by the organisation helping in knowing about what changes are required to make the product acceptable among the customers. Predictive artificial intelligence help in devising effective marketing campaigns through the products of Next Plc being promoted among the customers(Chen, et al., 2021). The online data in form of past reviews and online searches help in predicting the amount of engagement generated from the online marketing campaign benefiting the organisation in determining the customer behaviour and influencing them to buy the product. Customer behaviour towards influencing them in purchasing the product is being developed through the help of content marketers that are being designed through predictive artificial intelligence(Dimitrieska, et al., 2018). AI has entirely transformed content marketing by changing the way the content appears on the top result of search engines helping the customers in accessing information to make their mind if they are willing to purchase the product or not. predictive artificial intelligence also benefits in predicting customer behaviour for buying products through the help of using chatbots that create personalised content for the customers along with providing valuable insights to the customers to make up their purchasing decisions.

Critically analyse the impacts of AI-based predictive tools that can help Next Plc to grow its business by providing valuable insights into customer behaviours and preferences

AI-based predictive tools that can be used by next Plc to grow its business include SAS advanced analytics which offers Next Plc a list of different predictive analytics and other advanced analytical products. SAS advanced analytical tool for the organisation not only helps them in gaining valuable insights into the customer behaviour and preferences but also it helps in analysing historical data that provides

data and information to the organisation to know about the customer behaviour(Stroup, et al., 2018). The limitation of using SAS advanced analytics is that it takes a long time to perform the task which decreases its efficiency and also negatively impacts the outcome of the result. SAS advanced analytics in AI-based predictive tools help Next Plc to evaluate algorithms along with designing an astounding graphical user interface that benefits in providing more accurate output. SAP predictive analytics can also be used by Next Plc which will help them in storing their information in SAP analytics cloud and ERP data contributing to maintaining better organisational efficiencies(Lebefromm, 2021). SAP predictive analytics monitors the purchase history and also identifies their purchasing pattern enabling the organisation in knowing about their habits as a result of which benefits the organisation in offering customised products to the customers that are widely accepted among them.

Conclusion

The brief evaluation of the report has explained the online retail industry and offline retail industry along with discussing the background of the Next Plc organisation. The internal communication structural flow of Next Plc has been discussed followed by examining the information architecture and effective strategies undertaken by Next Plc. As the report progresses it has also explained digital marketing promotions of products and services for Next Plc. The implication of predictive artificial intelligence within digital marketing and predicting the future trends in digital marketing has also been explained in the report.

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