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Digital Marketing and Gamification

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ABSTRACT

Digital Marketing is the New Black. Digital marketing is an umbrella term which refers to using digital channels, platforms and devices to market the product or service. Digital marketing helps one achieve a larger target across the globe than through the traditional methods. Gamification, being a part of digital marketing helps in consumer engagement and to grow brand awareness. This paper primarily focuses on digital marketing management and how gamification aids to marketing.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Online or Cyber Marketing, Social Media, Management of Marketing, Gamification.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing enables consumers to identify, evaluate and buy products or services online and round the clock. This marketing provides consumers' anything, anytime and anywhere experience. In simple, Digital marketing is the promotion of products over the internet or any form of electronic media.

The pace of change and the scale of technological advancement as well as achievement can be staggering. In the face of the internet revolution, marketing communications today increasingly occur as a kind of personal dialogue between the company and the customer. Companies must not only ask "How should we reach the customers?" but also, "How should the customers reach us?" and "How can the customers reach one other?"

The digital marketing provides for marketers and customers with opportunities for much greater interaction and individualization. Marketers distinguish paid and owned marketing from earned marketing. Paid marketing includes company generated advertising, publicity and promotional efforts. Earned marketing is all the public relations and word of mouth which a company receives without having to pay. The marketers must go where the consumers are and that's mostly online now. Customers define the rules of engagement. They define what information they need, what products they are interested in, and how much they are willing to pay.²

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² Asim Ansari and Carl F. Mela, "E – customization," Journal of Marketing Research 40(May 2003) pp. 131- 145

II. HISTORY OF DIGITAL MARKETING

The roots of digital marketing can be found way back to the 1980s. It was when the computer technology became more accessible and attributable to businesses. The first digital marketing campaigns were simple text ads, and they were mainly used by companies to advertise their products and services to other businesses.

In the year of 1990, the term Digital Marketing was first invented and used. At that time Web 1.0 platform was developed, which helped in finding necessary information. But the marketers were unaware of the potential of digital marketing because of few limitations and drawbacks.

Then, in 1993, the first web-ad banner went live. At that time, HotWired, a commercial online magazine purchased a few banner ads for their promotion and advertising which marked the beginning of the digital marketing era.

The year of 1998 was the golden year for digital marketing as Google was launched in this year. Later in the years, Google introduced products like AdWords, which is a 3-line advertisement that show up at the top or to the right of search engine results, and AdSense which is a cost-per-click advertising scheme. Google became a key player in the world of digital business by targeting ads based on the interests of the customers.

In 2010, WhatsApp, the messaging app was launched. People have already started to spend time on these mediums, and these mediums have surpassed the television viewers too. The year 2012 is the year of social media. The companies have understood that the social media will help them in boosting their marketing and they were desperately trying to promote the products online.

The introduction of cookie was another significant milestone in the field of digital marketing. The search of a product by a person will constantly be popping in every website he/she opens which is an advanced person specific marketing which influences and brainwashes them to buy the product.

The concept of Metaverse which is a virtual world that combines social communication, entertainment and commerce. The integration of Artificial Intelligence and digital marketing is paving the way for upcoming generation. Technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are still left to wonder what the digital marketing is yet to achieve.

III. DIGITAL MARKETING PROCESS

STEP 1 - Research and Analysis

STEP 2 - Strategic Planning

STEP 3 - Execution and Monitoring

STEP 4 - Analytics and Reporting

IV. DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

A Company chooses which form of digital marketing will be most cost – effective in achieving communication and sales objectives.³ The options include web – sites, search ads, display ads, and e- mails.

(A) Websites

Companies must design websites that express or embody their purpose, history, products, and vision and that are attractive on first viewing and interesting enough to encourage repeated visits.⁴ To encourage repeated visits, companies must pay special attention to context and content factors and embrace another “C” which is Constant Change. The users of a website will judge a website’s performance on ease of use and physical attractiveness. They must also be sensitive to online security and privacy protection.

(B) Search Ads

An important component of digital marketing is paid search or pay per click ads. The Advertisers pay only if people tend to click on the links, but the marketers firmly believe that consumers who have already expressed their interest by searching are the prime prospects. The ever – increasing popularity of paid search has increased competition among keywords bidders, significantly raising search ad prices and putting a premium on choosing best possible key words, bidding on them strategically and monitoring the results for effectiveness and efficiency.

(C) Display Ads

Display Ads or Banner Ads are small, rectangular boxes containing text and or pictures that companies pay to place on websites.⁵ If the audience is large, the cost will be high. The ads

³ Hans Risselada, Peter C. Verhoef, and Tammo H.A. Bijmolt, "Dynamic Effects of Social Influence and Direct Marketing on the Adoption of High-Technology Products," *Journal of Marketing* 78 (March 2014), pp. 52-68; Zsolt Katona, Peter Pal Zubcsek, and Miklos Sarvary, "Network Effects and Personal Influences: The Diffusion of an Online Social Network," *Journal of Marketing Research* 48 (June 2011), pp. 425-43; Allen P. Adamson, *Brand Digital* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴ John R. Hauser, Glen L. Urban, Guilherme Liberali, and Michael Braun, "Website Morphing," *Marketing Science* 28 (March-April 2009), pp. 202-23; Peter J. Danaher, Guy W. Mullarkey, and Skander Essegaier, "Factors Affecting Web Site Visit Duration: A Cross-Domain Analysis," *Journal of Marketing Research* 43 (May 2006), pp. 182-94; Philip Kotler, *According to Kotler* (New York: American Management Association, 2005)

⁵ 23. Peter J. Danaher, Janghyuk Lee, and Laoucine Kerbache, "Optimal Internet Media Selection," *Marketing Science* 29 (March--April 2010), pp. 336-47

need to be more attention seeking, and influential, better targeted and more closely tracked.⁶ Interstitials are advertisements, often with video or animation, that pop up between page changes within a website or across websites. For example, Ads for Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol headache reliever would pop up on broker's websites whenever the stock market falls.

(D) E- Mail

E-Mail allows the marketers to inform and communicate with customers at a fraction of cost. The major disadvantage is that many customers employ spam filters to halt the flow. Privacy concerns are also growing and many customers restrain themselves from providing private details to the marketers even if it gives them additional discounts. Firms such as Kellogg, Whirlpool, and Nissan are emphasizing both email and search marketing.⁷

V. COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

(A) Social Media

An important component of digital marketing is the Social Media. The social media allows marketers to establish a public voice and presence online. Marketers can make use and tap into online communities creating a long – term marketing asset in the process and inviting participation from consumers. The best example is Dollar Shave Club which is an E – Commerce startup and it sells a low-priced monthly supply of razors and blades online with regard to three different plans. The key to company's launch was an online video which was considered the best start up video ever. The 90 second video won numerous awards and garnered millions of views on YouTube and gained thousands of social media followers in the process. The video by the CEO Michael Dubin is considered as an absolute brilliance and internet sensation in the digital marketing.

There are three main platforms for social media. They are,

- Online communications and Forums
- Blogs which includes individual blogs and blog networks
- Social networks

Online communities come in all forms, shapes and sizes. Many are created by consumers or groups with no commercial interests or affiliations to the company and others are sponsored by companies whose members communicate with the company and with each other through

⁶ Glen Urban, Guilherme Liberali, Erin Macdonald, Robert Bordley, and John Hauser, "Morphing Banner Advertising" *Marketing science* 33 (January – February 2014) pp 59- 75

⁷ "Email, search remain key for brands," www.warc.com, January 24, 2013

postings and text messages. A key for success in online communities is to create individual and group activities that helps to form bonding among the community members.

Blogs are regularly updated online journals or diaries and have become an important outlet for word of mouth. Corporations are creating their own blogs and monitoring the blogs of others.⁸ Many consumers examine product information and reviews contained in blogs and so it is necessary for the bloggers to disclose the relationship with marketers on whose products the blogs are written.

Social Networks like Facebook, Twitter and You tube have become an important force in B2B and B2C marketing.⁹ Having a social network page has become a virtual prerequisite for most companies.

By using the social media and the internet in a constructive and thoughtful way, companies have a means to create a strong online presence and to offer credible alternate points of view if negative feedback occurs.¹⁰ And if the firm has built a strong online community, members of the community will often rush to defend and protect the brand and play a protecting role over false or unfair accusations. The reality however is, that whether a company choose to engage in social media or not, the internet will always permit scrutiny, criticisms, and even cheap shots from consumers and organizations.

Social media is one example of online word of mouth which is a powerful marketing tool. Viral marketing is one of the forms of online word of mouth which encourages consumers to pass along company's developed products and services or audio, video or written information to others online.¹¹ The value of a customer depends on the ability and likelihood of making referrals and engagement in word of mouth which is positive. As intriguing as earning positive word of mouth from a consumer can be, getting consumers to directly engage with the company and provide it with feedback and suggestions can lead to even greater loyalty and sales.¹²

Many marketers concentrate on the online effects of word of mouth, given the ease of tracking

⁸ Judith Chevalier and Dina Mayzlin, "The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online Book Reviews," *Journal of Marketing Research* 43(August 2006), pp 345 - 354

⁹ Christophe Van Den Bulte and Stefan Wuyts, *Social Networks and Marketing*; and for some practical considerations, see "A world of connections: a special report on social networking", *Economist*, January 30,2010

¹⁰ Stephen Baker, "Beware social media snake oil" *Bloomberg business week*, December 14, 2009, pp 48 - 51

¹¹ Barak Libai, Eitan Muller, and Renana Peres, "Decomposing the Value of Word-of-Mouth Seeding Programs: Acceleration Versus Expansion," *Journal of Marketing Research* 50 (April 2013), pp. 161-76, Oliver Hinz, Bernd Skiera, Christian Barrot, and Jan U Becker, "Seeding Strategies for Viral Marketing: An Empirical Comparison," *Journal of Marketing* 75 (November 2011), pp. 55-71; Ralf van der Lans Gerrit van Bruggen, Jehoshua Eliashberg and Berend Wierenga, "A Viral Branching Model for Predicting the Spread of Electronic Word of Mouth," *3 Marketing science* 29 (March-April 2010), pp. 348-65.

¹² Omar Merlo, Andreas B. Eisingerich and Seigyoung Auh, "Why customer participation matters," MIT sloan management review, Winter 2014, pp 81 - 88

them through advertising, public relations and digital agencies. Through the demographic information or proxies for that information and cookies, firms can monitor when customers blog, comment, post, share, link, upload, stream, write on a wall or update a profile.

(B) Mobile Marketing

Given the presence of smart phones and tablets far and wide and marketer's capability to personalize messages grounded on colorful characteristics, the appeal of mobile marketing as a communication tool is obvious.

Wharton's David Bell gives four different characteristics of a mobile device.

- It is uniquely tied to one person.
- It is virtually always 'on' given it is typically carried far and wide.
- It allows for an immediate and fast consumption because it is in effect a channel of distribution with a payment system.
- It is largely interactive given it allows for geo tracking and picture and video tape taking.¹³

Smart phones are also conducive to boosting loyalty programs in which the users can track their visits to and purchases from a merchant and receive rewards. By tracking the whereabouts of receptive users who opt to receive communications, retailers can send them location specific promotions when they are near shops or outlets.¹⁴

The world of mobile marketing can be hard to get one's head around but is more important than ever before. With time spent on mobile overshadowing other devices, marketers who can leverage mobile to acquire new users and keep them coming back will reap the biggest prices and rewards.

VI. GAMIFICATION IN MARKETING

Gamification incorporates game elements in marketing such as scoring points, earning coins or super coins or virtual currency, having many levels in the applications into marketing campaigns which helps to boost customer engagement. To put it in simple words, it is the process of turning any process into a game. The gamification strategies in marketing includes,

¹³ Preethi Chamikuttyl, "Wharton Professor David Bill, on Brand Building in Online and Offline world," your story September, 2013

¹⁴ Peter DaSilva, "Cellphone in new role: Loyalty card", New York Times, May 31, 2010

(A) Website Games

Website games are the ones that popup in the websites at festive seasons or end of season sale and they can also take up forms. They can be simple, “spin the wheel” pages or they might be virtual scratch cards that let the consumers get a price reduction on their favorite products.

(B) Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs are also an amazing way to gamify the user experience. By offering user points, stars, or other currency after they make a purchase makes the user to stick to the same brand or website by claiming discounts or cashbacks for the points.

(C) Completion Meters

By giving users a goal to reach or another level to earn along with extra benefits, the companies can drive engagement by the users. Myntra offers extra benefits for its elite and icon insider members which can be achieved through further purchases from myntra. This makes the myntra users not to shift from myntra to other online sellers.

(D) Virtual Badges

Virtual badges or rewards for specific actions can help keep customers coming back and encourage them to earn the next award, especially if it’s tied to a discount or offers.

VII. TOP EXAMPLES OF GAMIFICATION MARKETING**KFC: MOBILE GAMING**

KFC Japan decided the best way to engage users which was with a mobile “advergame” called Shrimp Attack when they introduced shrimp on their menu eventually selling through the voucher redemptions. 22% of people who played the game redeemed their vouchers and the company had increased their store sales by 106% compared to the previous year.

M & M’S: EYE SPY PRETZEL

In the year of 2010, famous candy brand M&M’s launched a chocolate-coated pretzel flavor. The company wanted to boost user engagement. So, a digital puzzle that tasked users with finding a pretzel image hidden in a field of M&M’s. The game worked and M&M’s saw 25,000 new likes for the company with 6,000 shares and 10,000 comments.

DUOLINGO: GAMIFIED LEARNING

This Duolingo is the use of minigames to help users learn a new language. With a number of short games that allow the user to select the right word to complete a sentence, listening to a phrase and then translating it, or speaking into your device’s microphone to see if you have the

pronunciation right, Duolingo is doing gamification right by gaming all the way through learning.

STARBUCKS: CUP FLIP GAME

Starbucks is fully tapped on marketing through gamifying stuff. Their cup flip made the users to share and brag their results on social media and winners received vouchers to use in-store.

HEAD SPACE

Head space is a mindfulness app that helps people to meditate on a daily basis by utilizing gamification within core visuals and functionality. In the dashboard, it shows statistics and achievements. It encourages the users not to break their mindfulness streak. The app enables the users to share their progress with their friends through the buddies feature and reward them by unlocking milestones and badges along the way.

VIII. CONCLUSION

“Content is Fire; Social Media is Gasoline.”¹⁵ Digital marketing offers the ability to reach and engage target audiences in ways which were never before possible. A strong digital marketing strategy can deliver a great return on investment. People are consuming digital content at a rate which cannot be determined. More than half of the planet has regular and continuous access to the internet, spending an average of 6 hours per day, presenting massive opportunities for brands and businesses. Digitalized marketing is thus the future without any doubts.

¹⁵ Jay Baer, President of Convince & Convert, An online customer service and digital marketing consultancy

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