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A conceptual approach to the strategies and steps of digital marketing

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Abstract: *The aim of this study is to create a broad conceptual framework for emerging digital marketing tools and stages. A theoretical-based study of the concept of Digital Marketing and its digital marketing tools was conducted using journal articles, academic resources, books, and reliable internet sources. In light of this information, information is synthesized into a conceptual framework. In this framework, information about the basic principles and components of the concept of digital marketing is placed. Digital marketing and social media marketing have been proven to have many benefits for both suppliers and retailers. For suppliers, helping to enhance brand loyalty for retailers is another important finding, while benefiting from improving customer relationships. Digital marketing, the new face, and invention of marketing has become important to study the stages and methods of digital marketing to adapt and adapt to technology in changing global conditions. Businesses can increase their chances of success in a turbulent, chaotic, changing global digital environment by understanding the new global digital reality and focusing on new marketing rules. At this point, it will be inevitable that those who use technology well will catch success. It is clear that implementing digital marketing steps will provide a huge long-term advantage.*

Keywords: *Advantages of digital marketing, Brand awareness, Digital marketing channel, Digital marketing strategies, Digital marketing, Viral marketing.*
JEL Classification: *M30.*

1. Introduction

The Internet has been one of the most important inventions of the last century and mankind. Thanks to the networks connecting the whole world, countries have been closer to each other and communication has been faster. The development of technology and the fact that the internet has brought a great change to human life has also affected traditional marketing. The transition from the traditional market to the new era in the internet-based new era has caused major changes in all marketing strategies.

The application of traditional marketing practices in the internet-based virtual environment has led to the formation of new unique methods of its own. The first innovations in marketing communication with the target audience in the market have been the first step of change. Digital marketing, in short, is the digital realization of traditional marketing strategies through the internet channel. Internet channels ways are social media sites/applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Foursquare, Pinterest, internet sharing sites, forums, and digital media such as blogs. These applications, which are increasing in popularity day by day, continue to exist under the name of social media marketing. These social media applications can appeal to large audiences all over

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the world. While businesses determine traditional marketing strategies, they also determine digital marketing strategies besides traditional marketing. Being able to make statistical and measurable analyzes in digital marketing will provide a great advantage for businesses in terms of which products consumers show their inclination and interest in. The continuous development of internet and social media applications, their appeal to large audiences, and the fact that they have interactive communication provide an indispensable communication environment for today's companies. Thus, companies take big and important steps toward brand awareness.

From this point of view, the aim of this study is to create a broad conceptual framework of developing digital marketing tools and steps, to contribute to brand awareness, to provide information about the advantages of digital marketing, current literature, and to create a guide about digital marketing in terms of both customer relations and business relations.

2. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing techniques are the internet-based virtualization of all dimensions including traditional marketing techniques. According to Kotler, digital marketing is defined as developing the product or service produced by a brand and selling and promoting its products via the internet (López García, Lizcano, Ramos, & Matos, 2019). Digital marketing internet-based social media applications are the platform where customers and business partners communicate and interact (Gedik, 2020b). The term digital marketing has evolved over time into a term that creates customer acquisition, customer preferences, brand promotion, and brand awareness, not just the marketing of products and services. Digital marketing is an online umbrella term with all kinds of technology infrastructure, including search engine optimization, email marketing, content marketing, and social media marketing (Gedik, 2020a). It has been concluded that businesses that integrate their talents with technology will benefit greatly in terms of developing their international network capabilities. However, it offers the opportunity to increase the market share and competitiveness of the business using digital marketing tools (Kannan & Li, 2017; Kotane, Znotina, & Hushko, 2019).

Digital marketing is the promotion of products and services through one or more digital tools (Nair, 2016). Businesses can reach consumers through social media marketing, search engines, e-mail, and website in order to reach their target audience (Gedik, 2020b). This is also called internet marketing or web marketing. Since the 1900s and 2000s, the change in technology and the integration of marketing into marketing have surpassed traditional marketing and brought a new breath. As digital applications are integrated into daily life, digital marketing campaigns become more efficient and people are in real space. they prefer stores located on digital platforms instead of operating businesses (Desai, 2019).

3. Digital Marketing Steps

Businesses carry out their commercial activities by using technology, the internet, and websites instead of old-fashioned marketing such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. Companies that enter the digitalization path by establishing their technological infrastructure simultaneously provide access to the whole world and their consumers. Digital marketing basically consists of 4 steps (Özdaş, 2017).

3.1. Acquisition (Acquire)

The first stage, the acquisition stage, is the stage of attracting the customer to the website of the enterprise (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016). It is important for businesses to be on the right platforms at the right time so that the marketed product and service can reach the target audience. The aim is to attract the target audience to the desired environment. Brands use search engines and advertising partnerships, mobile marketing, and other digital marketing tools to attract their customers to the desired environment.

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3.2. Convert (Convert)

It is the whole of the activities carried out for the brands to reach their goals after the customers are attracted to the desired environment in the first stage of acquisition. The website clicked for this purpose, the time spent on the website, the news to be read or the total process and conversion stage within the website (Altındal, 2013).

3.3. Measurement and Optimization

At this stage, it is researched what brands do right and what they cannot do. At this stage, brands can make comparisons with their competitors. If brands do not measure on digital platforms, they cannot determine long or short-term strategies for the future (Altındal, 2013). The purpose here is to see and test the usage performance of consumers on the website.

3.4. Retain and Grow

Retention and acquisition phases are the activities carried out to create long-term customer loyalty by ensuring the satisfaction of the consumers obtained (Özdaş, 2017). For example, customer service and technical services provided after the product and service that the customer receives are the most important activities of this retention and acquisition phase.

4. Digital Marketing Strategies

When creating a brand's digital marketing strategy, the right strategies are needed to reach the right target audience. Increasing the brand's awareness, sales and recognition is important for brands. In determining their strategies, brands should have the ability to know the main business well, to know the target audience correctly, to monitor their competitors and to meet customer needs. Each brand should determine its own roadmap. Content, value format, goals, tactics, and ongoing optimizations are the strategies a brand should follow (Stokes, 2011);

Content: Content, one of the most important steps of digital marketing strategy, is an in-depth examination of the brand and its stakeholders.

Value Exchange: The second step, value exchange, is the study of promises.

Goals: Goals are the most important step in marketing. Setting goals should be realistic and achievable.

Tactics and Development: After the goals are achieved, customers should be reached through different digital tools.

Ongoing Optimization: As the digital environment is constantly changing, it is necessary for brands to determine new strategies and to be optimized them.

5. Digital Marketing Channels

Digital marketing channels enable the distribution of products and services to customers through a specific supply, integrating technology to reach customers. According to the latest research by Smart Insights (Table 1), based on the question of what is the most effective digital marketing technique for businesses to grow, content marketing has been the most effective digital marketing technique (Kotane et al., 2019).

5.1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

A search engine is a website where websites are listed, certain categories are formed with the help of algorithms, and internet users find the information they are looking for in the fastest way (Elmas, Dener, & Orman, 2009). SEO is the whole of the processes that ensure that the websites are developed in the most appropriate way to the functioning structure of the search engines so that they can take place in better positions in the search results of the relevant keywords (Gülten, 2019).

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Table 1.
Top-rated digital marketing techniques 2017-2019 (%).

Digital marketing technique	2017	2018	2019
Content marketing	20.3	20	15.1
Big data	20.2	14	14.4
Artificial intelligence and machine learning	-	14	15.1
Marketing automation	10.3	9	14.8
Mobile marketing	9.2	9	5.9
Social media marketing	8.8	10	6.8
Conversion rate optimisation and improving website experiences	5.9	5	6.8
Internet of things marketing application	5.4	3	3.4
Search engine optimisation (SEO)	4.1	4	2.7
Wearables	3.4	2	1.3
Paid search marketing	3.3	2	2.2
Online PR	2.7	3	2.8
Communities	2.6	3	3.2
Display	1.6	1	1.5
Partnership	1.5	2	1.8
Other	1.9	1	1.7

Source: Kotane et al. (2019).

A search engine is the most used service on the internet and it has a great impact on users or consumers to obtain information (Schultheiß & Lewandowski, 2021). After typing the desired keyword into the search engine, all the images or the information of the brands related to that subject are displayed. Users click on the first search result. Therefore, the fact that the brands appear in the top rank as a result of the search in the place entered in the search engine will provide access to potential customers. However, the search engine is a difficult and difficult digital marketing tool (Puchkov, 2016). Increasing the visibility of the users will also increase brand awareness.

5.2. Email Marketing

Marketing using e-mail is an internet-based marketing tool that can find potential customers whose returns can be easily and measurable (Haşıloğlu & Süer, 2010). The strategy of sending a commercial message to the potential customer list via e-mail is called e-mail or e-mail marketing (Bala & Verma, 2018). The purpose of e-mail marketing is to make the e-mails interesting and meet the needs of the customers. It is important for brand success to send appropriate e-mails to each customer for which purpose (Penpece, 2013). With effective e-mail software, an e-mail list can be prepared by separating the customers' spending habits or discount periods into various factors (Bala & Verma, 2018). One of the biggest advantages of email marketing is that the costs are low. MailChimp is a tool that speeds up the e-mail preparation process and provides automatic sending.

5.3. Search Marketing (SEM)

According to search engine results, it can be said that when a brand is ranked at the top, users will visit the site first (Miller, 2012). Search Engine Marketing or SEM is a comprehensive strategy to attract customers to your business primarily through paid effort. This is also called paid search marketing. Depending on your business structure, they choose PPC (Pay Per Click) or CPC (Cost Per Click), or (Bala & Verma, 2018). Search engine marketing is a type of online marketing strategy that increases brand rankings and visibility in search engines such as Google, Yahoo or Bing and enables brand promotion. Brands using SEM can benefit from both paid and free tactics. Brands or blogs that use a pay-per-click system can place paid ads within their websites.

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5.4. Content Marketing

Content marketing is a digital marketing tool that aims to attract attention by explaining information about a product or service to potential customers and then turning it into sales. With this method, marketing is done without putting pressure on customers and creating confusion (Efendioğku, 2022). Content marketing is carried out in two ways. The first one is created by the brand and affects the purchase intention, and the second one expresses their opinions about the product thanks to internet users (bloggers, YouTubers, and influencers) (Karkar, 2016). Content marketing has recently been the most preferred and most accelerated marketing strategy by brands (Gedik, 2020a).

In a survey conducted among world marketers, 91% of the respondents use content marketing, and 77% add content marketing to their medium and long-term strategies of brands (Guttmann, 2020).

With his research, Kım (2019) showed that user-generated content provides more personal experiences and experiences with product and service usage processes, while marketers focus on original product photos and features (Kım, 2019).

5.5. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing, the most indispensable and popular of digital marketing tools, is a tool that reflects the presence of a brand in the digital environment, aiming to hold products and services. Social media marketing is a type of marketing that allows brands to interact with consumers and encourage customer engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). With media marketing, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat applications, products and services are promoted through videos or photos. Social media applications bring great opportunities for brands to start with low cost to reach their goals (Ajina, 2019). With the development of technology and the widespread use of smart phones, the increase in internet use causes individuals to spend more time on social media. Therefore, brands should turn this situation into an opportunity and ensure that it attracts the attention of customers. According to a Study, social media marketing (Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015; Kapoor et al., 2018; Lee & Hong, 2016) is divided into viral marketing (Citton, 2017; Eppler & Mengis, 2004) and advertising (Alalwan, 2018; Lee & Hong, 2016). Shareef, Mukerji, Alryalat, Wright, and Dwivedi (2018) behavioral attitudes towards (Kapoor et al., 2018; Lee & Hong, 2016) Interaction (Jiang, Chan, Tan, & Chua, 2010), perceived convenience (Jung, 2017), perceived usefulness (Chang, Hung, Cheng, & Wu, 2015) and corporate reputation (Boateng & Okoe, 2015) have been found to affect consumers' attitudes towards social media marketing.

5.6. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing channel is a type of digital marketing based on performance power (Edelman & Brandi, 2015). A fee is charged per commission, click-through rate, and per visit. Thus, both the e-commerce owner and the sales partner win (Aksoy, 2009). Sales partnership provides great advantages for newly established brands. It has advantages in terms of both increasing brand awareness and reducing advertising costs. Theoretically, the core activities of sales partnership marketing can be classified as follows; first, the affiliate tries to redirect potential customers to the website using its advertisements and links. Second, these potential customers are expected to perform the necessary transactions to complete the sales transaction. Finally, the customer rewards every action requested to conclude sales, and sales are then tracked up to affiliates (Suryanarayana, Sarne, & Kraus, 2019).

5.7. Website Marketing

Internet users use the website of that brand in the first place to get information about a product or service. Internet marketing is the use of the Internet as a virtual store to sell products and services directly to consumers (Percic, Peric, & Kutlaaa, 2019).

There are some important considerations when customers visit the brand's website. The brand owner should design the website in a way that is clear, understandable and defines the brand identity. It is a platform where the basic information of the brands and information about the terms and conditions

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of sale are included, and even sales can be made through the e-commerce site. The following steps should be considered for a successful internet marketing (Grubor & Jakša, 2018):

- Businesses should have their own website.
- The company's website should be optimized for desktop, iOS, Android phones and tablets.
- The blog is a very convenient tool for communicating with customers and the blogs section on the website should be inspiring and engaging.
- Videos and photos should be clear and effective in online communication.

5.8. Viral Marketing

When customers want to buy products and services, they first consider the thoughts and comments of customers who have these products and services in the digital environment. Therefore, in order to turn this situation into an opportunity, brands should keep customer satisfaction at the highest level and provide positive comments. The fact that customers read reviews about a product before purchasing it directly affects their purchase intention. When the Viral Marketing literature is examined, there are many differences of opinion about the concept. Reichstein and Brusch (2019) state that these differences are due to technological developments and the increase in the methods used in viral marketing.

5.9. Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing provides information to the right customer at the right time by sending a message over the phone. Due to the increasing number of mobile users, brands customize their websites and applications. Mobile marketing is the most effective marketing method (Kumar, 2020). One of the most important tools of mobile marketing strategy, it offers important opportunities such as ensuring brand awareness, arousing the desire to buy, and providing information about discounts and promotions (Sunny & Anael, 2016).

5.10. Location Based Marketing

The widespread use of smart devices has recently created the location-based marketing technique. Location marketing also provides interaction by sharing the products that consumers go to in their geographical structure. For example, the Swarm application affects the purchasing intention of other consumers by sharing the location of the consumers with the places they go and sharing the ones they like. Location-based marketing, which is the sub-layer of the mobile marketing channel, is a type of marketing that influences the purchasing behavior of customers in the region where they are located and promotes the brand. This technology has offered businesses the opportunity to analyze the location-based behavior of consumers and to reach their customers wherever and whenever they want by tracking their location (Yuxin, Liu, Liu, & Huang, 2019). According to the latest 451 research data, it is thought that 10% of marketers will switch to location-based marketing system and this increase will reach higher levels in the coming years (Akgünlü & Kurtaran, 2020).

5.11. Phenomenon Marketing (Influencer Marketing)

Phenomenon marketing is one of the most popular marketing tools in recent times. In order to reach consumers, brands can reach their target audiences through phenomena. Thanks to the power of social media phenomena to voluntarily change the behavior and wishes of consumers, it has entered the literature as the concept of "influencer marketing". It is defined as the person paid by companies to encourage purchasing (Dictionary, 2020). Phenomenal marketing is when people who reach a high number of followers on social media channels such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter produce content about the product and service and share their experience with the product (Ünal, 2019). Phenomenon's can attract customers by organizing sweepstakes and campaigns from their social media accounts. A digital version of Word-of-mouth marketing is phenomenon marketing. Brands need influencers to increase their sales and promote brand awareness. The most important point here is that

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the brand with a certain target audience chooses the phenomenon that can reach that target audience. Brands can establish close links with influencers by providing brand awareness to consumers who adopt the image or views of influencers (Rakuten, 2019).

6. Advantages of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing can get easy and fast results in product and service promotion compared to traditional marketing (Alan, Kabadayı, & Erişke, 2018). Brands can interact and communicate with customers in the digital environment. One of the biggest advantages of digital marketing is that the advertisements created to attract the attention of customers in the digital environment are fast. It is very important for brands to have low costs in order for small and medium enterprises to make their voices heard well and to compete against large enterprises. In addition to these, digital marketing, which is more advantageous than traditional marketing in terms of measurability, can quickly result in statistics of how many times it is shown and clicked in the detection of advertisements. One of the important advantages of digital marketing is that it offers shopping opportunities at any time and is open 24/7. It offers the opportunity to compare products and prices for customers. Brands offer opportunities to reach large audiences, to promote products and services, to fulfill sales and orders, to provide after-sales customer satisfaction, and to convey customers' ideas by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the environment with internet applications (Wymbs, 2011).

7. Disadvantages of Digital Marketing

Although digital marketing has many advantages, it also has some disadvantages. Digital marketing cannot establish a warm relationship between companies and consumers. In traditional marketing, face-to-face communication creates more customer loyalty. In this context, we can say that it is more difficult to maintain customer loyalty in the digital environment. Customers who cannot establish easy relationships and close contact may turn to other brands. The disadvantage of digital marketing is that brands are not one-to-one in photos and products or that there are problems from time to time. In such cases, product return processes are dealt with. Speed is an important key in digital media. But the speed issue can put brands in a difficult situation. Communication or product errors that brands enter in order to act quickly with the consumer may cause the customer to lose (Sopakoymaz & Avantajları, 2021; Yoluk, 20121). The frequency of messages sent to customers may miss the consumer. In this context, the frequency of sending messages should be given importance (Georgas-Tellefsen, 2021).

8. Conclusion

Recently, the growth and popularity of the internet has affected every field as well as the field of marketing, and changes have been made in its functions. Businesses now play an active role in the Internet environment by using digital marketing methods with their customers. Follow-up and continuity are always essential in digital marketing. Businesses should make their brands up-to-date, open, and at a level to respond to the demands of their customers on the internet. Fulfilling the demands and wishes of the customers will bring an increase in the added value of the brands and customer loyalty. Digital marketing and social media marketing has many benefits for both suppliers and retailers. For suppliers, it helps to improve customer relationships, while helping to increase brand loyalty for retailers.

One of the biggest benefits of digital marketing to brands is to reach large audiences, increase product sales, determine customer analyses with measurement analysis and do these at the least cost. It should use high-quality, and correct websites and social media tools that are strategically important for brands. Brands reach their goals in a shorter time with a digital marketing method. In digital marketing, it can also show itself in places where internet use is not required. Brands can reach their customers via sms from their mobile phones and provide information about products and services. Through digital media, customers can access information anytime and anywhere. Digital marketing encompasses a wide range of services, products and brand marketing tactics that use the internet as a

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basic advertising tool in addition to mobile and traditional TV and radio (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). Marketing is seen as a valuable process (Tek, 2006) and human beings have always shown interest in all valuable things. The important point here is how you can show what is valuable and how you can reflect this to people (Oguz, 2018). In this context, it is important that businesses reflect their product and service values accurately, clearly, and transparently while taking part in digital channels. Thanks to smartphones, mobile marketing, location marketing, internet-based.

Examples of new marketing approaches such as holistic marketing, which are based on the importance of every detail holistically with a wide range, show the point where the art of digital marketing has come with online-centered rational strategies (Alankus, 2021). Due to the wide range of digital marketing methods, brands or businesses should integrate traditional marketing processes well and follow the processes without interruption. With digital marketing, businesses can establish value-added relationships and explain the business mission and vision to their customers while responding to the demands and requests of customers (Alan et al., 2018).

The use of digital marketing and social media has many benefits for the brand's suppliers and retailers. From the point of view of the suppliers, they can get support for their own products within the supply chain and add value to the positive communication between the customers and the brands. In terms of retailers, the effective use of social media creates customer loyalty (Alan et al., 2018). It can also affect other consumers by commenting on social media channels or shopping sites. In this context, brands should keep customer relations at the highest level and ensure customer satisfaction. In addition, brands should produce new content on social media and draw their attention to the brand in order to gain new customers. Brands should also pay attention to the selection of phenomena. As a matter of fact, brand-phenomenon harmony will show the brand's power. Brands that can develop new strategies and stay up-to-date can add success to their success by keeping up with the new face of marketing, digital marketing.

As a result, it is essential to examine the steps and methods of digital marketing in order to adapt to the changing global conditions and to adapt to technology, digital marketing, which is the new face and invention of marketing. By understanding the new global digital reality and focusing on new marketing rules, businesses can increase their prospects for success in the turbulent, chaotic, changing global digital landscape. At this point, it will be inevitable for businesses that use technology well to achieve success.

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Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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