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e-Commerce strategy for Rockerline clothing

Student Number

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# Introduction

When running a successful e-commerce business, it is recommended to plan and implement strategies throughout the business life. This is to maintain relevancy and provide the most optimal experience. Rockerline clothing has requested potential changes to the company’s e-commerce strategy. Inside this document, is an assessment of possible modifications as well as comparing successful e-commerce developments.

Key talk points are as follows:

* Direct marketing
* Search Engine optimization
* Google rankings
* Response time

## Overview of sales analysis

Rockerline recently reopen its business. In an attempt to boost revenue, they ran an advertisement campaign on Facebook promoting products they provide. Advertisement campaigns are still commonly used to gather more reach but are not cost-effective depending on the platform hosted upon. A recommendation would be running advertisements on a lower cost per click service by either altering the keywords or finding a new service entirely.

## Covid impact on the business

Covid-19 has impacted businesses and affected people massively. Some companies have thrived, whilst others have had to close down. As Rockerline specialises in water sports clothing, the business did not do too well during the pandemic as outdoor activities were advised and not to be conducted due to safety. This information is supported by (Aidan McParland MD, 2021) article which had stated “The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on surfing populations around the world, both professional and recreational”. Looking more into this from an eCommerce perspective, Covid-19 has also put an impact on SME sales. This was proven by (Hussain, Shahzad, Hassan, & Doski, 2021) study using the TOE model, which has suggested improving SME productions which have dropped by 70% by using a B2B platform to assist with production rates as well as being cost-effective overall boosting cross border eCommerce sales.

# Direct marketing

Using the direct marketing strategies and providing a possible subscription bonus would be an effective way of maintaining an interest in the business as well as possible steady revenue. This method has been used by a wide range of businesses such as IKEA using flyers for brand awareness.

Direct marketing is the process of passing promotional information or exclusive updates to a consumer that fits the correct target audience. The main goal of direct marketing is to gain awareness for the business and boost sales. There are many various styles of directing marketing that provide their way to reach the consumer. This can be direct mail, telemarketing, email marketing, text marketing, distributing leaflets, social marketing, and direct selling. Each of these methods has proven to be successful in the past, but a business should use the style that remains consistent with their current statistics, for example, looking at Rockerline Clothing’s conversion rate, 81% of consumers purchase products from the business on a mobile vs desktop 19% of consumers. This indicates that the mobile audience is more beneficial at this moment in time unless Rockerline prefers to have an equal result for mobile and desktop. The next section discusses each direct marketing style to aid in the decision on what the optimal method would be on this occasion.

**Direct mail**

During the covid-19 pandemic, businesses struggled to carry on as usual as they were not getting as many or if any customers at all. However, some companies had been able to adapt and sustain to current changes. This was due to suggestions from (Royal Mail Group Limited, 2022), which suggest that “Mail continues to evolve and adapt to changing times. In an increasingly online world, it hasn’t just survived – it’s thrived.” This can be achieved by sending letters or flyers to the consumer, providing details on new products or discounts. As an example, for Rockerline, this could be in the form of a catalogue, that is sent out monthly, that consumers could look through, refreshing their minds on possible products to purchase online. Supporting this suggestion, it was shown that “Between 2015 and 2016, the percentage of people purchasing after receiving direct mail rose from 26.7% to 36.1%.” A follow up of statistics from stating (JICMAIL, 2018 - 2020) “During the first lockdown, a record 96%\* of mail was engaged with. Frequency of exposure to mail was at its highest and online behaviour, driven by mail increased by 70%”. Rockerline could have attempted the direct mail strategy during the pandemic in an attempt to boost sales preventing closure. Regardless of the pandemic, direct mail has been a successful marketing strategy. This is used widely by large businesses, such as IKEA, fast food chains and plenty of local businesses. The most frequent you may receive personally could be takeaway menus. Proving the credibility of direct mail even further, businesses may post coupons to a consumer address to assist with business traction. This relates to 1989 and is still used to this day. (Shoemaker, 1989) has stated “that households most likely to redeem a direct-mail coupon were ones that were most likely to buy the brand in the first place.” Continuing with their findings (Shoemaker, 1989) implied that “direct mail coupon promotions lead to a significant increase in incremental sales and that incremental sales are greater for higher face value direct mail coupons”. This provides multiple suggestions for Rockerline for the use of direct mail, from a catalogue of clothing to coupons to be used in-store.

## Telemarketing

The concept of telemarketing is a subdivision of electronic marketing that focuses on communicating with the buyer via mobile phone calls or over the internet. This can be inbound calls as well as outbound. (Begam, 2020) Has expressed the importance of telemarketing inside their report as it states, “Telemarketing applications have an enormous positive impact on small business processes. There is a very important relationship between retailers and customers.” This could be due to the outcome of a call, which could lead or aid towards a sale or assist the consumer. Although this provides a positive impact, there are multiple adjustments required if Rockerline would like to implement this path, such as telemarketing is very demanding and will require constant daily calls out to potential or existing buyers this will require possibly more staff or an external company, which could lead to less revenue if unsuccessful. As well as if these calls are handled incorrectly this could prevent any future sales with the buyer and finally as (nibusinessinfo, 2022) states “telemarketing can be resented - particularly when dealing with business-to-consumer customers, and when calls are made in the evenings.” There are many factors why telemarketing calls are resented, as a consumer could be busy, not interested or considers the convocation an unsolicited call, so it could more feasibly social media platform for users to communicate directly or other methods for direct marketing. This is because running a social media platform with up-to-date posts about products and providing a service, where buyers can communicate or even by a messaging service, provides a valid way to maintain engagement between the buyers. By doing so the business can make a buyer feel connected to the company and maintain a frequent buyer. But most effective times to use telemarketing is for business-to-business purposes.

## Email marketing

This style of direct marketing sends promotions and updates about the business via email on most websites. When creating an account for an online store, there can sometimes be a setting to request what method of communication the buyer would prefer for promotions and update purposes. In the report conducted by (Xi (Alan) Zhang, 2016) a study has shown that 82% of business to business and business to consumer companies use various email marketing techniques. These techniques are still used frequently to this day. During the report, it was suggested that “the number of emails sent by the retailer has a non-linear effect on both the retailer’s short- and long-term profitability”. Continuing these findings it has been stated that in 2013 the return of investment from email marketing increased from £24.93 to £38 per each £1 spent but comparing this to 2018 statistics it has shown that (The DMA, 2018) “Email marketing’s return on investment (ROI) is up to £32.28 for every £1 spent, from £30.03 the previous year.”

Although there is a slight decrease in the return on investment, email marketing had still maintained a profit. Rockerline could use this strategy to notify buyers about possible future promotions by implementing an option for buyers to click when purchasing an order rather than the creation of an account. The reasoning behind this is to aid in tracking relevant data to what type of product the buyer could potentially be interested in as (Hartemo, 2016) suggests “E-mail marketing can be used to empower consumers by sending e-mails based on permission, by making consumers active participants in the communication process and by making e-mails relevant for the recipients.”

## Text (SMS) marketing

SMS marketing is very similar to email marketing but is sent to a mobile phone this can be a costly process done at a large scale frequently. With technology moving forward, there is a possibility that this method could be altered to decrease costs and increase the return of investment in the process. This is supported by (Šljukić, 2021) who has researched and produced a prototype build to assist with low-custom campaigns. The concept of the prototype is displayed inside (Figure1).

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure 1 Activity diagram for the prototype (Šljukić, 2021)

The report has proven to be successful but was stated that (Šljukić, 2021)“Further practical implementation is needed to gain full insight into potential problems or additional benefits and development possibilities of the proposed solution.” Comparing email marketing to SMS marketing, it was discovered in 2013 by (Philipp Reichhart, 2013) that “the response rate for e-mail coupons is higher than the response rate for mobile text message coupons, but text messages yield a better conversion rate and a higher number of total purchases.” In my opinion, using both mail marketing and SMS marketing simultaneously provides a sustainable balance to the ROI. Rockerline should provide multiple options to the consumer, so they can opt-in and out of different methods to their liking.

# Direct marketing applications

Many applications can assist businesses with the implementation of direct marketing. Some applications are built into third-party e-Commerce services like t-mill but are limited to only being used on the platform and may not even include all possible direct marketing methods. The issue behind this is that these strategies are not unique and will be repetitive to other businesses on the platform. However, this could assist start-up businesses with a gradual introduction to using direct marketing methods, larger and more established businesses should gradually transfer from third-party e-commerce platforms and become independent when the opportunity is there but doing so will make require finding a new way of providing direct marketing.

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generated with low confidenceLooking at external direct marketing services such as Emarsys, it is clear that they provide a wider range of direct marketing styles, as they focus on omnichannel marketing. This company has worked alongside Puma, Gymshark, CUE and many others as shown in (Figure 2). The process of the multichannel strategy is run by opt-in statements, if the user has agreed to a specific style the allocated notification will be sent.

Figure 2 Example of Omi marketing (emarsys eMarketing Systems GmbH , 2022)

Continuing the research of Emarsys, there has been plenty of successful results boosting sales and ROI for example Love Bonito increased their overall online revenue by 15% within 6 months of implementing Emarsys into their business. The head of growth (Zhou, 2020) from Love Bonito provided a statement on Emarsys website that states “Emarsys has enabled us to create automated personalized customer journeys across email, on-site, and paid channels. Their automation capability has powered our rigorous A/B testing, achieving 1a 5% revenue uplift on these journeys. Beyond that, the product recommendation capability from Emarsys is very robust in generating personalized recommendations for our online visitors, resulting in a 3x higher conversion rate from Emarsys-powered recommendations.” Although Emarsys does not provide a set charge fee for implantation it is possible to request a demo and receive a quote at further notice the key positive of using Emarsys is the fact they provide a unique omnichannel marketing strategy.

#### Following up on this suggestion,

This implementation was discussed with Rockerline and was expressed that the company does use and has access to direct marketing applications. It was not disclosed what current techniques Rockerline uses, but after assessing all possible forms of direct marketing, it has been suggested that Rockerline should use an omnichannel marketing strategy that provides the consumer their ideal method of communication. This is supported by (Das, 2021) stating that “All digital marketing channels have strength and weakness both. Thus, use of integrated channels is best way to reach end goals.” Looking more into how the consumer views the business, the method that provides the highest traffic is social media. This could be due to Rocklerline’s recent advertising campaigns, this may alter once implementing these features.

# The benefits of a positive website performance

It is a known fact that an easy-to-follow website provides a better user experience. The goal here is to assess the existing structure of the website and implement new data accordingly the goal behind this is to boost the Google rankings of the company currently the company name ‘Rockerline’ does display at the top of the google search results but checking the search results ‘eco-friendly sports clothing UK’ Rockerline is nowhere to be seen attempting to achieve this goal may bring new buyers to the business and possibly provide a bigger reach to the public eye. Continuing with the website structure there is a broad number of possible alterations that can potentially assist the google rankings this could be the name of products, the description of products or possible keywords. Using applications that assist with SEO will be crucial for this and may need maintenance to see if the current keywords are still viable after a period.

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generatedAfter using an application called lighthouse to assess the performance of the website the results on (Figure3) displays that the SEO has a perfect score at this current time as well as a stable response time of 2.1seconds.

Figure 3 Rockerline website Results (Chrome deveolpers, 2022)

However, when viewing the performance of the website on a mobile (Figure4) it has been discovered that the SEO score is 97 with an interactive response time of 11.4 seconds this result has drastically lowered the overall performance from 89 to 28 this may have been one of the reasons behind the ranking decreasing.

Text

Description automatically generatedFigure 4 Rockerline Mobile Site performance (Chrome deveolpers, 2022)

Looking into mobile site response times (An, 2017) suggests that the average time is 22 seconds, (An, 2017) follows this up with  “53% of visits are abandoned if a mobile site takes longer than three seconds to load.” During the study a neural network was created to assess the probability of a user leaving as shown in (Figure5) the quicker the response time the less likely a user will leave.

Graphical user interface, text

Description automatically generated

Figure Probability of bounce (Google Research 2017 Findings, 2018)

Looking at possible ways to reduce load times for sites compressing content used on a page can drastically reduce the overall load time this is supported in the same report from (An, 2017) “Simply compressing images and text can be a game changer—30% of pages could save more than 250KB that way.” And followed up the report by providing a website link for testing a page’s performance named test my site, this application works similar to the lighthouse but does not provide SEO rankings.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, there are plenty of eCommerce strategies Rockerline could implement, but at this current time the key points to focus upon are omnichannel marketing and improving response time on the mobile site to increase performance, this was brought to Rocklerline’s attention with the intent of further studies to compare and assist with future updates. At this current time, the suggestion is to compress all content on the page to possibly reduce load time future studies will be required to display the results of the compression, if load times are still underperforming a deeper dive into this topic will be required.

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