DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: *The world in which people lead their lives now is full of connections. These connections have also been favored by the emergence and evolution of digital technologies. Today more than ever, individuals turn to digital solutions to communicate, to buy, to sell and so on. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive literature review and analysis of the main digital marketing strategies. The research objectives are to identify and categorize the most common and effective digital marketing strategies from the existing literature and to contribute to the academic understanding of digital marketing strategies by synthesizing and analyzing them. The research method is qualitative, linking exploratory and descriptive approach.*

Key words: *digital marketing, media, Internet, business, consumer*.

1. Introduction

In the past few years, there has been observed a noticeable transformation in the economy and society, clearly influenced by the advancements in information technology. The primary driver behind this transformation can be attributed to the widespread adoption of digitalization, which has evolved alongside the growth of the multimedia market. This evolution has resulted in significant changes across the telecommunications, computer and media industries, culminating with digital revolution. Along the shift of society from postmodern industrial to the contemporary society shaped by information abundance, "the quantity and quality of information enter entirely new dimensions". The extensive availability and concentration of information today have reached unprecedented levels like never before. Notably, within this context, the Internet emerges as a pivotal entity, facilitating temporal and spatial autonomy while accessing an unimaginable wealth of knowledge (Wirtz, 2019).

Any business has a certain image shaped by its use of Internet advertising or any digital marketing environment and consumers sometimes transform marketing campaigns from nowadays in social or environmental movements so that marketers are forced to verify, quantify, adapt and keep everything under control, using these various digital channels (Dallas, Lubrano, 2022).

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2. Literature Review

Businessmen have always experienced the urge to promote their goods, either by word of mouth or through printed materials. Marketing activity today means a constituent element essential for the existence of a company, as production, management, accounting etc., activities have no value on the market if there is no demand for the goods and services offered. Marketing provides the link between the current needs of human society and its economic and social activities, having the role of anticipating and understanding these needs and then satisfying them, appealing to creation and innovation. However, the other activities of the organization should not be neglected, requiring close collaboration between marketing and other divisions within the organization: research and development, production, human resources, finance-accounting (Brătucu, Țierean, 2011).

The digital revolution has transformed the day-to-day lives of individuals and today the Internet is part of citizens' lives and, as a result, its costs decreased and the possibility of access increased (Felipa, 2017). Once most consumers are in the digital environment, then companies must also be present where the crowd is and the main benefit of a digital presence for a company is the visibility it gives when users apply on the Internet to purchase products in the field in which the company operates, as interfaces present a tour of alternatives (learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage).

The Internet is shaping modern society and has transformed itself from a tool, which facilitates communication, in a ubiquitous technology that supports all activities across the economy. Today, there are no geographical barriers stopping the Internet because it has become the means par excellence to provide solutions to users, whether at home, work, on car or on holiday, in short, wherever a connection can be established on a device by electronic signal to navigate a digital interface, and the expansion of the Internet is significantly shaped by the growing impact of user interaction and network (Felipa, 2017).

The scale of the Internet gives a new dimension to all the concepts and processes it encompasses, and so many of them are replaced or made whole. By associating the Internet with the social process by which individuals satisfy their needs and desires through exchange, marketing can be said to have been born digital. Digital marketing involves use of digital sources based on electronic signal, such as the Internet, advertising with digital displays and other digital media, to intermediate marketing activities improve customer experience by addressing customer preferences. The concept of digital marketing resulted from the expansion of the Internet and the ranking of search engines of websites (Chaffey, 2016) and is a new branch of marketing science (Brătucu, Tălpău, 2014).

During the 20s of the twenty-first century, the most important trends are expected to be the following: the coveted "oil" will be people's attention and advanced technologies will greatly influence daily life, potentially causing damage if they bring new economic divisions and if society does not adapt to the fast pace of technology and digitization (Davies, 2019). On the other hand, however, the abundance of information causes a clear problem, someone has to process the contents and often society is overwhelmed.

Experiment upon experiment has shown that information overload is a contemporary problem (Sinek, 2009) and people are looking for the superior value of a product, so businesses with a presence in the digital world need to consider all the technologies and opportunities available today to attract new followers and interact with them as well as maintain relationships with old customers.

In everyday circumstances, "the Internet is the most powerful tool" in business (Yannopoulos, 2011). Digital marketing has resulted from the progress of the Internet and the development of technologies that incorporate it (OECD, 2013). Marketing executives who neglect to acknowledge the significance of the Internet in the business marketing strategy would find themselves at a distinct disadvantage in the competitive landscape because the digital world is changing branding, pricing, marketing strategies and consumer behavior (Bala, Verma 2018).

The challenges in the recent context of the global economy, including the Covid-19 pandemic, determine all companies to have a presence in the virtual environment and become aware of the usefulness of digital marketing. Over the past decade, digital marketing has become popular because it uses smart display devices, which are constantly found around people (Benartzi, Lehrer, 2015). Given that most people are Internet users, the beginning of digital marketing was a reaction to this process and aims to harness the potential of the digital environment.

Marketing is entering a new era in terms of the different paths open to organizations, through the way they promote and deliver products/services to the market, and consumers quickly accept these new possibilities. Digital marketing can cover more traditional subdivisions of marketing, such as direct marketing, offering the same method of communicating with an audience, but in a virtual environment. In addition, monotonous advertising and marketing techniques have been pushed aside in favor of digital marketing because its immense power enables the potential revival of the economy and presents governments with remarkable opportunities to enhance operational efficiency (Munshi, Munshi, 2012).

Unfortunately, however, too fast a transition to a "clean economy" could jeopardize global financial stability, and too slow a transition would involve the risk of exceeding certain ecological thresholds (Attali, 2018).

3. Types of digital marketing strategies

Digital marketing aims to initiate transactions and for that "the design, marketing and placement of advertising space on the Internet" are essential elements of the attraction activity offered by tradesmen specialized in this field (Wirtz, 2019). At its core, digital marketing is based on three essential components for success in the virtual environment:

➢ Earned audience: The recognition a company receives for free through links to its own website, media and analyst mentions, customer reviews and recommendations. This natural help strengthens brand recognition and company visibility in search engines.

➢ Paid audience: Paid advertising consists primarily of redirecting to content on a

company's website and, desirably, conversions (visitor becoming buyer). This includes search advertisements, paid promotion on social media, email and/or intermediary platforms, advertisements through clips and display ads etc.

➢ Own audience: The content that a company composes and controls, opens up the opportunity to gain an audience. Own presentation website, own blog, news on social media pages are some tools that fit here.

When the three components are combined to result in a complex digital marketing strategy. These components pave the way for an excellent customer experience where they reach their target audience in a more accurate way and on the preferred channel of buyers (www.searchenginejournal.com). There are many strategies related to digital marketing, from marketing technologies and organizational transformation to social media marketing and content marketing, and below will be presented the most important and used of them.

3.1. E-mail marketing

Email marketing consists of sending a commercial communication via e-mail to a database of possible customers. This strategy is one of the most important and effective marketing strategies digital due to significantly lower costs compared to classic direct marketing and possibilities for increased content personalization and value creation given that this strategy supports loyalty or customer support objectives (Mullen, Daniels, 2009). Using an efficient software for email marketing, a company can manage its database of subscribers' emails, having the possibility to filter by several factors, such as: consumer likes and aversions, consumption habits and purchase frequency etc., as well as to instantly send newsletters to a list of subscribers, no matter how big it is (Brătucu, Tălpău, 2014).

By using marketing by e-mail, quick feedback is obtained on the efficiency and performance of this strategy, and newsletters are sent exactly to the desired segment (subset of subscribers). A business can measure: message open rate, click-through rate by message categories or topics, conversion rate, click-through rate on images and animations, sales, number of clicks on the unsubscribe link and date, but also others.

3.2. Social media marketing

Social networks are a practice of actively increasing social connections or expanding business networks by building interconnections with other individuals, usually through specialized platforms such as: Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat etc. These digital platforms create interconnected communities that help people connect with each other, otherwise interaction is unlikely. Depending on the social media platform and account connection criteria, members may be free to contact any other member (Li, Larimo, Leonidou, 2021).

Social media marketing uses content published on social media sites to increase traffic to websites, promote branding, sell products, and protect brand reputation in the digital environment. Basically, this strategy involves targeting websites or business pages

that use it through social media platforms. To reach a new audience, you can buy ads on these platforms or create a profile dedicated to your business and compose posts for promotion. Brands frequently post their own content, but many also have digital influencers who are third parties that audiences believe in and can build trust and loyalty for the brand. The essence of social media marketing is the experience that digital platforms offer users (Benartzi, Lehrer, 2015).

To reach the millions of users who use social networks like Facebook, Instagram, businesses and organizations are turning their attention to these platforms and most of them have links on their websites to their page or to the page of products / services offered, attracting numerous visitors. Likewise, in order to be successful on social networks, marketers of a company must understand the audience in depth, taking into account which platforms the target group spends their time on and what types of content they prefer. Moreover, it is important to know the latest trends on social networks because changes occur quickly and being informed is the equivalent of a visible and distinctive brand. As consumers spend more time on social media, businesses have more opportunities to connect with them.

3.3. Search engine optimisation

This strategy, optimization a search engine site (SEO), represents a technique to boost website traffic by improving its page rank in a search engine like Google, Bing or another, being a free way to promote a business in search results that appear naturally or organically. It consists of helping a particular web page to be seen before other pages in an Internet search, and search engines regularly update their algorithms so that only relevant results appear (Khan, Siddiqui, 2013). There have been many changes to search engine optimization pages in recent years, so search engine optimization software needs to understand what types of information are displayed and how to rank them. For example, Google constantly strives to protect against algorithm manipulation and effectively remove or filter out specific websites that are undeserving in the first results (learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage).

Search engine optimization not only involves improving the quality of content on the web page, but also ensures that there are enough relevant keywords and the page itself is organized with subtitles, key points and clear hyperlinks and also checks the optimization of the site's language code so that any search engine can determine what is on the page and display it as a result for a particular search (Chaffey, 2016). An increasing number of individuals uses devices to access information, search engines collect information from users in databases and use it to improve users' search experience and provide them with specific content.

3.4. Search engine marketing

Alternative to SEO is search engine marketing (SEM) through which websites can buy ad space within search results. Companies pay to appear higher and higher in searches, and most search engines use an auction-based system, where companies try to take

precedence and bid on some keywords. Cost of such digital advertisements usually depends on the number of clicks that the link receives, hence the pay-per-click (learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage).

What differentiates search engine marketing from traditional marketing (street billboards, newspapers, magazines, catalogues, flyers, etc.) is that entities pay only if the digital ad is accessed by people searching for the products/services offered by them. If, however, the ad appears and no user clicks on it, the company using search engine marketing will not be charged. It is also very likely that visitors who see the ads will be interested in the offer given that they have expressed their desire by entering keywords into the search engine, while in the case of traditional marketing the ad reaches an unspecified number of people, many of whom do not belong to the product/service market.

Search engine marketing uses optimization and other mechanisms, such as social media marketing and paid search, to increase brand recognition, attract leads, and make conversions. When businesses choose this mode of digital promotion, the "Ad" label will appear next to the web page address. Despite consumers' knowledge that these are advertisements, many still click on these links and search engine marketing can be a very effective digital marketing strategy (Wirtz, 2019).

An example of such advertising services is shown through the services provided by Google, through Google Ad Sense and AdWords. Search engine algorithms analyze content on customer websites and prioritize search results from the user's Google results list. Therefore, it analyzes the content on various sites, scans them, then displays among the results and ads that may be relevant to a target group.

3.5. Content marketing

Content marketing ranks among the most powerful digital marketing strategies; it offers three times as many leads and costs, 62% less compared to traditional marketing (www.demandmetric.com/content/content-marketing-infographic). The field of content marketing focuses on creating and delivering varied, high-quality digital content (including long-form content), such as: blogs, e-books, studies, forums, websites, webinars, videos or materials for social networks and the list can go on depending on the type of content suitable for the target audience (Balteș, 2015).

Content has become the main ingredient to have favorable results in a marketing campaign digital. For example, all the recent updates implemented to Google's algorithms indicate, when filtering search results, that the primary metric that holds the utmost importance is the quality and relevance of the content. It is also important that the information in the content is customized for different platforms considering that good content is shared and recommended and can bring recognition to the business (Bala, Verma 2018).

In the field of content platforms, the YouTube digital video channel holds a dominant position, nowadays being one of the most important media. This digital platform allows users to do a lot of actions: watching, downloading, uploading, publishing and so on, with videos of different sizes. To do this, the community may use different individual YouTube channels or websites through which information other than these videos may

be used or provided. The number of businesses using this service for marketing purposes is growing fast, with YouTube being the most known platform for this type of video (https://www.youtube.com/intl/ALL_ro/about/).

3.6. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is a digital marketing strategy, whereby a company (a trader) signs a convention with another company (a promoter or a publisher) to include an affiliate link on the brokerage company's websites to its website. Basically, a company pays a company specialized in promotion or a company with notoriety and a large number of visitors to bring it customers. This technique is particularly useful for newly launched companies because it will generate an increased influx of visitors to their businesses through high-traffic sites (Bala, Verma 2018). An example of an intermediary company on the Romanian market is Emag. It allows its partners to list their products on its digital platform and its customers to search for certain goods here, no longer requiring the market to be a physical place. After a potential output is identified, Emag redirects the customer to that seller.

Intermediation companies earn income mainly through retail sale or commissions for orders placed and delivered through their sites (pay/transaction) or monthly fees for the solutions they offer or advertising revenue from the exploitation of data based on customer and user profiles resulting from their business transactions.

4. Conclusions

The Internet brings with it a variety of opportunities for any type of business, all fields experiencing drastic changes nowadays. The dynamic of development has made digital marketing strategies become an extremely widespread component in the activity of any entity. This as well as the high need for connectivity of a business are the main factors why digital marketing strategies have become absolutely necessary elements for any successful business.

The identification and establishment of appropriate digital marketing strategies are steps of major importance because not all the strategies presented in this paper are suitable in the situation of any business as it is possible that some of the strategies may be expensive in terms of time or financial resources or may no longer benefit from popularity among business clients.

To sum up, digital marketing strategies focus on how businesses and brands use the power of the Internet and the benefits of technology to engage with targeted customer segments for achieving their overall marketing objectives.

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