

A Study of Online Marketing with the Changing Trend on IMC – Challenges and Opportunities

¹Rajendra Sinha, ²M. Akila, ^{3*}Rashmi, ⁴K. Ramesh, ⁵Mohd Naved, ⁶Sreejith P M

Abstract

Today, E- marketing is one of the most emerging technologies in IT and E- commerce sector. E- Marketing is referred to as Internet Marketing, Online Marketing or Web-Marketing, means using the internet to market and sell goods and services. At its most basic level, Integrated Marketing Communication or IMC means integrating all the promotional tools, so that they work together in harmony. An influx of new marketplace trends in the late 20th century spurred organizations to shift from the standard advertising approach to the IMC approach. Promotion is one of the Ps in the marketing mix. Promotion has its own mix of communication tools. Integrated Marketing Communication is a marketing concept that ensures all forms of communication and messages are carefully linked together. Integrated Marketing Communication is the concept that makes all the marketing tools to work together as a unified force rather than work in isolation. It blends various promotional tools and communication/marketing/advertising services and techniques to maximize profit. In the present study we analyzed to find out the opportunities and challenges of online marketing and IMC in India.

Keywords: Online marketing, IMC, Internet, Opportunities, Challenges.

¹Director and Dean Faculty of Management, MMIM, MM Deemed to be University, Mullana, Haryana

²Ph.D. Scholar in Commerce, Marudupandiyar College, (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy) Thanjavur, Tamilnadu., akilamahadevan@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Management Department, Delhi Global Institute of Management, Faridabad, Haryana, India, mbahr006@gmail.com

⁴Associate Professor, School of Commerce, St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research,(Deemed University), Chennai, Tamilnadu., drramesh.edu@gmail.com

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Business Analytics, Jagannath University, Delhi-NCR, India., mohdnaved@gmail.com

⁶Research Scholar, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala., pmsreejith03@gmail.com

Introduction

“Online Marketing or E-Marketing is the process of promoting a brand, products or services over the Internet. Its broad scope includes email marketing, electronic customer relationship management and any promotional activities that are done via wireless media.” Online Marketing means using digital technologies to help sell your goods or services. These technologies are a valuable complement to traditional marketing methods whatever the size of your company or your business model.”

Due to globalization, not only nations are coming closer to each other but also different sector undergoes into significant changes. And marketing sector is also affected by this and

experiencing so many changes continuously. To sell our product through internet or digital media is known as online marketing. Types and size of business organization affects marketing traditionally but in today's scenario, digital technology is a valuable addition. Online Marketing is also known as web marketing and E- Marketing. It helps to find out the right audience to whom goods and services are to be provided by the business organizations. It consists of all processes and activities with the purposes of attracting, finding, winning and retaining customers. Creative use of internet technology is made by using various multimedia, text, graphics etc. with different languages to create catchy advertisements, forms, e-shop where product can be promoted, viewed and sold. The scope of Online Marketing is deemed to be broad in scope it does not only use to promote marketing over the internet but also helps in marketing as well through e-mail and wireless media. Online marketing also joins technical and creative aspects of the Internet, including: development, design, advertisement and sales. Online marketing is a cost effective tool where customization becomes very easy and affordable along with very less marketing efforts. Various methods are used by the advertiser i.e., pay per play pay per click, pay per impression or pay per action. In this way marketers can able to determine that which message is good appealing and which message is not so effective. It helps to provide a large variety of high quality product in less time at reasonable rate. Customer's familiarity with the latest innovation both in digital technology as well financial and legal domain is required by online marketing. In this way, its appeal is limited because requirement of High speed Internet connections is there and also further complications are faced like customers are not able to touch, taste or smell the things and also fear about security in online payments over different websites.

Research objectives:

- To understand the importance of Integrated Marketing Communication.
- To understand the importance of Online advertising in changing market scenario.
- To understand the reasons for growing popularity of online marketing.
- To identify the limitations of online marketing as IMC tool.

Research Methodology

In the present study, researcher has followed Descriptive research. Descriptive research is usually a fact finding approach generalizing a cross - sectional study of present situation. The major goal of descriptive research is to describe events, phenomenon and situations on the basis of observation and other sources.

Tools of IMC:

- **Sales Promotion** is the Demand-stimulating activity designed to boost the sales of a product or service. It may include an advertising campaign, increased PR activity, a free-sample campaign, offering free gifts or trading stamps, arranging demonstrations or exhibitions, setting up competitions with attractive prizes, temporary price reductions, door-to-door calling, telemarketing, and personal letters on other methods. More than any other element of the promotional mix, sales promotion is about action.
- **Public Relations** programs are a planned communication effort by an organization to contribute to generally favorable attitudes and opinions toward an organization and its products. It is a communication function that seeks to build good relationships with consumers, stockholders, and legislators. The advantages of publicity are low cost, and credibility (particularly if the publicity is aired in between news stories like on evening TV news casts). New technologies such as weblogs, web cameras, web affiliates, and convergence (phone-camera posting of pictures and videos to websites) are changing the cost structure.

- **Personal Selling** is oral communication with potential buyers of a product with the intention of making a sale. The personal selling may focus initially on developing a relationship with the potential buyer, but will always ultimately end with an attempt to "close the sale. According to American Marketing Association, Personal selling is the personal or impersonal process of assisting or persuading a prospective customer to buy a product or service and to act favorable upon an idea that has commercial significance to the seller.
- Apart from the above, a new tool is being emerged in the contemporary market scenario and that is named as online marketing.

Benefits of IMC:

- Although Integrated Marketing Communication requires a lot of effort, it delivers many benefits. It can create competitive advantage, boost sales and profits, while saving money, time and stress.
- IMC wraps communication around customers and helps them move through the various stages of the buying process. The organization simultaneously consolidates its image, develops a dialogue and nurtures its relationship with customers. This 'Relationship Marketing' cements a bond of loyalty with customers which can protect them from the inevitable onslaught of competition. The ability to keep a customer for life is a powerful competitive advantage.
- IMC also increases profits through increased effectiveness. At its most basic level, a unified message has more impact than a disjointed myriad of messages. In a busy world, a consistent, consolidated and crystal clear message has a better chance of cutting through the 'noise' of over five hundred commercial messages which bombard customers each and every day.
- IMC can boost sales by stretching messages across several communication tools to create more avenues for customers to become aware, aroused, and ultimately, to make a purchase.
- Carefully linked messages also help buyers by giving timely reminders, updated information and special offers which, when presented in a planned sequence, help them move comfortably through the stages of their buying process and this reduces their 'misery of choice' in a complex and busy world.
- IMC also makes messages more consistent and therefore more credible. This reduces risk in the mind of the buyer which, in turn, shortens the search process and helps to dictate the outcome of brand comparisons.
- Un-integrated communication conveys disjointed messages which dilute the impact of the message. This may also confuse, frustrate and arouse anxiety in customers. On the other hand, integrated communication present a reassuring sense of order.
- Consistent images and relevant, useful, messages help nurture long term relationships with customers. Here, customer databases can identify precisely which customers need what information when and throughout their whole buying life.
- Finally, IMC saves money as it eliminates duplication in areas such as graphics and photography since they can be shared and used in say, advertising, exhibitions and sales literature. Agency fees are reduced by using a single agency for all communication and

even if there are several agencies, time is saved when meetings bring all the agencies together - for briefings, creative sessions, tactical or strategic planning. This reduces workload and subsequent stress levels - one of the many benefits of IMC.

Limitations of IMC:

- In addition to the usual resistance to change and the special problems of communicating with a wide variety of target audiences, there are many other obstacles which restrict IMC. These include: Functional Silos; Stifled Creativity; Time Scale Conflicts and a lack of Management know-how.
- Some organizational structures isolate communication, data, and even managers from each other. For example the PR department often doesn't report to marketing. The sales force rarely meets the advertising or sales promotion people and so on.
- And all of this can be aggravated by turf wars or internal power battles where specific managers resist having some of their decisions (and budgets) determined or even influenced by someone from another department. It shouldn't matter whose creative idea it is, but often, it does. An advertising agency may not be so enthusiastic about developing a creative idea generated by, say, a PR or a direct marketing consultant.
- IMC can restrict creativity. No more wild and wacky sales promotions unless they fit into the overall marketing communication strategy. The joy of rampant creativity may be stifled, but the creative challenge may be greater and ultimately more satisfying when operating within a tighter, integrated, creative brief.
- A survey in 1995 revealed that most managers lack expertise in IMC. Not just managers but also agencies. There is a proliferation of single discipline agencies. There appear to be very few people who have real experience of all the marketing communication disciplines. This lack of know how is then compounded by a lack of commitment.

Understanding these limitations is the first step in successfully implementing IMC.

The advances in technology have led to one of the most dynamic and revolutionary changes in the history of marketing, the dramatic changes in communication using interactive media such as Internet. Interactive media allows communication on a two way form instead of one way communication. And a two way communication plays vital role in IMC.

Online marketing is becoming a hot topic in every business sector, and gradually plays a truly important role in any company's multi-channel marketing strategy. It uses the Internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. It includes email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, many types of display advertising (including web banner advertising), and mobile advertising. Like other advertising media, online advertising frequently involves both a publisher, who integrates advertisements into its online content, and an advertiser, who provides the advertisements to be displayed on the publisher's content. Other potential participants include advertising agencies that help generate and place the ad copy, an ad server who technologically delivers the ad and tracks statistics, and advertising affiliates who do independent promotional work for the advertiser.

Tools of Online marketing:

- **Display advertising** -Display advertising conveys its advertising message visually using text, logos, animations, videos, photographs, or other graphics. Display advertisers frequently target users with particular traits to increase the ads' effect.
- **Web banner advertising** -Web banners or banner ads typically are graphical ads displayed within a web page. Banner ads can use rich media to incorporate video, audio, animations, buttons, forms, or other interactive elements using Java applets, HTML5, Adobe Flash and other programs.
- **Frame ad (traditional banner)** - Frame ads were the first form of web banners. The colloquial usage of "banner ads" often refers to traditional frame ads. Website publishers incorporate frame ads by setting aside a particular space on the web page.
- **Pop-ups/pop-under** - A pop-up ad is displayed in a new web browser window that opens above a website visitor's initial browser window. A pop-under ad opens a new browser window under a website visitor's initial browser window.
- **Floating ad** - A floating ad, or overlay ad, is a type of rich media advertisement that appears superimposed over the requested website's content. Floating ads may disappear or become less obtrusive after a preset time period.
- **Expanding ad** - An expanding ad is a rich media frame ad that changes dimensions upon a predefined condition, such as a preset amount of time a visitor spends on a webpage, the user's click on the ad, or the user's mouse movement over the ad. Expanding ads allow advertisers to fit more information into a restricted ad space.
- **Interstitial ad** - An interstitial ad displays before a user can access requested content, sometimes while the user is waiting for the content to load. Interstitial ads are a form of interruption marketing.
- **Text ads** - A text ad displays text-based hyperlinks. Text-based ads may display separately from a web page's primary content, or they can be embedded by hyperlinking individual words or phrases to advertiser's websites. Text ads may also be delivered through email marketing or text message marketing.
- **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** -Search Engine Marketing, or SEM, is designed to increase a website's visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs). Search engines provide sponsored results and organic (non-sponsored) results based on a web searcher's query. Search engines often employ visual cues to differentiate sponsored results from organic results. Search engine marketing includes all of an advertiser's actions to make a website's listing more prominent for topical keywords.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** -Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, attempts to improve a website's organic search rankings in SERPs by increasing the website content's relevance to search terms. Search engines regularly update their algorithms to penalize poor quality sites that try to game their rankings, making optimization a moving target for advertisers. Many vendors offer SEO services.

- **Sponsored search** - Sponsored search (also called sponsored links or search ads) allows advertisers to be included in the sponsored results of a search for selected keywords. Search ads are often sold via real-time auctions, where advertisers bid on keywords.
- **Social media marketing** - Social media marketing is commercial promotion conducted through social media websites. Many companies promote their products by posting frequent updates and providing special offers through their social media profiles.
- **Mobile Advertising** - Mobile advertising is ad copy delivered through wireless mobile devices such as smart phones, feature phones, or tablet computers. Mobile advertising may take the form of static or rich media display ads, SMS (Short Message Service) or MMS(Multimedia Messaging Service) ads, mobile search ads, advertising within mobile websites, or ads within mobile applications or games (such as interstitial ads, “advergaming,” or application sponsorship).
- **Email Advertising** - Email advertising is ad copy comprising an entire email or a portion of an email message. Email marketing may be unsolicited, in which case the sender may give the recipient an option to opt-out of future emails, or it may be sent with the recipient's prior consent (opt-in).

Benefits of Online Marketing:

- Internet gives you a wide access of your potential customers. It has been estimated that a couple of billion people around the world use the Internet, and more are becoming aware of Internet with each passing day. So, marketing your business to such a large group of people is only possible through Internet. Internet is the only medium that is able to cross geographic and national boundaries.
- The cost of promoting your business on the Internet is cheaper than other mediums of marketing. This makes it easy for small and mid-sized businesses to advertise their products.
- Internet allows the ability to stay connected with customers on a real-time basis. If any discount going on, then it is easier to send an email to customers and they can buy the product instantly. Internet also allows sending multiple messages at the same time, which saves the tedious task of sending a newsletter to every client.
- Internet marketing facilitates an instant feedback from the customers. Customers can share about their experience after using the product.
- Internet marketing saves a lot of time and effort. Instead of having a customer service representative to answer the queries of customers, one can put all the information about the product or service on the Internet so that customers can go through it. The most common way of doing it is to have a section dedicated to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the product so that customers get all the required information about the product or the service.

- Internet marketing allows your business to be available 24/7, which means increased sales and profits.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF Online MARKETING AND THE WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

Since late 1990s, there is a boom in the use of internet. Hence; so many web-based companies have been starting up every day. What more is available? What are the new opportunities for growth? , is expanding the reach and capabilities of the cyberspace. But for all these some problems are faced by these industries which are unique in itself. Special set of challenges are faced by these web-based industries. In this paper, we have taken a look at those and their possible solutions.

1. Marketing integration

Multiple channels are employed by the sales efforts which are online and offline, e.g. email advertising, social networking, outbound call handling and so on. The problem faced with these is that they are supposed to serve a concrete and measurable goal as part of an integrated campaign even though they are often handled as different parts of the work. So to coordinate all marketing efforts must be a priority. Alongside the traditional campaign, online marketing should be done and should not be tacked at the end of the business plan.

2. Security and privacy

Most people do not completely trust Web companies and, thus, they hesitate about offering information about themselves on the cyberspace. When companies that collect data are exposed to scammers and spammers, this is especially true. To adopt a sound policy and implement a fool-proof security measure, it becomes imperative for e-businesses. In a particular Encryption systems are a tool that online companies should seriously consider investing in.

3. Impersonal service

Electronic methods of providing customer service are used by businesses which are operating online, such as posting and emailing info on the website to answer possible user questions. Sometimes customers perceived this to as just too impersonal or uncaring. Merchants must develop efficient checkout procedures for selling goods via the Web, for addressing this problem. Hiring call handling services is also taken into consideration, so that customers can talk to real people when they have inquiries about problems that need instant answer.

4. Improving brand awareness

A big challenge for companies is that: primarily use the Internet to sell their products and services (tangible and intangible products). This is because, online adverts can be shut off by users unlike traditional advertising, (such as television, radio, billboard, and print) in which the campaign's message can be reinforced and repeatedly introduced to consumers at the marketers' will. So the challenge faced by web companies is to be more innovative in terms of advertisement.

Other Challenges Are As Follows:

1. Dealing with the IT Department

There is a circle of IT vs. marketing for a long time. But, it's a time to understand that we need to be partner with our IT friends to implement our marketing programs more efficiently. In simple sense, we need them and they need us or we can say that both complement each other.

2. Continuing Education

Constant learning is needed by the marketers of 21st Century. It is said that knowledge in marketing comes with an expiration date and continues professional development is a necessity for up gradation. Take a class, get a certification, read a book, attend a seminar or conference whatever works for you, but keep learning.

3. Bad Marketing

Anyone can call themselves a web designer, marketer, consultant, SEO expert and so on. Poorly created and executed marketing programs degraded our profession and also create mistrust among clients, marketers and other related parties. By doing marketing in a right time or way helps you to tip the scale in favour of our own profession which helps in long run survival.

4. Lack of Trust

In general, identity theft, Spam, intrusive advertising and technological glitches have left many mistrusting of marketing. You are either part of the problem or part of the solution, you have to decide it.

5. Know-It-Alls

Nobody is able to fully understand all aspects of marketing. There is simply too much to know, and whatever you do to know is changing at supersonic speed. If you are going to be an expert, you will have to get specialization in one aspect of online marketing.

6. Ethical Practices

An unprecedented mass of un-ethical businesses has been spawned by the Internet. There have always been scam regarding bottom feeders and artists, but the Internet seems to have brought them out in epic numbers. Make sure that your own practices are squeaky clean and try to educate your customers about some of the pitfalls of e-commerce.

7. Corporate Culture

In many companies every department "owns" the website and no department "owns" the website. Websites should belong to marketing, not finance/operations/ IT or legal. When the committee doesn't have a clue, it is difficult to produce good marketing by committee. Collaboration is an important in this situation and your associates should provide 100% input for this, but marketing should make the final decisions.

8. International Commerce

The Internet has made possible to provide products and services available around the world as close to customers and their living room (or wherever they have their computer). Unprecedented revenue flows in and out of foreign countries is allowed by this new world channel and that impact could eventually have a dramatic effect on our domestic economy. We have a lot in common with people of other countries in term of culture and traditions, but there are some differences as well which is known as Unity In Diversity. Understanding is the key for good international commerce as well as relations.

9. Intellectual Property

It has never been easier to steal someone else's hard work. Everyday everything from music to software, movies and images are lifted from the Internet. This is a bad thing.

10. Customer Expectations

Never before, customers had expected too much. Managing your customer expectations is vital to marketers, because if you don't know your competitors will, you are not able to survive in long run in the market. Without customers you will not have a business because customer is treated as a king of market, so take the time to get to know them, treat them with due care and respect, and in the same way you want to be treated as a customer.

CONCLUSION

Online marketing also offers businesses the opportunity to garner data about their consumer base to an extent that has till now been very difficult to achieve via traditional marketing methods. The development of internet marketing and social media advertising has led to examples of businesses in recent years that appear to little more than categories and filter information relating to products and services on the Internet, taking a small cut from any transaction that may occur as a result.

In the next few years, online marketing in India will strengthen even further. However, long-standing sustainability directly depends on factors like changes in the market, innovations and interactivity by market players. Owing to increased penetration of credit cards and easy access of computing witnessed a promising growth. Moreover, bargain-hunting consumers are latching on this trend as Internet retailers are known to offer products at special discounted prices compared to store-based retailers. Consumers in the country can now truly expect a well streamlined, efficient and world-class shopping experience supported by the best technology.

References

1. Philip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, Marketing Management, New Delhi, Pearson Education, 2006, pg. no. 537
2. Warren J. Keeyan, Global Marketing Management, USA, Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., 2002, pg. no. 3
3. Philip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, Marketing Management, New Delhi, Pearson Education, 2006, pg. no. 52
4. Belch, G. E. and Belch, M. A., 2004. Advertising and Promotion – An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective. 6th ed. New York: Tata McGra.
5. Beard, Fred K., Conflict in the Integrated Marketing Communications Task Group, in Proceedings of the 1993 Conference of the American Academy of Advertising, E. Thorson, Ed., Omnipress, Madison, WI. 1993, pg.no. 21-31.
6. Abed Abedniya, Sahar Sabbaghi Mahmoudi, The Impact of Social Networking Websites to Facilitate the Effectiveness of Viral Marketing, December 2010, International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications, Vol. 1, No.6
7. Andrea C. Wojnicki, Word-of-Mouth and Word-of-Web: Talking About Products, Talking About Me, 2006, Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 33.

8. Chaffey, D., Ellis-Chadwick, Johnston, K.F. and Mayer, R., 2003. Internet Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
9. Roa A B (2008), Research Methodology, Excel Books, New Delhi.
10. Best John, Kahn James; (1992). Research in Education Presentice-Hall of Indian Private Limited New Delhi.
11. Marketing research, First Indian adaptation By A. Parasuraman, DhruGrewal, R. Krishan.
12. Marketing Research, An Applied Orientation By Naresh K. Malhotra, Satyabhushan Dash.
13. Statistics For Business And Economics By Anderson, Sweeney, Williams.
14. Applied Statistics In Business And Economics By David P. Doane, Lori E. Seward.
15. Schultz, Don E., Tannenbaum, Stanley I., and Lauterborn, Robert F., Integrated Marketing Communications, NTC Business Books, Lincolnwood, IL. 1993.
16. Weinberg, Tamara 2009. The new Community Rules: Marketing on the Social Web. O'Reilly Media Inc. Sebastopol, CA, USA.
17. Diamond, S. 2008, "Web Marketing for Small Businesses: 7 Steps to Explosive Business Growth", Sourcebooks Inc., Illinois.
18. Reid Mike (2005), "Performance auditing of Integrated Marketing Communication [IMC] actions & outcomes", Journal of Advertising, vol. 34, pg. no. 41-54.
19. Bengtsson, M., Boter, H. and Vanyushyn, V. 2007. Integrating the Internet and Marketing Operations. Journal: International Small Business Journal, Issn02662426, Volume 25, Issue 1, pg. no. 27.