

Predictors of Companies Preferences for Adopting a Proposed Marketing Strategy

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Abstract

Digital marketing has become increasingly popular and even a mandatory component of an organization's marketing strategy because it covers the entire range of tools, technologies and communication channels. Digital marketing involves the use of digital technologies to support marketing activities for profitable acquisition and customer retention in a multi-channel process, no matter what the stage of the customer acquisition cycle. Through this article we will look at its importance in a company, the benefits of digital marketing and there will be developed hypothesis to improve the marketing strategy, starting from the current situation.

Key words: digital marketing, marketing strategy, digital technologies

J.E.L. classification: M31

1. Introduction

Online has captured every development market and the focus of business is increasingly falling online. The presentation site is business card, and it must be as professional as possible. Due to the fact that most of the information presented by a brand reach via the internet to potential customers, the online presence must be impeccable. In order to keep up with the online environment, which is constantly changing, we must have a professional presence and know how to adapt to everything new.

2. Theoretical background

Marketing has, over time, been the subject of wide-ranging disputes and deeper theoretical developments. The term "marketing" derives from the word "to market" which means the conduct of a market transaction, namely, to buy and sell. Marketing thus defines the process of market-sharing.

According to the definition formulated by the American Marketing Association. marketing is aimed at "conducting economic activities that direct the flow of goods and services from manufacturer to consumer or user." With the passage of time, this definition has gradually improved, both in terms of formulation and essence.

It is believed that marketing is a social and managerial process through which individuals and groups of individuals get what they need and what they want by creating, offering and exchanging products of a certain value.

Marketing has always meant to connect with your target audience in the right place at the right time. Now, that means you need to get in touch with the customer where he already spends much of his time: on the Internet. What are the digital marketing tools: company website, blog posts, e-books and studies, infographics, interactive tools, social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn,

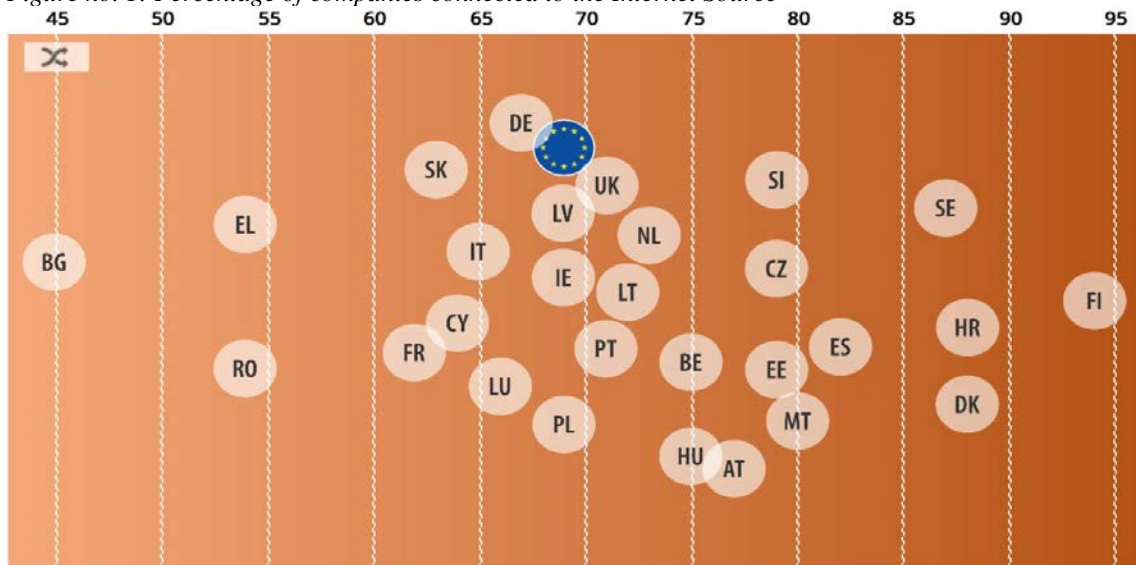
Twitter, Instagram etc.) and reviews), online brochures and brand assets (logos, fonts, etc.). As far as digital marketing tactics are concerned, one of them is SEO - optimization on search engines. The first step is to have a site. should think about optimizing content so as to be as high as the search engine results. This means that the site the company owns increases its chances of organic trafficking. Another marketing tactic is the delivery of content in order to generate brand consolidation, traffic growth, lead generation or customers. There are other effective digital marketing tactics, and one of them is Affiliate Marketing, which is beginning to take shape in Romania as well.

In this article, there were proposed 5 hypotheses that represent the stages of a marketing strategy model. These assumptions were analyzed by compiling a questionnaire that was distributed to companies in Bucharest, Romania, and the results were interpreted using the SPSS analytical tool. From the correlation matrix, the links between these 5 hypotheses and the company's tendencies to use some of these hypotheses were highlighted.

3. Current situation

According to Eurostat, only 3% of EU businesses did not have access to the Internet early last year, with the highest percentage being in Romania (16%) and Greece (12%). Of the businesses with Internet access, the vast majority (95%) used a fixed network to go online. However, the mobile network is still more common: in 2016, this type of connection was used by 69% of businesses, compared to only 28% in 2010. As I said, without access to the Internet, Romanian companies are deprived of one of the more efficient methods of promoting and increasing sales: digital marketing. There are a few reasons why digital marketing is mandatory for any kind of entrepreneurial initiative. First of all, people spend twice as much time on the Internet as they did 12 years ago. Then the way we do shopping has changed, which means offline marketing is not as effective as it was. And when we say that a business must have access to the Internet it means that it must also have a website.

Figure no. 1: Percentage of companies connected to the Internet Source



Source: <<http://www.perceptum.ro/antreprenorii-romani-si-marketingul-digital-de-ce-firmele-nu-au-strategii-online/>> [Accessed 10 April 2018]

Olson (2018), along with his team of researchers demonstrate that companies which have a compatible marketing strategy with their business strategy have better results regarding their performance.

Hansen (2017) studies the factors that do not allow a firm to develop competences. He establishes a triangulated isomorphism which can diminish the retention of competences.

Angell (2017) proposes a program that is able to generate a marketing strategy based on events that are correlated with customers preferences for a product.

Hulland (2018) developed a research based on a survey to evaluate if people which are in charge with marketing are using the most evolved practices.

In his paper, Camilleri (2018) examines the tools which are used to promote an item and it is concluded that an integrated marketing communications plan must be based on the 6Ms.

Customer experience management is a resource according to Homburg (2017), that enables a company to understand their client's perspective and strengthen the relation with them.

Another author, Payne (2017), outlines the priorities regarding a marketing relationship and there is also indicated the link between marketing relationship and marketing management.

Digital marketing is also influenced by systematic literature reviews as Rowley (2017) indicates in his research through a meta-analysis.

4. Hypothesis development

The landscape of platforms, tools and performance indicators in digital marketing has become extremely complex. Differences in approach and suitability in each industry, industry, campaign type make it even more manageable. The costs of an ineffective campaign are not neglected either. That is why it is essential for companies to have a clear digital marketing strategy.

In order to improve the marketing strategy, it is hoped to implement within the companies five hypotheses, which will be formulated below. The degree of current use of these is determined by means of a questionnaire.

H1: Correlation of business objectives with digital marketing to improve marketing strategy

Often, companies without a digital marketing strategy do not have clear strategic goals for what they want in the online environment. Their focus may vary greatly from one campaign to another. Also, the results, the platform mix, the tracked indicators. But the most important aspect is that, in the absence of a digital marketing strategy, the correlation of online goals / results with business objectives / results is deficient.

H2: Building a relevant and consistent online presence to improve marketing strategy

Only through a strategic approach, with clear directions and action plans declined then at the level of consistent tactics, one can build a strong presence of the company in the online environment. On the other hand, by monitoring competitors and listening to customers, the company can understand the dynamics of the behaviors of these two categories and can make a strong proposal.

H3: Integration of traditional and digital marketing channels to improve marketing strategy

It is common for digital marketing activities to be implemented separately from traditional marketing, be it a digital marketing specialist or a separate team. This is easier to do in this way, but it is not very effective. But digital environments work best when integrated with traditional environments when the tracking indicators on these channels complement themselves and especially when their mix is optimal.

H4: Measuring results relevant to top management to improve marketing strategy

Digital marketing platforms provide a multitude of indicators and entire tables of results in real time. But managers in corporate leaders do not understand their meaning, they do not have time to review them, and therefore do not make decisions on their own. A digital marketing strategy makes it possible to identify business indicators relevant to top management. It can then be translated into the specific marketing indicators and reporting them to the company's executive directors.

H5: Continuous improvement of consumer experience to improve marketing strategy

The explosion of digital environments has empowered consumers. They have at their disposal countless channels of information, comparison of offers, selection of suppliers, etc. Providing reviews and feedback has become something very common for digital consumers. The Digital Marketing Strategy makes it possible to allocate the resources for the most important touchpoints in the buying experience and to implement campaigns that respond to the real expectations of the customers.

5. Measures and Results

Context of research: A study was carried out on the basis of drawing up and distributing a questionnaire. It was designed to test the proposed assumptions. It is hoped that the analysis of the questionnaire will determine which hypotheses are currently used by companies and their correlations. The questionnaire was completed by companies from Bucharest, Romania, which are part of the IT field. Micro-enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises were targeted for the study. Currently, this city is one in which the IT industry is in a continuous development and offers numerous opportunities both for setting up new companies and for communicating with foreign and multinational companies.

Sample: Data was collected from a sample of 28 IT companies (N = 28) between February and April 2018. All companies returned the completed full questionnaire. His respondents were both female and male, who were involved in the development of marketing strategies. The analysis could thus be based on valid responses to establish correlations between hypotheses.

Data: The companies' answers are interpreted using SPSS Statistics Version 25 provided by IBM. Through this analytic tool it is build the correlation matrix. The Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = total disagreement, 2 = disagreement, 3 = neutral, 4 = agreement, 5 = total agreement) helped to determine how each hypothesis helps to develop a marketing strategy.

Results: It has been noticed that all companies choose to develop marketing strategy for more than one hypothesis. Correlation is a statistical method used to determine relationships between two or more variables. The correlation coefficient is a quantitative value describing the relationship between two or more variables. It varies between (-1, +1), where extreme values assume a perfect relationship between variables while 0 means a total lack of linear relation. If the value of the correlation coefficient is between 0.5 and 0.75 there is a correlation of average intensity, if there is an intense link between 0.75 and 0.95 and if it exceeds 0.95 is a relatively deterministic relation.

Figure no. 2. Correlation Matrix

		Correlations				
		Correlation of business objectives with digital marketing to improve marketing strategy	Building a relevant and consistent online presence to improve marketing strategy	Integration of traditional and digital marketing channels to improve marketing strategy	Measuring relevant results for top management to improve marketing strategy	Continuous improvement of consumer experience to improve marketing strategy
Correlation of business objectives with digital marketing to improve marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.064	-.150	.359	.005
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.750	.456	.066	.980
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Building a relevant and consistent online presence to improve marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.064	1	.134	.056	-.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.750		.504	.783	.622
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Integration of traditional and digital marketing channels to improve marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.150	.134	1	.306	.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456	.504		.120	.935
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Measuring relevant results for top management to improve marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	.359	.056	.306	1	.484*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066	.783	.120		.011
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Continuous improvement of consumer experience to improve marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	.005	-.099	.016	.484*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.980	.622	.935	.011	
	N	27	27	27	27	27

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

After interpreting the correlation coefficients within the matrix, it is observed that the hypothesis H1 is closely correlated with hypothesis 2 and in deterministic relation with the hypothesis H5.

The H2 hypothesis is closely correlated with H1, H3, H4 and H5.

Companies using H3 tend to use both H2 and H5, with an intense correlation between them.

6. Conclusions and further research

Even if a company has enough marketing resources, it can be wasted by duplication, lack of integration, tracking irrelevant indicators, inefficient campaign implementation, etc. The best way to align business goals with digital marketing goals is to develop a strategy. This will provide clarity in communicating with the company's management on this topic, providing managers and executives with support for online initiatives, and reaching relevant customer categories to achieve the expected resource efficiencies.

In conclusion, the results taken from the correlation matrix indicate that all proposed assumptions are used by companies, but not all at once. In the future, it is hoped that all these hypotheses will be implemented to improve the existing marketing strategy of each company that responded to the questionnaire. The situation will be reevaluated to see the new indicators. The proposed model can be expanded and improved through a market analysis and the use of appropriate analytical tools to showcase our current trends.

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