CURRENT TRENDS IN DIGITAL

MARKETING

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ABSTRACT:

Marketing is a dynamic concept. It adapts according to the current market trends. It has become a multidimensional aspect, ever since people have started to realize its importance. First developed as the Production Concept (from the beginning of capitalism), which fixated on the production of goods only. Today, it majorly focuses on Customer Experience and Satisfaction.

Among new marketing trends, Digital Marketing is one of the flourishing marketing strategies. It has escalated during the time of Covid-19 as everything has switched to the online mode. From local vendors to the education system everyone is using a digital approach to reach their customers. This paper answers the question on what is digital marketing? And, what are the emerging/new digital marketing trends?

Keywords: Marketing, Marketing Trends, Digital Marketing, Customer Experience, Digital Marketing Strategies.

INTRODUCTION:

Digital Marketing is an act of selling and promoting products or services through channels like social media, SEO, Email, and mobile applications. In simple words, digital marketing is the marketing of products or services through digital platforms. The improvement of digital marketing, during the 1990s and 2000s, has changed the way brands and businesses use technology for marketing. Digital marketing has successfully incorporated itself into marketing plans and everyday life, as people have increasingly switched to digital services instead of visiting physical stores. Digital marketing campaigns have become prevalent, employing different blends of affiliate marketing, content marketing, influencer marketing,

search-engine-optimization (SEO), search engine-marketing (SEM), campaign marketing, data-driven marketing, e-commerce marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, display advertising, e-books, and optical disks have become commonplace. It also includes non-internet-based platforms like mobile phone (SMS and multimedia messaging services (MMS)), callback, and televisions. Though digital marketing exists for the past few years, the role and importance it has increasingly noticed/felt during these pandemic times.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To define what is digital marketing (?).
- To understand and discuss the current trends in digital marketing.
- To identify the benefits of each digital marketing trend and how they help reach more customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Internet is the most influential tool for businesses (Yannopoulos, 2011). In addition, it is so powerful that it can help revive the economy and can create tremendous opportunities for governments to function in a more efficient manner (Munshi, 2012). The introduction of new technologies has created new business opportunities for marketers to manage their websites and achieve their business objectives (Kiani, 1998).

Digital marketing is simply described as 'achieving marketing purposes by applying digital technologies.' Digital marketing is the use of technology to help marketing activities to improve customer knowledge and match their needs (Chaffey, 2013). Online advertising is a powerful marketing vehicle for building brands and increasing traffic for companies to achieve success (Song, 2001). As the world is developing, companies have realized the importance of digital marketing. For businesses to be successful they will have to combine online with traditional methods for meeting the needs of customers (Parsons, Zeisser, Waitman 1996). Today, Digital Marketing can play the role of knight in shining armor for all local as well as international

businesses. But this is possible only if the managers are fully aware of using the communication strategies to engage the customers and enhance their experience (Mangold, 2009).

As the relation of the young audience's accessibility to social media and usage has increased dominantly, strategic integration approaches must be adopted in an organization's marketing communication plan (Rohm & Hanna, 2011). Content Creation as a tool for digital marketing has successfully created an impact for increasing sales revenue, especially for products where customers can read reviews and write comments about personal experiences. For businesses, online reviews have worked well as part of their overall strategic marketing strategy (Zhang, 2013). A study revealed that online tools are more influencing than traditional methods of communication (Helm, Möller, Mauroner, Conrad, 2013). Good user experience increases in self-esteem and enjoyment when they adapt to social media which itself is a motivating sign for businesses and marketing professionals (Arnott, 2013). Web experiences affect the mental process and enhance the online buying decision of consumers (Cetină, Cristiana, Rădulescu, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The paper is based on Exploratory Research. This paper only intends to explore and discuss the current trends of the digital market and not the problems associated with it.

CURRENT TRENDS IN DIGITAL MARKETING

Below are listed some of the trends in digital marketing:

1. INTERACTIVE WEBSITE:

An interactive website is an Internet page that uses different kinds of software to create a rich, interactive experience for the user, i.e., it simplifies the user to be actively engaged with the site.

BENEFITS:

- Creating interactive websites can help to attract the target group and serve as a great help to the brands.

• It enables the user to spend maximum time on the website while exploring all the options available.

• Brands providing experience must opt for such marketing techniques. • Brands that are offering products with different visuals can also use this technique for displaying a 3D object of their product.

• Creating innovative websites will help brands in enlarging their customer base.

EXAMPLE:

• **HBO:** HBO developed an interactive website for the promotion of their superhit TV series Game Of Thrones in August 2016. It served as a treat for the fans as they were able to search for their favorite character and cast a vote on which one will lead the great wars in their upcoming series. The campaign was a massive hit. About 17 million people cast their votes. They even released a short video named What We Believe | #GOT2016 which was able to garner more than 500k views and the "campaign trail song" garnered more than 112K plays!

2. USER-GENERATED CONTENT:

In simple words, content is created and posted online by the user about the product in the form of images, videos, text, and audio. That is why User-generated content (UGC) is also known as user created content. Why does it work so well? Because people trust each other more than they trust brands. According to various surveys, it was found that more than 60% of the people trust or get influenced by other people's comments on pictures or photos taken by them than those taken by the sellers.

BENEFITS:

• It turns a loyal consumer into an automatic campaigner of brands.

• UGC can build engagement among various communities.

• It can acquire more relevant and authentic information from regular customers. • It decreases the companies' marketing cost and makes the customer feel more valuable. •

Also, plays a major role in increasing brand awareness and expanding the user base.

EXAMPLES:

- **Pillsbury:** Pillsbury makes use of contests for its online recipes. What's great is that once the contests are over, the brand can collect the material to use for future marketing services.

- **The Goodreads community:** It's like a social platform for book lovers, where people can create online and local events to meet up and talk about books. It seems like the majority of the Goodreads website is created and moderated by users. Goodreads even has a submission tool made available to the people for writing their own stories.

- **Apple:** Apple was quick to realize when they started losing potential customers because of average camera capabilities for photos shot in low light. Without any delay, Apple came up with a campaign saying #ShotOniPhone to regain their customer's trust. This campaign was for both, newbies and pro-users wherein they had to take pictures under low light and later post them online. Apple then posted these shots on YouTube under the same campaign name. The internet flooded with so many magnificent everyday shots shared by the users. This not only regained the trust but also made the consumer feel valued.

3. AUGMENTED REALITY:

Ever wondered why Byjus' educational videos look so interesting? Or how Google just brings virtual objects into real life? Thanks to Augmented reality (AR). A technology that enables users to overlay virtual 3D objects onto their physical world with a mobile device or any other device with a camera. It is an experience of the interactive real-world environment. Though, it does not create a new reality; it simply integrates the virtual world with the real world. Using AR, people can interact with virtual objects in the real world.

Today, companies have already started to apply AR in their marketing campaigns, but with the purpose to stay ahead with the trend. This aspect overlooks the motive to give consumers new experiences. That is why many companies are not able to apply it successfully.

To implement AR features successfully, it is important to keep in mind the purpose and the need

of the consumer. It is possible that if an AR campaign is designed and implemented correctly, it will be able to reach and engage customers at a very high level.

BENEFITS:

- It is new and a fresh technique to apply.
- It can change the overall consumer experience.
- AR can influence the buying behavior of a consumer drastically.
- It can be applied to any field i.e., e-commerce, education, or any product-based company. Companies like Google, Lenskart, and IKEA have already implemented it successfully.

EXAMPLES:

- **Google:** "Sometimes the things we want to search for are hard to describe in a search box. Other times, words are precisely the thing we're interested in. Just point your camera and Google Lens can help" - Google. Google started giving their consumers ARVR services through Google lens, Google Maps, Google Search, few enabled applications that can be downloaded from Google Play Store (Tiktok). It enables the user to place a 3D digital object from the website on chrome or search directly to the users' space. It enables the user to learn and understand anything from Space to aquatic species like whales, and sharks, with a greater sense of context and scale.
- **Lenskart:** Lenskart is one of the first companies to use AR technology and named it "3D Try-On" available on Android, iOS, and web platforms. This feature captures the user's face from all angles and then analyzes the user's facial structure. And then when the user wishes to try on a frame, the AR feature visualizes the frame on the user's face from all angles thus giving him/her an idea of how the frame might look. The frame alignment is near to perfect, thus providing the user a real-life-like experience of trying on different frames. Lenskart used this very AR feature as a marketing technique and invited users to try on more than 5,000 styles of eye wears available on its platform

4. VIRTUAL REALITY:

Virtual reality (VR), is a simulated experience that can be similar to or completely different from the real world. A person using virtual reality equipment can look around the artificial world, move around in it, and interact with virtual features or items.

BENEFITS:

- Highly unexplored field, so it can bring new opportunities to that table for companies. • Its scope goes beyond TV ads, magazines, and billboards. And, the mindset of the people has changed from wanting to read about a marketing campaign to be shown instead.
- It can increase brand awareness to a great extent.
- It can be a highly successful feature specifically for the real estate, retail, gaming companies, tourism industry, and educational sector.
- But at the same time, brands have to be careful while implementing a VR marketing campaign. If the VR world is not designed correctly and if the consumers do not like it, then it may create a negative impact in the minds of the customers.

EXAMPLES:
- **New York Times:** As we know, VR is a great medium to tell a visual story. A few years back, the New York Times delivered Google Cardboard glasses to all of their most loyal customers to watch a VR film and then did it a few times over with different films

- **McDonald's:** McDonald's offered a simplified VR experience, and made it accessible to the under-12 set. McDonald's managed to create a Happy Meal Box that easily folds into a VR headset. The initiative was inspired by Google Cardboard, with is their motive for offering VR experiences to people in a simple and affordable format. They even mention the instructions on the boxes on how to build their own VR headset at home. They offered consumers to build their own VR headset, which made it accessible for the kids to enjoy the experience in an easy, budget-friendly way.

5. 360° VIDEO:

The 360° Video has been trendy for a while now; marketers have recently started to take advantage of this interactive technology to drive brand engagement. Omnidirectional cameras are used for the recordings so that, during playback, the viewer can control the screen and view the clip in any direction they want. This marketing style is extremely innovative and versatile, allowing users to have an immersive brand experience without a VR headset. A report by Google, states that this technique can increase the chances of viewers taking action by 41% when compared to standard ads.

BENEFITS:

- It encourages engagement and, through this, has over three times the conversion rate of traditional video content and a 30% higher repeated view rate.
- It is clear that your audience is likely to respond better to your marketing efforts if they have immersive, 360° Video content to interact with.

EXAMPLES:

- **Thomson Holidays:** Obviously, it's on everyone's bucket list to see Northern Lights in Iceland. Travel Operator Thomson Holidays captured stunningly the changing lights and movements of Iceland's Aurora Borealis with the help of 360° View. The view can be changed to see the different parts of the sky, just as you would in person. •
Google: Even they have enabled this feature for Google Maps. This enables the user to see a particular place or monument in a 360° view.

6. PHYGITAL MARKETING:

This concept is the assimilation of the two most important aspects of digital and physical marketing to enhance the customer experience. Phygital marketing is the integration of digital and real-life experiences, brought together to benefit the consumer. It is about effortlessly

integrating marketing efforts across the physical and virtual spaces. It is important because phygital marketing is proving to be essential to the survival of brick-and-mortar retail especially in the time of the COVID-19 crisis.

BENEFITS:

- It integrates both physical and digital marketing methods.
- It helps to increase the reach and the market.
- Can be applied to any field from education to retail.

EXAMPLES:

- **Nike:** Nike has always been experimenting with their marketing techniques, to give their consumers different experiences. Nike has been experimenting with a new type of pop-up style, neighborhood-centric store, since the summer of 2018. They have designed this store in Los Angeles considering the local data analysis of their LA NikePlus members. The insights were later on informed to the members like what products are offered in-store, and the development of store-specific product lines. With the Nike app, members can redeem in-store rewards, book a product trial session, reserve products for pick-up, and access curbside returns by texting the store.

CONCLUSION:

As we discussed above, the current digital marketing methods we can say that digital marketing has paved the way for each sector to reach their consumers specifically during Covid-19. It has adapted according to the time. Digital marketing in combination with traditional and virtual methods has turned to be the strongest tool for even brick-and-mortar sellers. We can conclude that right implementation and, digital marketing can help vendors in increasing customer reach and brand awareness.

FURTHER SCOPE OF STUDY:

As we say marketing is a dynamic field and it changes according to time, so do the digital marketing methods. They change according to the time. Different situations like pandemic, brings

in the scope for further study and Innovation.

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