

# SWOT Analysis of e-Marketing for e-Business

Kelly Steer, Lalit Garg, Vijay Prakash, Vipul Gupta

**Abstract**—e-businesses are becoming more and more popular with time, mainly due to the range of opportunities offered by the internet and other technologies. These new technologies have provided marketers with new ways of promoting their products or services to the public. This paper compares the traditional marketing media with the new ones and looks at marketing tools which can be used to create a successful e-marketing strategy. The paper also analyses different e-marketing mediums using Porter's 5 forces and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

**Keywords**—e-business, e-marketing, strategy, digital marketing, social media, Porter's 5 forces, SWOT analysis

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing has always been an important aspect to every business. Since the great evolution of the internet, a lot of concepts had to evolve from the traditional way of doing things. It also applies for marketing, as the internet has introduced various new opportunities in this domain [1]. The web is now indispensable in both business and everyday life as we use it for a lot of things [2]. This era also touched businesses and that is where the term e-Business was born. Colin Combedefines e-business as "the use of the internet to network and empower business processes, electronic commerce, organisational communication and collaboration within a company and with its customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders [3]."

The remarkable increase in popularity of such businesses, and the advancement of technology, leads to various innovations in marketing. Strauss and Frost defines e-Marketing or Digital Marketing as "The use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals [4]."

E-Businesses are now using various mediums available on the internet to interact with their audience and market their brands, products or services to the public. These mediums help businesses to widen their reach further and to target better their audience. Companies that have adopted e-business have a faster product development cycle, enabling them to respond quickly to market needs. They take advantage of being market leaders to increase revenues before their competitors can enter the market.

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Rest of the paper is organised as Section II discusses the traditional media marketing. Section III presents E-Marketing Media. Literature review is presented in section III. Marketing models for e-Marketing strategies are discussed in Section IV. Section V presents developing e-marketing strategy. Section VI presents the discussions followed by conclusion in section VII.

## II. TRADITIONAL MEDIA MARKETING

Traditional Media marketing have to depend on other media to promote their products or services to the public in by using some of the following media are considered as the "traditional media"

- **Television:** Television has long been used as a form of advertisement to persuade and inform the viewer visually and verbally [5].
- **Radio:** Radio can be considered the oldest form of informative marketing. The listeners or users do not need to see or read anything. Radio commercials are generally short and straight forward and listeners are not distracted [5].
- **Billboards:** This type of advertisement exists from a long time and effective enough due to their ability to catch people's eyes and convey a message easily [5].
- **Corporate gifts:** Companies hand out various items with their logo printed on them and reminds the receiver of the company [5].
- **Corporate fairs or expos:** Fairs and Expos are organised by businesses to show off their products or services to the public. This allows companies to reach a larger number of people who might not have known about the products before visiting the fair [5].
- **Flyers:** Flyers can be created by using exciting headline, compelling offer and call to action to make the advertisement more effective [6].
- **Cross- Marketing Campaigns:** These are cheapest way to advertise something and can be combined with flyers, contests and many more. Cross marketing campaigns actually relates with the services which are not provided by the company itself but promoting as an offer with the product [6].
- **Direct Mail:** Although it is very expensive than the online marketing, but it can covers

thousands of advertisements in a day [6].

- **Posters:** It relates with the large pictures of product and any other offer if combined. Just need to stick large posters on walls or hoardings [6].
- **Brochures:** Brochures are designed by keeping in mind about the end user customers, presentation of products/ services, idea and logical sequence behind the advertisement [6].

### III. E-MARKETING MEDIA

The concept behind e-marketing is connecting people (marketers)with other people (consumers) to build relationships and ultimately drive sales [7]. The only differences are the mediums that are used to interact with the public, and understanding the technical tools being used. Further, e-marketing is not only selling products or providing services through IT but also consists of strategic model to get brand value and provide customer satisfaction [8]. E-marketing provides other mediums to do so and some of these are outlined in the following sub-sections.

#### A. Social Media

Businesses are using social media platforms to promote their products or services while interacting with their audiencesome famous platforms include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many others [8-10].Customers tend to engage with a company’s page on the platform by sharing their experience and writing their opinion on the brand. Although this can sometimes have a negative effect, it helps other users to decide whether one should trust on experience shared on the social media.

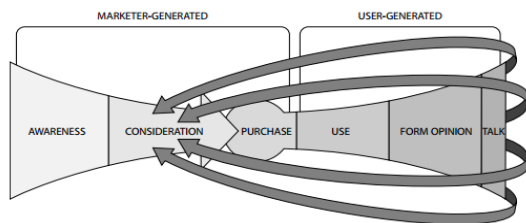


Figure 1: Social Feedback Cycle [12]

The Social Feedback Cycle helps to connect the experience of customers from the past to the current trend. As shown in Figure 1, the Market- Generated process also known as the ‘purchase funnel’ mainly consists of three phases such as Awareness, Consideration and Purchase. The main purpose of awareness phases is to aware the customer regarding the product using any of the traditional marketing media. Consideration phase is used to consider the quality of product and compare it with the similar products available in the market. Based on the awareness and consideration, consumer can finally purchase the product by comparing its qualities etc.

User-Generated process consists of Use, Form and Talk as the major phases. After purchase of the product, users use the product, forms their opinion about the product and finally talks about the product. When the users discusses and talks about the product on the social media then it creates a cycle to the

Market Generated Phase. In this way the future customer uses the experience of customers from the past. Additionally, most of the platforms provide various insights to the company to help them understand their audience and hence target them better. These insights include:

- **Demographics:** society-based information like gender, age, nationality etc.
- **Activity:** information about the times people are most active
- **Content:** information about the most popular content used by the business.

#### B. Websites

The website should include information about the business and the products or services they offer and also focus on how to convert traffic to leads and opportunities. These conversions include online purchase (a sales transaction), to an online query (lead generation), to subscribing for the business’s online newsletter, or whatever else the businesses decide is appropriate to their customers [8].

#### C. Online Advertisement

Targeted online advertising is another effective way of promoting a brand, used by various businesses. Popular channels of such advertisements include:

- **Google Adwords:** when searching on Google, advertisements appear on the right-hand side of the search and sponsored advertisements across the top as shown in Figure 2. Businesses pay for these advertisements based on a cost per click or cost per impression basis.This works by specifying a set of keywords which are matched to user’s searches and when the specified keywords are used, the advertisement is shown.

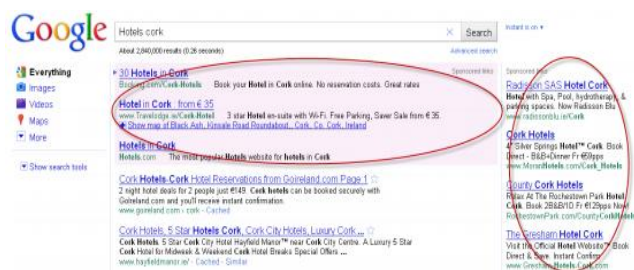


Figure 2. Google Adwords [13]

- **Banner Advertisements:** A banner advertisement appears on a website that is clickable [13]. When the banner is clicked, the user is redirected to the company’s website, or a specific page.

### IV. MARKETING MODELS FOR E-MARKETING STRATEGY

A marketing strategy is used to combine marketing goals of a company into comprehensive plans. To assist marketers in creating marketing strategies, popular models such as the Marketing Mix, the Porter Five Forces and the SWOT analysis have become widely adopted [14-15].All of these tools help businesses to evaluate what they have to offer, while assessing the competitiveness of the market.Even though the internet had a great impact



on marketing, the concept is still the same and these tools can still be used to help develop a good strategy for the business.

### A. Marketing Mix

The marketing mix model is used to depict what the business has to offer in terms of products or services. This is often portrayed by the 4 P's as depicted in Figure 3.

- **Product:** This part deals with the products and services offered by a business. Internet has allowed for a wide range of new products from tangible products to digital goods and consultancy. Digital products such as software and music could now be sold online by using the internet as the distribution medium. This part of the marketing mix model helps marketers to analyse the product being offered and identification of unique selling proposition [14-15].



Figure 3. The Market Mix Model [14]

- **Price:** Customers could easily access pricing information on the internet. This allows customers to compare prices offered by different retailers due to which companies had to decrease prices as much as possible. Value can be added by offering a better service and hence customers might be willing to pay a higher price for a better experience. Marketers need to outline these value-added characteristics so that they could attain more customers by achieving better marketing [14-15].
- **Placement:** Digital products and services are no longer restricted to a specific geographical area as the internet provides access to a global marketplace. Tangible products are also not bound to a specific area as one could find various shipping channels which transfer goods around the World [14-15].
- **Promotion:** The Internet has offered another place of promoting businesses' products and services by offering a range of tools which allows for the marketing of such goods. These tools or media were outlined in the previous sections and include social media, online advertisement, and many more [14-15].

### B. Porter's Five Forces

Another model used by marketers to analyse the industry is Porter's Five Forces as shown in Figure 4 which specifically helps to determine competitive intensity and attractiveness of the market [17, 18]. The internet affected the analysis of these forces in various aspects and hence marketers need to take these in consideration when creating an e-marketing plan.

- **Power of Suppliers:** The bargaining power of suppliers is the contrary to power of customer when looking from the business's perspective.

When this power is high, the suppliers have the overall control over the business. This is likely to happen when dealing with unique products or services or when there a limited number of suppliers.



Figure 4. Porter's Five Forces Model [16]

- **Power of Customers:** The bargaining power of customers is when buyers have more power than the seller [19]. The higher the bargaining power, the higher the ability for buyers to bring prices down. For example, when a business has a small number of customers then it is very easy for the customer to switch to another product or service. The former affects e-Businesses positively as the internet provides a broader range of potential customer from around the world. On the other hand, the latter might be more achievable over the internet as the competition is increased. Marketers need to analyse this bargaining power to come up with ways to improve their service and promotion to attract and influence customers positively.
- **Threat of New Entrants:** The easier new rivals can enter in an industry, the easier it is for prices and profits to decrease [18]. The internet has low barriers to entry and hence e-businesses need to find ways to offer uniqueness and better service for their customers. Having strong barriers to entry helps e-businesses to have a better position in the market and hence have an advantage over new entrants.
- **Threat of Substitute Products:** This threat deals with the possibility for customers to turn to substitute products [18]. A substitute product or service can be any other product or service which serves a similar function. Hence e-businesses thrive to add unique value to their offerings to have a competitive advantage. When developing an e-marketing strategy, marketers need to analyse substitute products so that they could come up with unique offerings so that the business could stand out over other competing firms.
- **Competitive Rivalry within Industry:** All the mentioned four forces constitute in the competitive rivalry within the industry [18]. Analysing all these areas provides a profound study of the competitiveness between rivals in a given market. Hence this creates a mean of competitiveness. This therefore intensifies the rivalry between competitors and marketers have to be very innovative to reach as many customers as possible.

### C. SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis as shown in Figure 5 is another way to understand the business and the market by



analysing the business's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats [20, 21].

- **Strengths:** Here, one needs to depict the main strengths of the business. The inclusion of the internet adds various strengths to the business as follows :
  - 24/7 Operations
  - Globalisation
  - Fast and effective selling
  - More marketing media.

Outlining these strengths help marketers to focus on them and attract more customers. Promotions could be based on strengths outlined in this section.



Figure 5. The SWOT analysis [21]

- **Weaknesses:** This section outlines the main weaknesses of the business. Internet also adds multiple weaknesses to e-business and include the following:
  - No direct interaction with customers
  - Shipping costs increase product costs
  - Non-technical people might not want to buy online

These weaknesses with others must be taken care of the marketers could mitigate them as much as possible. During the development of the strategy, marketers could plan ahead as to minimise these weaknesses.

- **Opportunities:** The business's opportunities are outlined in this section. The opportunities might be bound to a specific industry. The internet itself also provides several opportunities to e-businesses. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Internet users are increasing with time.
  - Social media awareness is increasing and making it easier to market products
  - Business intelligence offers various insights and analytics which helps target people better when applied to marketing campaigns

These opportunities are helping e-businesses to improve their services. Marketers need to remain on the lookout for new opportunities to proceed with them and hence have an advantage over other competing firms.

- **Threats:** It is very important for businesses to outline and assess threats to their business so that they can find ways to mitigate them as much as possible. Threats could sometimes also be triggered by the internet, for example:

- Threat of new entrants as outlined in the previous subsection
- Changes in technology might incur further costs to change an e-business strategy

Other threats exist for specific industries and hence one need to expose as much of these as possible, to assess their significance and find ways to recover from them. Marketers need to outline these threats so that they could plan their strategy in a way to offer more value and hence mitigate these risks as much as possible.

## V. DEVELOPING AN E-MARKETING STRATEGY

E-businesses need to plan effectively to achieve prosperous tactics and hence reach their goals. The analysis of the market and the industry of e-business through the marketing models outlined to develop a better structured and optimised marketing plan. Once the acquired knowledge is at hand one could come up with the main content of the strategy.

### A. Objectives

Every e-marketing strategy or plan must have a set of objectives. These objectives normally depend on the business needs and some possible objectives include raising awareness of a brand, increasing business profit and improving customer retention.

### B. Competitor Awareness and Target Audience

The analysis done in previous sections help to identify competition in the industry. Benchmarking against such competitors could also help to understand the environment in which the business is operating.

Identifying the target audience is also important when developing an e-marketing strategy. Knowing who are the prospective customers, helps to target them better by having specific promotion to that particular sector. This normally involves customer segmentation and assists marketers to choose the right tactics for the plan. By analysing characteristics from the marketing tools outlined, marketers could come up with various profiles of targeted audiences who might be willing to buy the products or services offered.

### C. E-Marketing Media or Tactics used

Once the main objectives outlined the business knows about its competitors and target audience. Marketers need to come up with a plan on how to achieve the mentioned objectives. The media outlined in the beginning of this paper are some of the platforms or tools that might be used to achieve those objectives. It is very important to conduct some research and then to keep informed about new technologies which might help the business to perform better. Choosing the right media and tactics is vital for a successful strategy and these are unique to every scope. The marketing tools outlined in the previous section help to choose the media required based on the characteristics of the business.

Hence, one also needs to plan how the e-business is to measure its success by assessing the performance of the e-marketing strategy and identifying areas of improvement. Since this is



to be done on online tactics the internet provides various tools which helps to convert data into knowledge. For example a website's heat map is used to depict how users interact with specific web pages and content. These tools provide various opportunities to the business as they provide ways to acquire further knowledge and hence achieve better marketing.

**D. Budget**

Finally, the e-marketing strategy includes a budget which estimates the costs needed to execute the marketing plan. Different objectives and tactics are allocated a fixed amount of money which helps to have a definite amount that could be spent. Although a budget is sometimes hard to create, it is important for the business to have a clear amount of what could one spend? Even though the internet offers various tools for free e-businesses might require additional tools to achieve certain ones. These outlined sub-sections help to develop a successful marketing strategy and marketers need to pay attention to such areas to make sure that the e-business objectives are achieved.

**VI. DISCUSSION**

The previous sections outlined how an e-marketing strategy could be developed with the help of different marketing models and marketing mediums. The tables in the following sub-sections outline the main points of the Porter's 5 forces (Table 1, 3, 5 and 7) and the SWOT analysis (Table 2, 4, 6 and 8) for the marketing mediums mentioned previously.

**A. Social Media**

Table 1: Porter's 5 Forces for Social Media

Power of Customers	Social Media could be used to expand the reach and attract more customers by using the social network. Acquiring more fans helps the business to lower the bargaining power of customers.
Power of Suppliers	Businesses could use this media to learn about new suppliers as well as to keep a good relationship with the current ones.
Threat of New Entrants	This threat might be tremendous and hence it is important to look out for new entrants. Nowadays, businesses start by creating social media profiles to gather information. Further, frequent communication with the audience help to improve the relationship with the customers.
Threat of Substitute Products	Once a product is on the market, other companies will try to mimic the product and offer other similar ones to substitute them. Once again social media could be used to look out for these kinds of products. The platform could then be used to outline unique selling propositions of the company's products.
Competitive Rivalry within Industry	This type of media provides businesses with a competitor's contacts. Analysing competitors help businesses to add unique value to their offerings, so that they could stand out as unique out of others.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis for Social Media

Strengths	Social media provides better way to target and communicate with the business audience. Further, it help businesses to attain new customers as well as retain
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	loyal customers.
Weaknesses	The information shared on the platforms is available to the public and hence could be seen by competing brands. This might impact the business as competitors could use detailed information and news for their own good.
Opportunities	This medium is still evolving and new trends are continuously coming out. This provides businesses with a lot of opportunities that businesses must be on the lookout for.
Threats	Comments and reviews from the public should be well managed and communicated. Social media affects the reputation of the brand, and this could be easily damaged by bad comments and reviews on these platforms.

**B. Website**

Table 3: Porter's 5 Forces for Websites

Power of Customers	Enabling online sales help to acquire customers globally this is known to lower the power of customers. Additionally the website consists of information about the company which helps to provide a better understanding to the customers.
Power of Suppliers	The website is visible by suppliers across the globe and hence it is the formal point of attaining new suppliers.
Threat of New Entrants	Normally, new entrants in a market do not offer full-blown functionality and sales on their websites. This could be used as an advantage over them by offering better services online.
Threat of Substitute Products	Websites have increased the power of threat significantly as one could find substitute products easily all over the World. Therefore, marketers need to find ways how to add unique value to their offerings so that they could stand out as unique from others.
Competitive Rivalry within Industry	Competitors would likely look at what the business is doing in terms of events and even pricing. Websites expose this information to everybody and hence it is essential to keep an eye on competitors.

Table 4: SWOT Analysis for Websites

Strengths	Websites are the main point to provide detailed information about the company and its offerings. E-commerce websites also provides a 24/7 operation.
Weaknesses	Pricing information is available publicly which could also be seen by competitors. Further, selling online incur shipping costs which increase the product cost.



Opportunities	Having an e-commerce system also provides various opportunities in respect to globalisation.
Threats	Web technology is constantly evolving, which further might incur costs to keep the website up to standards.

**C. Email Marketing**

Table 5: Porter's 5 Forces for Email Marketing

Power of Customers	Email marketing offer businesses have a more personal communication with their audience a more formal and private manner. This type of communication allows customer retention and further helps to keep down the power of customers.
Power of Suppliers	Newsletters could also be sent to suppliers to know about the business. Suppliers might want to invest more in the business, if the business is using good strategies with their customers.
Threat of New Entrants	New entrants would not start off with this type of marketing due to their limited contacts base. It is therefore beneficial to use this type of marketing as a competitive advantage over the start-ups.
Threat of Substitute Products	Private emails could be used to communicate confidential information such as special offers which entice customers to stick to a particular product. Additionally, sending targeted email to group of people help to offer and include information specific to them. This helps to offer better service in hope to retain customers.
Competitive Rivalry within Industry	Email marketing is a more private way of communicating things. It is therefore important for businesses to take an advantage on this fact, to communicate offers and news which are more confidential or targeted.

Table 6: SWOT Analysis for Email Marketing

Strengths	Email marketing allows for private and targeted marketing. It is also a cheap marketing medium when compared to others. Responses and interaction to emails could also be easily tracked by available software.
Weaknesses	Emails could be filtered as spam which therefore would not have the desired impact. Marketers should be attentive when creating emails to avoid this as much as possible.
Opportunities	Various software are being released which help with the automation of creating the content, targeting people, sending the emails, and analysing the responses.
Threats	B2C companies might not receive a great success from this type of marketing, since customers might abandon their emails, and are more prone to use other mediums such as social media.

**D. Online Advertisement**

Table 7: Porter's 5 Forces for Online Advertisements

Power of Customers	Online advertisements help businesses to reach more people based on their searches. This will also reach people who might not have heard about the brand before. Therefore this type of medium help to keep the bargaining power of customers low.
Power of Suppliers	Various suppliers could also learn about the business from such advertisements and might be willing to invest in the company.
Threat of New Entrants	Having advertisements visible at the top of a search page would mean that the customer will most likely click on links at the top. This would therefore make it harder for new entrants to compete.
Threat of Substitute Products	Online banners and advertisements could be used to outline unique selling propositions, and hence entice customers to buy that particular product.
Competitive Rivalry within Industry	This gives a competitive advantage over other firms as the business reaches people who might not know about the company. This could also be used to have a listing on top of a search page and hence will most likely be clicked before other competitors.

Table 8: SWOT Analysis for Online Advertisements

Strengths	New customers could be attained from online advertisements. It is also a very effective way of advertisement since a lot of people search online.
Weaknesses	This type of advertisement is not cheap and is typically paid per click. This means that the business has to pay even if the customer does not buy anything after clicking.
Opportunities	Various people are widely using the internet, therefore the reach is constantly increasing. Services such as Google AdWords help to automate this function.
Threats	Other competitors might also be using such advertisements. Therefore it is important for businesses to make use of such mediums to benefit from their returns and have a competitive advantage over other competing firms.

**VII. CONCLUSIONS**

E-marketing revolves around the same concept as traditional marketing. The only differences are the media used for this promotion to take place. The evolution of the internet and technology has provided business with a range of services that can be used to perform better. E-marketing strategies mimic



the plans done traditionally, however, looks at the impact of technology on the tools used. This paper looked at popular marketing models and analysed how technology influenced the way they are studied. Additionally, this paper looked at how these models could be used to create a successful e-marketing strategy. The main sectors of the strategy were also outlined.

As a future work we can also include cultural and social dimensions of e-Marketing [22] including corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication [23-24].

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