

Original Paper

A Theoretical Approach to Digital Marketing and Usage Channels

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Abstract

Today, new inventions are constantly emerging. These inventions affect almost all areas of our lives and change our lifestyle, mentality and perspective on events. The Internet, and with its digitalization, is one of the important inventions that brought about such changes. Thanks to digitalization, companies have had the opportunity to market their products or services more quickly. Thanks to digitalization, customers and/or consumers can more easily have detailed information about the products that can meet their needs, taking into account criteria such as the price, quality, features and quality of the products they are looking for. In this study, the most used channels in digital marketing, which are the top roof of online marketing activities: digital platforms, mobile applications, social media sites and search engines are emphasized.

Keywords

Digital Marketing, Digital Platforms, Mobile Applications, Social Media Sites, Search Engines

1. Introduction

The information storage capacities of computers were quite large in the 1980s. This size of digital storage was one of the major inventions of its time, allowing businesses to store customer information, create a database of customers, and use this data when needed. This opportunity not only made it possible to process information better and faster but also ensured a relationship between customers and manufacturers. However, the processing of this information is rather slow compared to the speed and technology used as it is today, and it did not provide the desired efficiency. By the 1990s, businesses began to perceive even more than the phenomenon in data processing created customer recognition and new marketing sales opportunities. This brought a new concept, “digital marketing”, to the marketing

literature. So much so that in 1994, the first clickable banner ad called “You Will Do” was prepared, and 44% of those who saw the ad clicked on the ad in the first four months (Desai, 2019).

Since the 2000s, the development of digital marketing has also changed the way companies and brands use technology. Thus, it has become common for people to visit digital spaces instead of visiting stores. In 2007, with the concept of marketing automation, multi-channel marketing and personalized products began to be marketed to customers. Customers were quick to adapt to this new marketing, but the same was not true of technology. The proliferation of devices in the 2010s led to a sudden growth in access to digital media. Firms tried to reach customers using search engines, websites, social media and e-mail channels. Instead of visiting stores, people have started to prefer digital platforms that are digital and included in daily life. Thus, marketing campaigns have become both widespread and more efficient (Khan, 2016).

2. Digital Marketing

Along with what age brings, people spend most of their time in digital environments. Therefore, businesses have considered making product or service offers in these environments as a great opportunity. Digital marketing, which can also be defined as the shopping world where people can buy products or services in the digital environment, called e-commerce, is the process of performing marketing activities for brands, products or individuals in digital environments (Çoşkun, 2016).

Digital marketing is a form of marketing done online (Stoll, 2019). Digital marketing is the interaction of customers with business partners through electronic devices. Digital marketing, which can be defined as the use of digital channels to attract and retain customers, is the activity of conducting marketing activities through online technologies (Serohina, Petryshchenko, & Andrljic, 2019). Kotler defined digital marketing as a kind of marketing side of e-commerce, as manufacturers communicate via the internet (Kotler et al., 2011). In digital marketing, a brand makes use of marketing activities holistically while giving information about an advertisement or product. Digital marketing has undergone a conceptual evolution over time, introducing brands, retaining old customers, acquiring new customers, and all the opportunities that digital channels are used to do so (Kannan, 2017).

Digital marketing, social media, search engines, web, email, video, smartphones, etc. It can be defined as making advertisements and product sales related to products and services using online and offline marketing strategies (Puthussery, 2020; Dahiya & Gayatri, 2018; Yalçinkaya, 2018). Digital marketing allows companies to reach their customers cheaply. What is more important than this is that it changes marketing strategies (Chaffey & Smith, 2013). Because marketing activities take place in a digital environment. This differentiates digital marketing from traditional marketing and provides more advantages (Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2001).

3. Channels Used in Digital Marketing

Digital marketing's most frequently used channels; are mobile applications, websites, social media sites and search engines (Chaffey & Smith, 2013; Dahiya & Gayatri, 2018; Yalçinkaya, 2018).

1.1 Digital Platforms (Websites)

Digital marketing, which has been heard frequently in recent years and has a significant impact on people's lives, has led to innovations in many fields, especially in the communication sector. In parallel with this, marketing has also gained a digital dimension. Although social media is the most important field of study, it is not possible to think of digital marketing outside of these channels. There are certain strategies used to increase the visibility of websites and the experience of users (Saçan & Eren, 2021). It is known that marketing has become digital thanks to the integration of these strategies and technologies (Kannan, 2017; Smith, 2011).

With technological developments, consumer behaviors and habits are also changing. The change in people's lifestyles thanks to mobile devices has caused companies to allocate budgets for digital platforms. Thanks to digital platforms, companies can reach customers. Thanks to these channels, businesses can reduce their costs while promoting products or services to their customers and/or consumers. Because, thanks to digital platforms, businesses get rid of physical space, warehouse, etc. expenses and provide the transportation of products to the consumer without the storage costs (Ryan, 2016).

Digital marketing has been moved to digital platforms (Companies' websites, Youtube, Facebook marketplace, etc.) with the use of digital media, digital data and technology (Chaffey, 2019). Businesses evaluate and use these platforms as a marketplace. Thanks to these platforms, the customer base expands and access to the product becomes easier.

The websites contain information such as photos, videos (Demirci & Uğurluoğlu, 2020), order systems and prices. Potential customers can access products, information about these products, contact information about the business and information about how to order the product through the websites of the businesses (Sanhceç, 2003). Digital platforms, especially Web sites, fulfill a number of marketing tasks such as reaching potential customers, ensuring their satisfaction and maintaining customer loyalty (Hoşgör, Gündüz Hoşgör, & Özsarı, 2016). It can be said that this situation makes digital platforms very important in digital marketing.

1.2 Mobile Apps

The Internet has been used by companies for commercial purposes for half a century (Kannan, 2017). With the increasing use of mobile applications, smartphones and tablets, companies have started to use them as digital marketing tools. Thanks to these devices, individuals can easily access and use the social networks of institutions and organizations via mobile platforms (Safko, 2012). Thanks to mobile applications, companies can share information about their products or services with messages, pictures, audio and video (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). Scharl, Dickinger and Murphy, mobile applications; stated that it is a marketing tool that can be used in the process of promoting products or

services via mobile devices (Scharl, Dickinger, & Murphy, 2005).

Mobile applications are software that runs on tablets, computers and smart devices (<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/2953/mobile-application-mobile-app>, E.T.: 13.12.2021). Especially the widespread use of smartphones has increased the importance and necessity of mobile applications (Demirci & Uğurluoğlu, 2020). Sometimes there are mobile applications of well-known brands (blue, kikili, festive, etc.), and sometimes there are also businesses (closet, let go, Trendyol, etc.) that have emerged only thanks to these applications.

1.3 Social Media Sites

Today, people actively use social media. In addition to information exchange, people who direct people's lifestyles see social media as an indispensable part of life. Businesses have also tried to turn this development into an opportunity and have tended to increase their sales by communicating with large masses (Solmaz & Görkemli, 2012).

Social media sites, especially Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, offer companies the opportunity to communicate with their customers in full and/or real-time. Thanks to this opportunity, businesses can establish a closer relationship with their customers. In this way, companies were able to acquire new customers through suggestions and advertisements, while at the same time increasing their relations with their own customers. In this way, companies have the opportunity to improve their product or service, on the other hand, they ensure that customer feedback is read by everyone (Heindl, 2015).

1.4 Search Engines

Another channel that is frequently used in digital marketing is the search engine channel. A search engine is a software that provides access to the product and information about the product in digital environments (Kesen, Şenol, & Yanar 2008). Search engines (Google, Yaani, etc.) classify websites based on keywords and present the information they want to the searchers. Consumers generally seek help from search engines when they do not know the websites they want to find or the businesses that sell the product they want to buy (Yurdakul & Mat, 2011). Since businesses know this, they want to be seen in the first place in search engines related to the products they sell (Yalçın & Köse, 2010). Because customers who do not have enough knowledge about businesses or products are often influenced by the sites they see and view for the first time and connect with those businesses. This situation has caused businesses to place their product promotions in search engines in the form of advertisements and has created a new digital marketing channel used to reach customers.

1.4 Conclusion

Digital marketing is a type of marketing done through the internet. This type of marketing means that all standard marketing activities are done on virtual platforms. Digital marketing provides cost and time advantages that arise both with the development of technology and as a result of economic crises. Thanks to digital marketing, businesses save on many cost items such as warehouses, marketing expenses carried out by employees, etc. This situation provides businesses with better competitive

power and more affordable price advantage, as it reduces costs. Within the scope of the research in the literature, the most frequently used channels of digital marketing; are websites, social media sites and search engines. Thanks to these channels, customers can more easily access the product they want to buy, information about the product and all kinds of information about the company selling the product. The same situation provides benefits for businesses. These benefits include the ability of businesses to promote their products at less cost and to reach a wider customer base. In this case, it can be said that it would be beneficial for businesses to give the necessary importance to digital marketing and the channels used in digital marketing.

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