

RECENT TRENDS IN MARKETING 'ON-LINE MARKETING' ISSUES AND CHALLENGES



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Introduction

In the rapidly changing social economical, political, environmental and technological situations, the world-over companies are under tremendous pressure to respond to the changes. The changes are more accelerated with the onset of Liberalization, Privatization & Globalization. Today is not like yesterday and tomorrow will be different from today. Traditional nature of Trade, Commerce & Industry is going to replace by new one and information technology (IT) is playing a predominant role in it. Competitive economies produce more wealth than highly regulated and planned economies. So, many countries are privatizing state owned companies for the benefit of competition. A whole world people became the customer of business. The no hold barred competition had given rise to marketing challenges before business. The market with choice and ready availability as its crucial feature forced the companies of India to resort to the best marketing practices as adopted in the highly advanced countries. If we want economic development in freedom and responsibility, we have to build it on the foundation of marketing. Without marketing, production & development of any business is not possible. Marketing is backbone of business.

Due to changes in information technology, use of Internet has become common feature of economy. The new competitive situation has changed the situation leading to new global life style. Computer based information, use of internet and intranet services, web wisdom, ERP; thus widening the increasing nature & scope of e-marketing. The market place is not what it used to be. Marketing is typically seen as the task of creating, promoting & delivering goods & services to consumer and businesses. This marketing is now done electronically. E-commerce is now doing the exchange of products, services, information & payments through the medium of computers or electronic networks.

The term Electronic Commerce describes a wide variety of electronic platform such as sending of purchase orders to supplier through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), the use of FAX and e-mail to conduct transaction, the use of ATM, EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale). Smart Cards to facilitate payment & obtains digital cash & use of Internet & online services. Firms know, how to market over the Internet & new multimedia with a tremendous potential to achieve competitive edge. On-line marketing is now playing important role in this competition. E-commerce, Retail Management, Wholesaling, Brand loyalty, changing buyers behaviors' are some of the recent trends in marketing. But in this paper only 'On-line Marketing' is taken into consideration.

Meanings of online marketing

Company efforts to market products and services and build customer relationships over the internet. A vast public web of computer networks that connects users of all types all around the world to each other and to an amazingly large “information repository”. The web has fundamentally changed customer’s notions of convenience, speed, price, product information, and service. As a result, it has given marketers a whole new way to create value for customers and build relationships with them.



Definition of online marketing

In its simplest form, the term online marketing refers to using the power of Internet advertising to generate a response from your audience. Also known as Internet marketing or web marketing, online marketing is used by companies selling goods and services directly to consumers as well as those who operate on a business-to-business model.

Ways to conduct online marketing

Website

Website help customers to compare prices and services of particular products offered online to choose the best quality product at competitive price. Companies can open their own website to give information about products and services given by the firm.

E-Mail

A Company can encourage prospects and customers to send the questions, suggestions and even complaints to be company via e-mail. The company may also develop Internet based electronic mailing list. Using the lists online marketers can send out customers; newsletters, special products and promotion offers based on purchasing histories reminders of service requirements or warranty renewals or announcement of special events.

Forums, News Group & Bulletin Boards

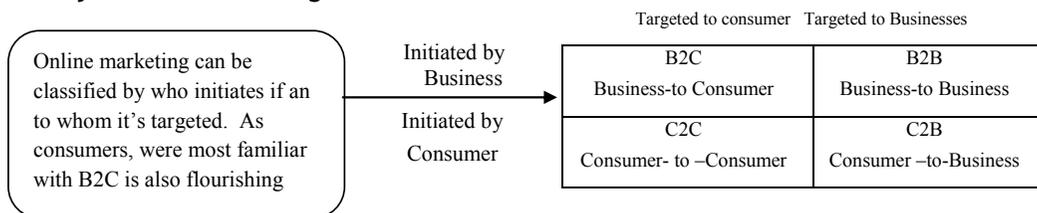
Business may participate in or sponsor Internet forums, news groups and bulletin boards that appeal to special interest groups.

Web-Communities

These are commercially sponsored web-sites where members engage themselves on line & exchange views on issues of common interest. On-line buyers join interest groups to share product related information having an important buying influence. Marketers can do on-line marketing by creating an electronic presence on the internet; placing ads online, participating in forums, news groups, bulletin boards and web communities and using e-mail and web-casting.

Online Marketing Domains

The four major online marketing domains are



Business-To-Consumer (B2c) Online Marketing

Business selling goods and services online to final consumer. The popular press has paid the most attention to business-to-consumer (B2C) online marketing—businesses selling goods and services online to final consumers. Today's consumers can buy almost anything online—from clothing, kitchen gadgets, and airline and railway tickets to computers and cars. Online consumer buying continues to grow at a healthy rate. More than half of all U.S. households now regularly shop online. Last year, US. Consumers generated \$175 billion in online retail sales, up 22 percent from the previous year.'

By 2010, the Internet will influence a staggering 50 percent of total retail sales. • Thus, smart marketers are employing integrated multichannel strategies that use the Web to drive sales shier marketing channels. The Web site also offers several tour packages for tourists and runs special trains for foreign tourists, taking them through various heritage sights and familiarizing them to the glorious past of India. A number of other theme-based packages are available, such as "adventure," "wildlife," "hills," and "spiritual.")

Business-To-Business (B2b) Online Marketing

Businesses using business -to- business websites, e-mail, online catalogs, online trading networks and other online resources to reach new business customers, serve current customers more effectively, and obtained buying efficiencies and better prices. Most major business-to-business marketers now offer product information, customer purchasing, and customer-support services online. For example, corporate buyers can visit Sun Micros'ytems' Web site, select detailed descriptions of Sun's products and solutions, request sales and service information, and interact with staff members. Some major companies conduct almost all of their business on the Web. Networking equitant and software maker Cisco Systems takes more than 80 percent of its orders over the Internet.

Consumer-To-Consumer (C2c) Online Marketing

Online exchanges of goods and information's between final consumer, and communication occur on the web between interested parties over a wide range of products and subjects. In some cases, the internet provides an *excellent* means by which consumers can buy or exchange goods or information directly with one another. For example, eBay, Amazon.com Auctions, Overstock.com, and other action sites offer popular market spaces for displaying and selling almost anything, from art and antiques, coins and stamps, and jewelry to computers and consumer electronics.

Consumer-To-Business (C2b) Online Marketing

Online exchanges in which consumers search out sellers, learn about their offers, and initiate purchases, sometimes even driving transaction terms. The final online marketing domain is consumer-to-business (C2B) online marketing. Thanks to the Internet, today's consumers are finding it easier to communicate with companies. Most companies now invite prospects and customers to send in suggestions and questions via company Web sites. Beyond this, rather than waiting for an invitation, consumers can search out sellers on the Web, learn about their offers, initiate purchases, and give feedback. Using the Web, consumers can even drive transactions with businesses, rather than the other way around. For example, using priceline.com, would-be buyers can bid for airline tickets, hotel rooms, rental cars, cruises, and vacation packages, leaving the sellers to decide whether to accept their offers.

Benefits of Online Marketing

- The buyers can get the information about product and services at any time, at any place without wasting time, money and efforts in visiting stores.
- Customers can get the information about companies, products, competitors and prices without leaving their office.
- Absence of intermediaries develops faith of the buyers on the sellers.
- Customers don't have to face salespersons and they also don't have to wait in line.
- Marketers can know how many persons have visited online site and help them to improve their offers & ads.
- Marketer can reach customers all over the world at a very low cost & in a very short period of time.
- Communication on one to one basis at a very low cost & data collection is possible.
- Marketer can develop close relation with customers who assure repeated orders clearly. Marketers are adding online channels to find, reach, communicate & sell. There is no limit on advertising space. Every firm can afford it. Information access & retrieval are fast compared to overnight mail & even FAX. Shopping can be done privately & swiftly.

Limitations of Online Marketing:

- Customers can not physically examine the product before purchasing which is need of customer.
- A good customer does not want to buy online with their debit & credit cards because they feel that hackers may misuse theirs cards.
- In India customer don't trust online marketing.
- In several countries including India, there are problems of delivery. This may be due to poor infrastructure in terms of roadways and airways so there are often delays in getting products ordered online.
- In India there is low density of PC's & Internet. Internet log on is of poor quality.
- Online marketing is neither for every company nor for every product.
- Internet offers millions of web sites. Many sites go unnoticed and even visited sites must capture visitors' attention within eight seconds or lose them for another site.
- Consumers' worry about privacy, companies might make unauthorized use of their names and other information, such as selling it to others.

Problems Faced by Small Business on Online Marketing

Marketing effectively online is a challenge. As technology evolves at a rapid pace and new tools are introduced to the market on a daily basis, it's hard for constantly wired millennial to keep up, let alone small brick and mortar business owners who spend little time on the web. It's easy for small businesses to take the crucial first step and design a website with Base Kit. However, challenges still exist in spreading awareness of their online presence and attracting customers to their store on the virtual streets. Here are the 11 biggest problems faced by small businesses marketing online.

Failing to recognize the opportunities and the benefits that can be derived from exploiting them. For an online marketing plan to be effective, it is important to thoroughly assess the market and know what tools are available. For many small businesses, the powers of Face book and Twitter are not apparent without digging deeper with some research.

Lacking technical knowledge. For a small business owner who is not web savvy, playing with new technologies can be daunting. It is often easier to avoid the unfamiliar but the best advice is for small businesses to dive in head first and get their hands dirty. Many online marketing tools are easy to learn to use, with a steady learning curve allowing for more advanced use of the tool as small business owners become more technically literate.

Lacking time. It does take time to learn how to use different tools and to explore the world of online marketing. However, it is time well spent for small businesses investing in the future of their business. Once online accounts have been setup, maintenance takes far less time.

Lacking money. Like most things, online marketing is easier when there is plenty of money available to use on it. Lack of funds is an easy excuse for small businesses wanting to avoid dipping their toes into the world of online marketing. Fortunately, there are many tools and services online that are completely free. The lack of funds is a potential opportunity to get creative with what is available.

Seeing marketing as a quick fix. Online marketing takes time to see results. It is a relatively slow process to begin with. However, momentum can pick up quickly once the metaphorical ball is rolling. It is the same situation with content marketing which involves creating, curating and sharing high quality content.

Failing to clearly establish goals. Goals need to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. It is common for small businesses to be too vague when defining what they want their return on investment to be.

Failing to identify what is unique. For small businesses, knowing their unique selling point and using it to differentiate themselves in the marketplace is crucial. Avoiding the temptation of being too general can be the difference between success and failure when marketing online.

Misunderstanding the art of two-way conversation. The nature of online marketing is very different to traditional offline marketing. It involves creating conversation and engaging with customers. This shifted paradigm is often difficult for small businesses to comprehend at first. The online community is receptive to people, not robots.

Failing to establish consistency. Setting up social networking accounts and then leaving them inactive is a recipe for doom. All the efforts that small business may put in will be lost if they are not regularly updating. Keeping customers engaged is key.

Not finding the killer marketing combo straight away. Online marketing requires some trial and error. Sometimes small businesses find that a certain tool is not useful for their business needs. At other times, they may need to adjust and tweak how they are using an online marketing tool. Many small businesses lose heart when they see their social media campaigns not giving them the results that they initially expected. The key is in experimenting and discovering what works best.

Selling before offering any value. Online marketing requires providing value to customers, not just bombarding them with sales pitches. Small businesses often make the mistake of using their Twitter Feed solely for sales and promotions. It is important for small businesses to create valuable content on their blog, share interesting articles on Face book, create conversation on Twitter and so forth. The human element of online conversations should never be overlooked.

Promise and challenges of online marketing. Online marketing continues to offer both great promise and many challenges for the future. Its most ardent apostles still envision a time when the Internet and online marketing will replace magazines, news-papers and ever stores as sources for information and buying, most marketers, however, hold a more realistic view. To be sure,

online marketing will become a successful business model for some companies internet firms such as a Amazon.com , eBay, and Google; and direct marketing companies such as Dell. However, for most companies, online marketing will remain just one important approach to the market place that works alongside other approaches in a fully integrated marketing mix.

Despite the many challenges, companies large and small are quickly integrating online marketing into their marketing strategies and mixes. As it continues to grow, online marketing will prove to be a powerful direct marketing tool for improving sales, communicating company and product information, delivering products and services, and building deeper customer relationships.

Conclusion

With the development in information technology, the marketers will overcome the above challenges. Online marketing is vital in even changing market. In Indian context online marketing is in the beginning stage, for its development, great amount of computer literacy & internet acquaintance is required. To solve the problems of existing physical marketing virtual (sky) marketing is required and e-marketing will fulfill this requirement. Indian customers are more habited and find of to see & physically verify the products, while they are purchasing the product. In view of the rapidly changing competitive global market, enterprises are striving to achieve improvement in performance, customer satisfaction, quality service, security and profitability. This is possible only with the passage of time. Marketing would change with changing situations. It will secure its important position let it be change its nature. It is everlasting, ever-changing & always given new direction for research.

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