

Lecture 3: Characteristics and Dimensions of Digital Marketing

1. Characteristics of Digital Marketing:

Digital marketing possesses several distinctive features that provide marketers with greater opportunities and facilitate their activities. Some of these characteristics include:

1.1 Multiplicity and Integration of Activities:

Digital marketing allows the use of multiple channels. The Internet provides diverse media: a website with well-designed content acts as an integrated foundation; other platforms host banner ads or video-sharing spaces. Constantly evolving formats further expand the marketing landscape. Digital marketing is thus characterized by its openness to multiple, often complementary activities rather than substitutes. For example, search engine optimization (SEO) remains a foundational digital marketing practice and is essential for marketers today. Social media activities do not replace SEO but can enhance search engine positioning.

1.2 Rapid Evolution:

Digital marketing practices continuously evolve alongside technological advances. The integration of technology and marketing reflects the pervasive role of technology in digital marketing activities. Rapid technological developments, particularly those related to the Internet, directly affect digital marketing practices. Historically, the emergence of search engines enabled new marketing practices, such as Search Engine Marketing (SEM). Similarly, the evolution of banner advertising led to the development of web portals, and more recently, Buzz Marketing has been facilitated by video-sharing platforms and improvements in technology and infrastructure, allowing wide-scale content creation and distribution. Most of these practices are linked to the evolution of Web 2.0. Therefore, marketers must remain vigilant for new technologies, tools, or innovative uses, as each represents a potential pathway for enhancing digital marketing activities.

1.3 Multi-Measurement Channels:

Digital channels provide unprecedented measurement opportunities compared to traditional media. For instance, a print magazine advertisement allows tracking only the number of magazine copies sold and estimating ad exposure. In contrast, digital advertising enables precise measurement of impressions, clicks, and conversions at a relatively low cost. Online metrics provide actionable insights that allow marketers to evaluate performance and optimize campaigns in real time.

2. Dimensions of Digital Marketing:

2.1 Attraction (Acquire):

Attraction involves driving traffic to a website and is often the primary concern of online marketers. This dimension focuses on drawing attention to the brand or product and engaging potential customers via diverse digital channels such as SEO, paid advertising, and social media.

To achieve this, a company must maintain a strong digital presence, allowing users to find it easily when searching for the brand, its products, or services. This may include an online store, website, or mobile application. Many businesses now rely on easily installable mobile apps for rapid access. Companies may also maintain social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Google+, Twitter) to showcase products, offer promotions, and engage directly with customers.

There are two primary attraction strategies:

- **Acquisition Strategy:** Combines various paid online methods directly linked to traffic or value generation, such as sponsored links or email marketing campaigns. This strategy often delivers immediate measurable results and allows ROI calculation.
- **Generation Strategy:** Involves methods whose costs are not directly tied to traffic or immediate value, such as SEO or creating social media pages. These activities develop gradually over time; for instance, it may take 1–9 months for SEO efforts to improve website rankings significantly.

2.2 Engagement:

Engagement (or content marketing) refers to users' active participation, interest, and interaction with content or business activities. Engagement is crucial for generating demand and involves creating attention-grabbing content, interactive media, and creative programming. Applications with uninspiring or low-quality content often fail quickly, whereas highly developed, visually impactful content enhances user attention and participation.

Customer engagement involves two main components:

1. Creative programming of interactive media.
2. Providing content of real value to users.

Some companies foster engagement by creating virtual communities or platforms that enable information exchange among users with similar interests, ultimately expanding customer bases and driving sales.

2.3 Retention:

Retention focuses on delivering interactive, valuable content to strengthen customer relationships. It includes ensuring repeat visits, providing dynamic and unique content, and cultivating dedicated digital audiences. By engaging customers with relevant content, companies encourage repeated visits, nurture ongoing relationships, and maintain continuous interaction with customers.

Retention also requires advertising via digital marketing platforms and search engines to promote elements of the marketing mix (product, distribution, promotion, pricing, operations, human resources, facilities, productivity, and quality). Continuous content renewal or dynamic, interactive content is crucial for maintaining engagement (Ali et al., 2012; Chan & Guillet, 2011; Pawar, 2014).

2.4 Learning:

Learning involves leveraging interactive digital channels to gather customer data (preferences, behaviors, attitudes, and demographics) through surveys, polls, or user tracking. Behavioral information can also be obtained from customer records or clickstream data. Many companies utilize chat systems to facilitate interactions and discussions, providing valuable insights into consumer preferences.

2.5 Relationship (Relate):

Relationship marketing focuses on personalized interaction with target audiences to understand consumers better. It includes personalized, on-demand, and tailored communication. According to Ghiselli (2015), relationship-building is among the most critical opportunities in digital marketing, as it allows firms to customize interactions with multiple customers simultaneously. Digital marketing tools enable precise communication and distribution, allowing companies to understand individual customer needs and preferences. Chan & Guillet (2011) emphasize the use of social media, blogs, and other digital platforms to engage with customers and encourage them to share experiences and feedback.