



PRE-READING ASSIGNMENT NO. 3 (4 pages)

WEEK 2 SYLLABUS: CUSTOMER VALUE CREATION

(The Essence of Digital Transformation)

DIGITAL MARKETING: BACK TO HUMAN AND INTEGRATED BASICS

Digital marketing is currently the most used term for marketing activities that heavily rely on digital channels, tools, and tactics. Digital marketing is grown out of online marketing, and both are often used interchangeably. Some still talk about Internet marketing since it's the advent of the Internet that we started doing online and digital marketing.

The Evolution of Digital Marketing

The main Internet applications which businesses and people started to use, particularly the World Wide Web and email, today are still essential in digital marketing. They also gave birth to phenomena such as web design, e-commerce, conversion optimization, online content marketing, search engine optimization, and advertising, online advertising (webvertising), web analytics, and email marketing, to mention some.

As new channels and devices were added and the thinking about online marketing evolved, new forms of digital marketing popped up: *mobile marketing, social media marketing, inbound marketing, online influencer marketing*, you name it.

The advent of new devices such as smartphones and Internet of Things devices also has an impact on how existing digital marketing tactics evolve. This is driven by the context in which such devices are used, their possibilities, and the purpose they serve.

Many years ago, digital marketing tactics and offline activities started to be combined since people don't live in a digital world alone, and distinguishing between online and offline in our lives really is a bit archaic. Marketers started talking about **bridging** the physical and digital worlds, **multi-channel** marketing, and **omnichannel** marketing as this occurred.



The Essence of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing today seems far more complicated than it used to be. There are thousands of new tools, and marketing technology (martech) is omnipresent. There is an increasing proliferation of channels and devices. People use several channels, devices, and means of interaction across their buying journey, and the overall time they directly or indirectly experience, see or engage with a brand. Customer-facing activities and solutions get combined. Back office activities get digitized and aligned with the front office as organizations **digitally transform** with the customer experience in mind. And people continue to adopt ever more digital devices and services which in turn give birth to new tactics, from video marketing to specializations for specific channels and services (Facebook marketing, Instagram, whatever). The tools marketers use have grown into often complex systems with quite a bit of automation, lots of data coming from different sources and places, and the demanding digital customer isn't always easy to serve. As a result of all this and more, many organizations tend to get a bit lost in this digital marketing jungle and forget the essence.

Looking at the why behind your online marketing actions and what people want you to know is the essence of digital marketing. The “**why**” drives the digital marketing actions that deliver value to your customers, brand, and bottom-line. And to make it work, going back to the essence and getting from behind dashboards and tools will be crucial. Asking the right questions and keeping in mind the human dimension remains key, regardless of channels, tactics, and tools.

What Matters In Digital Marketing

It's clear that in the coming years, several digital marketing techniques will be increasingly used by several organizations. It's been happening for years, and in times of crisis, even more so. Although this isn't just the case for online marketing, the fact that digital marketing tactics generally lend themselves better for measurement, metrics, and faster automated actions, is one of the reasons for this.



Yet, digital, data, automation, and digitisation alone don't suffice to build a business and grow a brand over time. As per usual, context matters and some companies or even industries can realize more with digital marketing than others. Regardless of the importance of digital marketing, it's clear that the 'physical' and offline component is important and one must be cautious not to forget that people inform themselves and live in the **"real world"**, even if **"digital"** continues to have an increasing role in our lives. Physical means of marketing and advertising, such as outdoor displays and ample devices in shops and even our homes are increasingly digitally-enabled as well, making the digital marketing space bigger than ever.

Shiny new inventions (from smart speakers and chatbots to data and technologies) often make us forget that digital marketing is marketing and **basics do matter**. We overlook the fact that behind each email address and set of customer data are real people and it's essential to look at marketing in a holistic or integrated way. Adding to the risk of forgetting the essence is the fact that becoming specialized in one or more areas of digital marketing can be quite a challenge and requires much experience. It's important to have specialists, but you need that holistic approach to keep asking the right questions and making the right choices.

With each different digital marketing channel, we saw a new generation of experts to optimize the impact of marketing via that channel. Yet, marketers have started to realize that you can't do everything. And you don't need to. Go back to basics and understand what your customer wants you to know. Prioritize and focus on the human essence behind digital marketing and marketing in general. And for each tactic, channel and piece of content you create or action you take, ask **"why"** and what's the **"value"**.

People are overwhelmed by brands that say they care. They want you to show you care and engage in a valuable and meaningful way. The challenge is to find the proper approach, depending on your goals, budget, and situation, making sure you cover short-term priorities, and you don't fall in the trap of overlooking the long-term impact of a strong brand. Understand what works for your business and customers and dare to challenge the seemingly obvious and best practices.



The Difference Between Digital Marketing, Online Marketing and Internet Marketing

Are there differences between digital marketing, online marketing, and Internet marketing? You could say that **Digital Marketing** is the umbrella term in a sense. Digital marketing refers to all marketing efforts that use digital channels, devices, platforms, and tools, regardless of whether they are connected to the Internet or not and regardless of place, time, and carrier. Remember those outdoor displays, in-store devices, etc. **Online Marketing** and **Internet Marketing** are more synonyms since “online” in this context simply means connected to the Internet. And that’s essentially what distinguishes it from digital marketing. Let’s keep it that simple.

A simple example by way of illustration will explain this. What are you doing when using a digital device that captures specific customer data in a store and sends it to an application in the cloud, which then triggers a marketing action via the Internet? Although we’ll use the term digital marketing, our main focus initially will be on online marketing disciplines and related disciplines that make them work well or better, that form the backbone of most digital marketing strategies.

Other terms that were used over time include interactive marketing, in analogy with interactive advertising. Other terms were invented to emphasize that digital marketing enabled more of a dialogue and two-way communication, whereas several forms of traditional marketing and certainly advertising did not. Engaging with a print ad wasn’t that easy. That **two-way dimension** became even more emphasized with the advent of social media and other channels and tools enabled by so-called **Web 2.0** technologies. All of the sudden people became **empowered** and other digital and non-digital channels and devices enabled a “**dialogue**”. Today the interactive and two-way aspects are stressed less and the discourse shifted to data-driven and automated marketing.
