

ROLE OF INTERNET IN MARKETING



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Abstract: This paper attempts to understand the role of Internet in marketing process and its implications on business activities and the decisions making process. With the increasing technological advancements the businesses are shifting from traditional methods of marketing to modern methods.

Moreover, with the increasing literacy rate and easy accessibility of technology, the people have started using internet more. Students of schools are often asked to make use of computer & internet more to complete their projects. From school or college students to working professionals being more tech savvy, the usage of internet is not restricted only to a particular age group. This also guides marketing managers to make customer base targeted strategies.

This paper lays emphasis on the various uses of internet in accomplishing marketing objectives and how it helps in better customer penetration. Internet not only helps in advertising products but it is a boon for gathering information regarding needs and wants of the consumers who are spread across the world, which aide companies to know work areas in new products production.

However, there are many reasons because of which internet as a tool of marketing is not considered successful (reasons like- hacking, payment issues, virtual space constraint, lack of technical skills etc.). But the usage of internet marketing has considerably increased over the years. Today many companies are trading over the internet and have started e-business. The data used in the paper is secondary data collected from various online journal magazines and various e-business websites and books.

Keywords: MARKETING, INTERNET, E-BUSIN.

INTRODUCTION:

MARKETING

“Marketing is the business process by which products are matched with the markets and through which transfer of ownership are affected”

Cundiff and Still

Marketing focuses on customer's needs of want-satisfying goods. Emphasis is given on product planning and development to match products with the market. Customer is treated as a king. Thus marketing aims at profits through customer satisfaction.

INTERNET

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link several billion devices worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies.

With the help of internet one sitting in INDIA can easily communicate with the one sitting in another country. Internet provides a communication medium through which two or more people can easily interact with each other without meeting physically.

Internet is the heart of e-business. Internet has made it possible for businessmen to sell their products all over the country without opening its store in each country.

INTERNET MARKETING

Internet marketing is a type of marketing in which the internet and related digital technology is used for accomplishing marketing objectives .All the steps and processes of marketing are done through internet like:

Collecting information regarding taste and preferences of customers.
Advertising products on various websites or through search engines or through pop up ads.
Creating direct contact with customers through e-mail, online chat etc.

With the help of internet the traditional marketing objectives can be achieved in much better way. In this competitive world, marketing through internet can help the business to survive and grow in the market.

ROLE OF INTERNET IN MARKETING

As we know that marketing starts even before the production of a product, the internet helps in researching the product and service as per customer desire. We all know that due to globalisation the culture and the lifestyle of Indian people have been changed by western culture. Therefore, it is necessary that company keeps track on the changing needs and desires of customers.

Internet is an efficient medium through which the needs, wants, choices, preferences and taste of various consumers can be known through various questionnaires, feedback forms. With the help of e-mail address of customers the company can ask them directly to provide feedback on their product or product idea. Thus internet can be used to build long term relationships with the customers. Internet can be used as a research tool for finding changes in the trends of customer's needs and wants. There are various websites or agencies that do online surveys on behalf of concerned companies. There are plenty of websites who sell various kinds of products online like- Automobiles, food, clothes, toys, appliances etc.

Online Sales and purchase of products and services is called E-commerce. There are companies who sell the products through traditional methods i.e. through retail shops (offline mode) as well as through websites (online mode). Companies often use mixture of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, publicity as promotional tool. But nowadays companies have started promoting their products through internet like- Cadbury, Pantene etc.

The companies who only do online business (e-business) and have their own websites also

advertise their products on other websites. Also websites like- WWW.FLIPKART.COM, WWW.SNAPDEAL.COM and WWW.MYTRIP.COM use television, hoardings as promotion tools.

Thus it is very clear that internet plays an important role in marketing but alone internet marketing is not enough. Traditional methods of marketing cannot be neglected completely.

Implications for using Internet as marketing tool

Internet is being used for the various purposes in E-business:

- Surveying through questionnaire.
- Advertising a product.
- Product selling.
- Customer complaints.
- Providing Customer support.
- It helps in international marketing

With the help of internet a company can reach to the masses and also the customers can reach to companies of various countries through websites. Thus internet provides a route of Global reach. Since company can deal with the customers residing across the world without actually going to each place, internet makes the marketing process cheaper. Cost involved in traditional methods of marketing is higher than the methods of internet marketing.

Customers can know about the product at any time with the help of internet even if the office of company is closed. The customers can even purchase the product at any time through websites.

Through email and chat options companies provide the customers with the facility of asking their queries or giving any feedback at any time. Those customers who do not feel comfortable in enquiring through phone calls can also do online chat with the assistance providers.

Many companies keep the track of the no. of visits that a particular customer makes to their websites. Also, how often a customer visits a website can be traced out.

Various strategies that companies use for attracting customers online are:

- Cash back guarantee – in case, if the customer does not like the product then the company will refund the money.
- Cash on delivery- Some companies provide facility to customers to pay when they receive the product at their door step. Thus customers need not to pay in advance for the product ordered.
- Fast delivery- Many websites claim to deliver the products within 2-3 days of the order placed.
- Discounts- Websites like www.jabong.com, www.snapdeal.com, www.myntra.com etc. offers 50-60 % discount deals to attract the customers.

Sometimes people visit websites because of discount offers but sometimes they do not buy even after adding product to the cart. The reason for not buying the product could also be traced by interacting with customers through email, chat or phone.

The reason for non purchase could be:

- Shipping /delivery was not free or high shipping charges
- Discount was not attractive
- The quality of product was not determinable
- The customer queries were not addressed etc.

The major problem that online companies face in promoting their product is to make consumers aware about their products and services. To overcome this problem many companies place advertisements on other major websites that are expected to be seen by most of the people like on www.google.com, www.yahoo.com etc.

Some companies purchase some place on search engines like www.google.com etc. i.e. whenever a customer will enter any keyword related to a product that company sells then the link to the company website will appear on the searched pages by google.com.

For example: if Cadbury Ltd. Purchases some place on ww.google.com with the keyword chocolate. Then whenever people will enter keyword chocolate in Google search engine then the Cadbury

ltd. Website link will appear on the searched pages.

Social networking sites also serves as a good advertising tool.

Facebook and Twitter websites advertise products of various companies. Also, companies have made separate page on facebook for each of their products like- Pantene, ponds, Cadbury chocolates etc. Through these pages, companies try to interact with the people and try to know their views about the product or company. It also serves as a discussion forum among the customers.

PROBLEMS IN USING INTERNET AS A TOOL OF MARKETING

Hacking and Security: Many people do not trust the websites. They feel reluctant in paying the amount through credit/debit cards, internet banking as they feel scared that their account may be hacked by hackers.

Trust: People may not trust the companies. Sometimes people feel, as if they may be cheated by the company. Many questions arise in mind of people like: Will they deliver the product or not? Is it a fake website? Will the product be delivered same as shown in pictures?

Products: People do not feel comfortable in purchasing all types of product through online or websites. Customers do not prefer purchasing expensive products like diamond, gold and products which require personal touch like clothes etc. through internet.

Literacy: Internet marketing is beneficial, only if, aim of a company is to sell the product to educated ones because only literate people can use computers and work over internet. If the target market is rural people then traditional methods of marketing will be used. Likewise there many other limitations because of which e-business is not as successful as non e-business

CONCLUSION

Change is the only key to success. One needs to change itself with the changing environment because the one who do not accept the changes are not able to survive. Similarly, with the changing technology, firms need to accept the changes that are taking place around them if they want to exist in the market. In today's world internet has become a part of everyone's life. People spend more time on internet than television (Earlier kids use to play video games on the television but now they use computers and play games over computer and even online like FARMVILLE on Facebook).

Thus with the changing lifestyle the companies need to change their methods of traditional marketing to online marketing. Internet helps in gathering information regarding latest trends in market of various countries. It makes communication with the customers easy and fast. Doing online business and product advertising are cheaper than doing offline business.

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