

Assessing the Impact of Digital Marketing in Generating a High Customer Base of Online

Retailers: A Case Study of eBay

ABSTRACT

The study focused on assessing the impact of [digital marketing](#) in order to generate a high customer base for the online retailer of eBay. eBay has emerged as a major economic force through Digital Marketing. Digital Marketing has been considered a marketing technique that is interactive, targeted and measurable. This technique has also been used for the promotion of brands, improvement in sales and customer retention. Therefore, several studies have provided evidence that Digital marketing create loyal customer base, which will be the main target of evaluation for this study.

Digital marketing has been considered an integral part of business organizations and performs a decisive role in attracting sales and customers. Considering this, the study identified the important factors relevant to Digital Marketing that directly impact the customers of eBay. The study further evaluated the impact of digital marketing to generate a high customer base in the light of eBay. The study adopted the [qualitative research](#) design, and primary data were collected to assess whether Digital marketing create loyal customer base for the online retailer of eBay. The primary data collection method allowed the researchers of this study to extract data from interviews. The study has suggested that eBay company focus on hiring more skilled and talented individuals who have knowledge about the basics of social media or digital marketing and have the ability to understand the reviews and engage with the customers to increase their customer base.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Contextual Background

This study is based on the case study of eBay, which focuses on the assessing whether [digital marketing](#) create a loyal customer base of online retailers (Kannan, 2017). Similarly, digital marketing is also used to build customer preferences, promote brands, retain customers and improve sales. Furthermore, according to Kannan (2017), various multinational organizations and corporations such as Facebook, Google, Amazon, eBay, and Alibaba have emerged as major economic forces through digital marketing. Therefore, digital marketing is now considered an integral part of every business organization and performs a decisive role in attracting sales and customers. Moreover, the importance of digital marketing is underlined by the fact that companies are enabled to select the appropriate method of marketing campaigns according to their budget in order to reach a broader range of audiences.

Similarly, according to Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015), businesses previously had to adopt methods that did not guarantee success. In addition, digital marketing enables businesses to adopt measures that provide effective conversion rates through social media. Similarly, eBay uses effective digital marketing methods to increase its customer base and sales. According to Stephen (2016), the practice of socializing online provides organizations with effective tools for learning the [buying behaviour of customers](#).

Research Problem

The research problem is that the researchers have not covered the role of digital marketing and its impact on organizations. Therefore, there is a strong need to address the issue. Moreover, there is a significant literature gap in the study regarding the effectiveness of how social media

and digital marketing create loyal customer base. Furthermore, according to (Karjaluoet al. 2015), digital marketing performs an imperative role in influencing customer behaviour. However, the research related to the influence of digital marketing on the customer base is limited, and the field of digital marketing and social media is constantly evolving. Thus, the literature relevant to the various digital marketing concepts must also be restructured. Therefore, this study focuses on covering the potential gaps present in the existing literature. Likewise, the study of Kannan (2017) extensively describes the framework of digital marketing but significantly lacks research material on the impact of digital marketing on the customer base.

Aims and Objectives

This research aims to evaluate the possibility whether Digital marketing create loyal [customer base](#) of online retailers: a case study of eBay. The following are the objectives of this paper:

- To identify the key factors pertinent to digital marketing that had a direct impact on the customers of eBay.
- To evaluate the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base concerning the case study of eBay.
- To provide recommendations for eBay, which they can use to increase their customer base through improving their digital marketing strategies.

Research Questions

- What key factors pertinent to digital marketing directly impacted the customers of eBay?
- Up to what extent can Digital marketing create loyal customer base with regard to the case study of eBay?

- What recommendations can eBay use to increase its customer base by improving its digital marketing strategies?

The rationale of the Study

The study is important for future studies on digital marketing practices that will allow the researchers to reduce the gap in the existing literature. Similarly, digital marketing is a fast-paced industry with rapid innovations; thus, marketing educators need to keep up with the changes in marketing (Kannan, 2017). Furthermore, according to Pradhan et al. (2018), there are clear research gaps in the study of digital marketing and its usage in small to medium enterprises. In addition, this study can be considered significant because it mentions the importance of DM and its role in corporations like eBay. In addition, according to Hill and Alexander (2017), in this era, organizations have understood the importance of customer satisfaction. Hence, this research has a strong emphasis on the usage of digital marketing for the procurement of customers and consumers. Therefore, this study can be essential in providing valuable recommendations related to DM to various organizations.

Significance of the Study

The study can be considered significant because eBay can utilize it by following the recommendations and suggestions provided by the researcher to improve its digital marketing strategies to increase its customer base. Moreover, the research is essential because it is not limited to a particular organization; rather, various organizations can utilize this research to implement multiple [marketing](#) strategies to enhance their sales and improve their brand image. Furthermore, the current research also highlights the impact of DM practices performed by the online retailer store eBay to gain and develop an increased customer base.

Structure of Study

Chapter one of this study is the contextual background of the research. It provides a summary of the procedure through which Digital marketing create loyal customer base of online retailers. In addition, chapter one also discusses the aims and objectives of the study. Moreover, it also discusses the research problems and questions, along with a brief rationale and significance of the study.

Furthermore, chapter two of the literature review describes the concepts, benefits and impact of DM. Similarly, the chapter also highlights the impact of digital marketing on eBay customers and the study's theoretical framework.

Chapter three discusses the [research methodology](#), philosophy, approach and design of the study. In addition, chapter three examines the data collection method used in this study and analyses the data in detail. It also covers the topic of research limitations of the study and mentions the reliability and validity of the study. Therefore, the chapter is concluded at the end with a discussion of ethical considerations that were kept in mind during the research and the summary of chapter three.

Similarly, chapter four discusses the analysis of data that has been derived from the study.

Chapter five concludes the entire study in detail.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As the marketing industry developed, organizations adopted various strategies and techniques to improve their existing customer base and attract new customers (Baltes, 2015). Similarly, the

retail industry also decided to capitalize on the opportunity and reach new heights in the business sector. Furthermore, the retail industry is known as the process of selling goods to consumers through a variety of channels in order to gain maximum profit. The retail industry now has an enormous online presence and requires extensive DM (Yasminet al., 2015). In addition, the digital marketing strategy is adopted by various multinational organizations and start-ups to generate a considerable customer base. Digital marketing provides extra marketing features that are effective in gaining new customers and promoting the product through various channels (Kingsnorth, 2019).

Moreover, traditional marketing methods often lead to extra costs, budget and time for product promotion (Todor, 2016). Therefore, DM provides organizations ease in showcasing their product and attracting consumers. In addition, the DM strategies deployed by eBay are also included in the study to assess the impact of digital marketing on online retailers.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of the five D's of DM is known as the overall effective digital marketing theory that is linked to the customers and their interaction with the brands on digital platforms. Digital devices are known as the stages where the customers interact with their brand of choice, such as smartphones, tablets, consoles, laptops, etc. A digital platform is a place where customers and consumers spend most of their time, such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. Digital media is known as the channel of communication where brands engage with customers through content and DM. Digital data is known as the data which is acquired by organizations and companies to track and monitor their potential customer base. Digital technology is the asset that organizations use to create user experiences for customers.

Conceptualizing Digital Marketing

In this digital age, the Internet has created considerable opportunities for organizations and businesses to promote their products online (Chaffey and Smith, 2017). Similarly, using [social media](#) also guarantees employers to earn customers for their businesses and expand the horizons of their products to attract different customers (Mogoş, 2015). Businesses have adopted the DM strategy that suits their business and allows the organizations to attain a wide range of public attention. Therefore, according to Järvinen and Karjaluoto (2015), the pace at which the information is transmitted to customers through digital media enables companies to create a potential online presence.

Digital marketing is known as the measurable, interactive and targeted technique of marketing (Yasmin et al., 2015). This marketing technique employs digital technologies to reach customers conveniently, turn them into potential leads and preserve them for long-term return on investments. However, DM is different from traditional marketing methods in various ways. Therefore, according to Durmaz and Efendioğlu (2016), traditional marketing methods have challenges and difficulties in measuring the results generated; in some cases, the results are not measured at all. Moreover, traditional marketing involves businesses promoting and advertising their products on commercials, print media, and radio. These methods are cost extensive and require major budgeting. In addition, traditional marketing methods consist of limited access to the customers and lack the potential to influence the buying behaviour of the consumers (Ozuem, 2016).

Furthermore, digital marketing also has effective inbound marketing methods such as SEO, blogs, podcasts, short ads, social media marketing, articles, content marketing, etc. These

methods allow organizations to attain customers through cheap marketing budgets and less time. In addition, inbound marketing is a DM branch that turns potential visitors into leads and generates profit (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). Similarly, with the advancement of technology, the strategies of digital marketing are supposed to improve with time (De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg and Holthof, 2018). Therefore, according to Edelman and Heller (2015), the DM is similar to traditional marketing methods, but the crucial difference is the usage of digital media and channels.

Benefits of Digital Marketing

The benefits of DM outweigh the benefits of traditional marketing methods because businesses and organizations of all sizes are effectively deploying the use of [social media marketing](#) (Stephen, 2016). Furthermore, digital marketing provides businesses unrestricted access to the mass and global market of customers at an affordable price. Moreover, the methods of DM also allow companies to customize and personalize their marketing strategies according to the targeted customer base (Dodson, 2016). In comparison to traditional marketing, digital marketing is considered a cost-efficient marketing method.

Furthermore, marketing and advertising costs are considered the most expensive business planning (Cacciolatti and Lee, 2016). Similarly, multinational corporations might have the budget and time to afford such costs, but start-ups and small to medium enterprises need a more effective marketing method (Heinze et al., 2016). Therefore, marketing through digital mediums offers organizations a relatively cheaper method compared to traditional marketing methods and provides a diverse impact. The digital presence of brands online provides customers with a certain level of interaction with the brand. The interactivity of online users allows customers a

certain level of freedom regarding initiating contact and engagement with the brand (Cacciolatti and Lee, 2016). At the same time, the engagement and interaction of customers with the brand or an organization determine the sustainability factors of that company. Similarly, DM also allows companies to create a proper [brand image](#) online among their target audience and customers. In addition, digital marketing assists organizations in building their brand reputation online (Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán, 2016).

One of DM's most integral benefits and advantages is that it encompasses a global reach and allows businesses to explore new markets and make their trade global with a limited amount of investment. Moreover, according to Dodson (2016), due to digitization, the world is now a global village; thus, digital marketing allows ad campaigns to become perceptible and visible in any part of the globe, thus, providing start-ups to create an international image and gain exposure.

Impact of DM in generating a high customer base

The impact of [digital marketing](#) can be analyzed by judging its potential to reach customers and consumers in any part of the world (Saurat al., 2017). DM impacts the daily activities of people and is able to influence their buying behaviour. Similarly, digital marketing affects the purchases, interactions, work and habits of people. Moreover, research studies have found to be more supporting towards the hypothesis that Digital marketing create loyal customer base, as compared for that of traditional marketing (Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán, 2016). Therefore, it is also considered important for digital marketing agencies to appropriately implement marketing strategies in the digital universe to create a brand image and generate a larger customer base.

The impact of DM is that it makes the customers feel connected with the brand of their choice and enables the companies to turn potential customers into profitable leads. Similarly, the engaging content being produced by the brand or an organization tempts potential customers to try the product or service of the organization or business. Therefore, according to Vien (2015), it is imperative for every company to implement strategies through which Digital marketing create loyal [customer base](#) along with a strong customer base.. Similarly, the impact of DM can be analyzed by assessing brand awareness among customers. Furthermore, the brands now enjoy a high following on social media (Edelman and Heller, 2015).

Similarly, digital marketing has been an effective tool in creating the brand image of companies among their potential customer base. Therefore, the impact of DM on generating a higher customer base has been influential and extremely effective (Vien, 2015). Furthermore, compared to traditional marketing methods, digital marketing has allowed businesses and organizations with the way to engage with their clients, customers or consumers on a global level.

Factors pertinent to DM having a direct impact on the customers of eBay

With eBay being an online store, its business is based on the trading of goods and services at a global scale (Blake et al., 2016). Online businesses require online marketing; thus, the approach of eBay is also based on different marketing strategies, such as customer-centric and channel-centric (Neto et al., 2016). Furthermore, the channel-centric strategy strongly focuses on the customer, thus, providing customers with relevant and personalized marketing methods. Similarly, eBay has successfully created ad experiences for their customers by communicating in a personalized manner (Comberg and Velamuri, 2017). Therefore, in the process of how digital marketing create a loyal customer base, tracking the customer is essential because it provides

details regarding the potential customer base. eBay has been successful in attaining innovation in its business model through e-commerce and DM (Le-Nguyen and Guo, 2016). Therefore, digital marketing enabled eBay to build a quality shopping experience for the customers, for instance, by providing product details in the items list and creating a detailed user experience.

Furthermore, the factors that affect the DM strategy of eBay are the target market, budget, talent, technology and time (Neto et al., 2016). Therefore, the target market allows eBay to effectively implement digital marketing strategies to attain customers and improve sales (Gregg and Parthasarathy, 2017). Similarly, targeting enables the organization to determine the [customers' behaviour](#) to understand their choices and buying behaviour. Moreover, the aspect of budgeting is extremely crucial in the planning of a DM campaign to generate a higher customer base. Therefore, digital marketing also requires capital for investment in the marketing budget, but relatively cheaper than traditional marketing methods. In addition, eBay is a billion-dollar organization and possesses extensive marketing budgets, thus, creating effective techniques to generate and improve its customer base (Neto et al., 2016). The talent factor requires the company to hire skilled marketing professionals to execute DM strategies. It is also important to implement technology to initiate digital marketing services (Edelman and Heller, 2015). Therefore, eBay has also invested in high-quality servers and equipment to run flawless campaigns.

Similarly, time is also considered an essential factor that guarantees the success of a DM campaign (Blake et al., 2016). Planning and monitoring digital marketing strategies require a certain commitment of time. Hence, eBay has trained professionals that monitor and plan marketing campaigns.

Chapter Summary

The literature review chapter highlights the important aspects of the topic related to assessing the process of how Digital marketing create loyal customer base for an online retailer. Furthermore, the literature review briefly introduces the topic, which discusses digital marketing and its importance in detail. The section on conceptualizing DM provides a detailed description of digital marketing techniques and underlines its usage in retail industries. The benefits of the DM discuss and mention various advantages of digital marketing and how different organizations are reaping benefits from the DM. Moreover, the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base emphasizes the various impacts that affect the [customers' buying behaviours.](#) Furthermore, the literature review also covers the factors pertinent to DM that directly affect generating a high customer base; thus, this section describes the various factors that affect the customers of eBay. In addition, the literature review mentions the theoretical and conceptual framework that figuratively focuses on the different conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the appropriate manners used in this study to conduct the research effectively. Furthermore, the methodology that has been employed in this study is qualitative. Similarly, the research used the interpretivism philosophy, the research design used in this study is the [qualitative design](#), and the approach used is deductive. Moreover, the data collection method is the primary method. The chapter discusses that the researcher used thematic analysis to derive the study results by using the snowball sampling technique and interview questionnaires.

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy employed in this learning is the interpretivism philosophy. This philosophy is used to incorporate human interests into a study (Potrac et al., 2014). Similarly, the current study also used the interpretivism philosophy to study the qualitative data in detail. Furthermore, this theory requires qualitative analysis (Potrac et al., 2016). The advantage of engaging the interpretivism philosophy in the current research is that the process of how Digital marketing create loyal customer base can be assessed in a descriptive and detailed manner.

Research Design

The research design is the collection of different techniques and methods which can be used to deal with the problem of the research effectively (Lewis, 2015). In addition, the study used the qualitative research design, which is applicable to the philosophy of interpretivism and permitted the researcher to explore the horizons of the research area. Moreover, the qualitative research

design can be employed to extract important data in a non-numeric form (Rahman, 2017). Furthermore, the qualitative research design was suitable for this study because it is exploratory in nature, and the chief concern of qualitative research design is to obtain relevant insights regarding the reasons and motivations of the research area. Similarly, the benefit of applying the qualitative research design in this study is that, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research was versatile in exploring the interviews of the participants.

Research Approach

The study used the inductive [research approach](#). This method allows the researchers to make observations through modern approaches (Woo et al., 2017). Moreover, an inductive approach was considered valuable for this study because it supported the assessment of the process of how Digital marketing create loyal customer base of online retailers. This practice enables researchers to explain various rules and processes quickly and efficiently (Jebb et al., 2017). Furthermore, the inductive approach is used in this study because it enabled the researcher to make time for the effective use and application of data. According to the study of Woo et al. (2017), the inductive approach is used to create detailed observations and revolves around certain ideas and generalizations. Similarly, the study applied the inductive approach because it allowed the researcher to develop practical generalizations and categorize the relationships throughout the research process. Furthermore, the inductive approach produced meanings from the collected data and identified the patterns to build a theory.

Data Collection Methods

The method of data collection used in this study is the primary method. Furthermore, the study used the interview questionnaire method to acquire the data necessary to conduct this research. Moreover, the primary data collection method is considered relevant for the study because it aims to originate accurate results according to the researcher's curiosity. The primary data collection method allows the researchers to easily extract data from the interviews and surveys (Thomas, 2015). Moreover, the various primary data sources include surveys and interview methods.

Similarly, the primary data can be qualitative as well as quantitative. Thus, the researcher can use data according to their need or preference (Sutton and Austin, 2015). Secondary data will also be gathered to complete the literature review and support the study's findings.

Sampling Method, Technique and Size

The study employed the non-probability method because the researcher did not have a complete population list for random sampling. In the non-probability method, the selection of each unit is minimum (Rahi, 2017). Moreover, the study preferred the snowball sampling technique because it allowed the researcher to gather participants who were hard to find. Snowball sampling technique can be used for qualitative research with a population which is hard to locate (Etikan et al., 2016). Furthermore, the snowball technique was performed by forming a sample group in which the subject provided referrals which were then further used to create a complete sample group. This technique also allowed the researcher to make unprejudiced valuations from the snowball samples under different conditions. Furthermore, the sample size is a noticeable factor in the data analysis (Rahi, 2017). Therefore, this study chose 30 digital marketing employees of

eBay for an interview questionnaire to assess whether Digital marketing create loyal customer base for online retailers.

Data Analysis

The [data analysis](#) in this study allowed the researcher to develop different concepts on how digital marketing enables eBay to perform in the online retail industry. Moreover, the study employed the use of thematic analysis to create interpretations from the results. This analysis offers a consistent, precise and credible source of results (Nowell et al., 2017). Moreover, the thematic analysis is considered the trustworthy method of analysis, which can be effectively adopted in the qualitative method because it can be employed in analysing large data sets of qualitative research methods.

Research Limitation

The research was limited in some cases because the researcher was following the primary data analysis. Using primary data limits the scope of creativity in research because it is considered expensive and limited to time, participants, and location. Moreover, the research was limited because the research results were based on the interviews of the participants. Furthermore, the limitations in the researcher's creativity stunted the research's growth, thus creating restrictions on the data and creating uncertainty in the study's research. Furthermore, due to the data being qualitative, the study also required time and effort from the researcher. Moreover, the interviews also posed some restrictions and limitations, because the researcher ensured that the participants did not feel uncomfortable or threatened during the interviews.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher made sure to follow the ethical constructs for this study to ensure that the data has been referenced properly according to the study of the author. The researcher conducted the interviews for the primary research. Similarly, the interviews were conducted properly, so the respondents felt that their integrity was maintained throughout the interviews. Furthermore, the interviews are important procedures of the study and the researcher planned out the key questions in advance before the interviews. In addition, it is also the researcher's responsibility to ensure their safety when conducting interviews. Moreover, the researcher also made sure to respect the participants' confidentiality and ensure that the participants' privacy remained intact.

Chapter Summary

The chapter on the methodology briefly and descriptively highlights the different paradigms of research that were used to perform this study. In addition, it introduces the topic, mentioning the various research methods employed in the process of how Digital marketing create loyal customer base for online retailers. The section on research philosophy highlights the importance of interpretivism philosophy, which was used in this study. Moreover, the section on the research design mentions the research design used in this study, which is the qualitative research design. In addition, the research approach mentions the inductive approach and its importance in the current study.

Furthermore, this chapter also includes the data collection method of the study, which is the primary data collection method. Therefore, due to the data being primary and qualitative, the data analysis method highlighted in the study is the thematic analysis method. Furthermore, the chapter also discusses the limitations of research that occurred during the research. Thus, the

research methodology provides a detailed section of ethical considerations that were kept in mind by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, techniques for collecting and analyzing the data for the research were identified. The current chapter is developed to explain the results generated with an interview with the marketing team members of eBay. The technique used for analyzing the interviews was based on thematic analysis, which helped the researchers make effective themes from the interview questions. Thematic analysis is considered the only choice for researchers when they analyse different people's opinions and values.

Thematic analysis

Marketing strategies play an important role in the development of business. These marketing strategies help the enterprise effectively overcome its basic marketing functions. The current section of the chapter discusses the importance of marketing strategies and makes recommendations about selecting the specific marketing strategy that can support the business functions.

Theme 1: Identifying the factors related to digital marketing and their impact on eBay's performance.

Before identifying the factors that are related to the effective digital marketing practices of eBay, the respondents were asked about their opinion about the effectiveness of digital marketing practices. One of the respondents provided answers with the following statement.

“I think that digital marketing is effective because it has the capability to reach a wide range of audiences. For instance, whenever our digital marketing team at eBay sits down at

marketing meetings, we always know our target audience in advance. For me, digital marketing has been an effective tool that creates advertisement opportunities for brands to reach their target audience in this digital age. For us at eBay, digital marketing is cost-efficient and saves time, whereas traditional marketing methods lead to extra costs, time, and budget for product promotion.”

For identifying the factors that were related to performing digital marketing activities on eBay, many respondents stated that the main factors for making an effective digital marketing strategy are associated with understanding the audience demands and developing a marketing message accordingly, so the desired result can be generated.

“Being the marketing worker, I have to say that eBay has effectively understood its target audience for designing the marketing message for targeting customers looking for easy and reliable solutions for performing the activities that support their social goal attainment. Such digital marketing practices have had a positive impact on the services provided by the company through its website.”

“We at eBay also consider the tactics and strategies of digital marketing to be more effective than the traditional methods. Many aspects of [digital marketing](#) make it stand out from traditional marketing methods. However, one of the most distinctive features of digital marketing is that marketing campaigns can be monitored with accuracy. Digital marketing encourages open communication through social media, email marketing, and different digital techniques. As marketers, we can now communicate and put forward our services and products without any hesitation. Digital marketing also allows consumers and customers to communicate and provide requirements, queries, and even engage with the brand without any filter or barrier.”

Theme 2: Planning eBay to engage more customers through digital marketing.

“That is an interesting question, over the years eBay has been driving global marketing. We always plan to engage and communicate with our customers and provide a proper personalized experience. We also consider social media as one of the massive opportunities for us to scale our brand. Because the majority of Millennials prefer shopping online, and customers spend chunks of their time on social media. It is also important for us to gain a competitive advantage by engaging with our customers regularly because most of our marketing traffic is coming from social platforms. Also, traffic is expected to increase over the coming years. Now you get how important social media is for us.”

For effectively planning the processes of digital marketing that can help eBay in engaging more customers, other respondents declare that,

“At eBay, we ensure that our customers receive a personalized customer experience. However, we cannot act too biased towards the buyer and the seller. We are committed to creating a balance and a good experience for both. We also post regular everyday stuff on social media and create an interactive user experience for our customers. We have also created an interactive website that is easy to understand for our customers and allows them to explore the options available on our website fully.”

It is also stated by different respondents that,

“At eBay, we engage more customers through the use of digital marketing practices of social media. As the number of smartphone users is increasing every day, the digital marketing department of eBay has customized its advertisements for supporting smartphone users effectively. Our website is developed in a manner that supports all types of browsers used on smartphones. In this manner, we are able to engage more customers through digital marketing.”

Theme 3: Importance of market advancement through digital marketing practices.

“To reach our customers' different strategies and steps are required to identify their needs. Processes like this require good marketing insight and a better understanding of the marketing campaigns, and the proper marketing campaigns require an accurate marketing budget. So, as marketers, we are responsible for planning the marketing budgets. Doing so ensures that the campaign is moving in the right direction. Most of us at eBay believe that planning a marketing budget is an accurate method to analyze the overall scope of the marketing campaigns and measure the total ROI.”

Other respondents also provided their input about the processes of market advancement through digital marketing practices:

“Digital marketing practices can effectively support the market advancement of eBay services. These market advancements conducted by eBay through digital media practices require an established budget that generally supports business growth. Even though digital marketing is cheaper than traditional marketing practices; still, it requires the development of a supportive digital marketing budget.”

It was also explained by other respondents that,

“Market advancement in the digital market of the business is becoming a vital part for attaining the desired growth level though the businesses like eBay can perform their digital market advancement through posting their advertisements on other websites that are not part of social media. In this manner, the effective process of digital market advancement can be attained.”

Respondents also explained that they had to develop marketing strategies that support eBay's online business's market advancement.

“At eBay marketing department, we are always looking to develop and implement new marketing strategies that can support business growth. These different digital marketing strategies are based on the platform selected by our management to target the desired market segment. Therefore, the marketing department members are assigned to conduct a market survey through social media about the marketing strategies the target consumers prefer for making purchases. The target customers are also becoming technologically advanced, and the digital marketing practices performed by different companies have increased their knowledge about the product quality and brand image.”

Theme 4: Recommendations for customer retention through digital marketing practices

“Social media and digital marketing are an important investment for us, and most of our customers are moving towards digital platforms. Therefore, we have also implemented such strategies to engage with our customers. We consider tracking important because it provides us with further details regarding our potential customer base. Also, we retain customers by uploading regular digital content and try to follow up with our existing customers.”

The above response was supported by the other responder, who is assured that digital marketing practices are the next big thing in marketing,

“Yes, it is very much a thing of the future because even today in the present start-ups and even the big corporate brands are employing the use of social media and digital marketing to communicate with the customers and their product consumers online. Besides, artificial intelligence is expected to improve in the coming years, assisting digital marketers. The video content is also increasing rapidly, and the content they create these days is also very engaging.

Even most of the content gets viral very quickly, which helps the brands to establish their image for gaining and retaining an increased customer base.”

Further, it was also supported by other respondents,

“The methods to retain customers through digital marketing are diverse. Such methods usually involve the creation of personalized content which is suitable for the customers. Properly executed personalized content can be considered an effective method to maintain an engaging connection with customers. As a marketer, I must create presentable content for the users, providing them with a positive and engaging user experience. In my experience as a marketer, this method is more likely to increase customer retention.”

Discussion

Kee and Yazdanifard (2015) have explained in their study that the previous decade has observed a change in the buyers' actions to satisfy their needs. The buyers are looking for online marketing of products so that they can easily make purchases. This type of digital marketing practice is supported by using [digital marketing](#) practices (Brinker, 2016). Piercy (2016) also noted that in the retail business, the retailers have generally contended essentially on costs and the selection of the target market for effectively marketing their products. However, developing marketing ideas that support the digitalization of marketing to increase the value of consumers is getting immediate attention (Cook, MacKenzie and Forde, 2016). This has changed the elements of the retail business. A major example of such digitalized marketing practices is Amazon and Wall-mart, which are expanding their market online and offering their services around the globe (Lee and Kotler, 2015).

Conducted research on digital marketing practices identified the importance of digital platforms that can be used for supporting the growth of the company after satisfying the needs of

their consumers (Donnelly *et al.* 2015). Yet, it was also discussed by Piercy (2016) that the effective use of digital marketing practices could easily affect the market reach of businesses like eBay and Amazon.

Tidd and Bessant (2018) have discussed that in traditional marketing practices, many marketing officials of businesses are finding ways to recover the company's return on marketing investments. The traditional marketing workers are ordered to display the trail of money spent on marketing the products placed on the shelf (Zeng and Glaister, 2016). Therefore, such marketing officials are now moving away from traditional marketing systems and are not using digital marketing practices to instantly develop and recognize the return on their official investments (Nisar and Prabhakar, 2017).

It has been accepted by Spotswood *et al.* (2017) that the significant approach to improving the marketing of online products and services is not the traditional way of marketing. However, digital marketing practices support marketing products and services on the internet. With the use of digital marketing of products in such a technological era, the marketing department of eBay can only incur promotional marketing costs incurred by the business professionals and then save the costs of brand development (Nowak *et al.* 2015).

It is also discussed by Govindan, Khodaverdi and Vafadarnikjoo (2015) that they must develop a system of customer rating and other review practices that easily promote digital marketing in businesses like eBay. Further, it was explained by Tidd and Bessant (2018) that customer ratings and reviews are the two most important factors that influence customer choices for digital marketing practices. In this manner, the digital marketing practices of eBay can support the increase in the number of customers.

Chapter Summary

In the current chapter, the results and discussion of the qualitative study are discussed. In the conducted thematic analysis, it was identified that the factors that affect digital marketing practices are related to operational costs that exceed the developed budget for marketing practices. The thematic analysis also determined that digital marketing practices are important for business success and help the business move forward in the future. In the discussion part of the chapter, it was discussed that business improvement is only supported through the implication of digital marketing practices that can easily help the growth of eBay and other online businesses.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis above findings, the study suggested the following recommendations to eBay:

- eBay should focus on hiring more skilled and talented individuals who have knowledge about the basics of social media or digital marketing, can understand the customers' reviews and engage with them to increase their customer base.
- eBay company should focus on advancing the digital market by publishing their advertisement on websites that do not belong to social media. Considering this, an effective advancement of the digital market can be achieved. Moreover, eBay should focus on enhancing digital marketing practices to achieve advancement in digital market and establish an increased budget that will help eBay grow their business.
- eBay company should regularly increase customer engagement with their customers to gain a competitive advantage and increase customer loyalty. For this purpose, eBay company should focus on using sponsored posts on social media platforms Instagram and Facebook to ensure that their target audience sees their marketing posts. eBay should share interesting content on a daily basis on social media platforms and emphasize interactions of the audience over sales.
- eBay company should focus on allocating its market budget for digital advertising strategies, for example, email, remarketing and retargeting, and analyze customers' purchasing habits to target the ideal customers. Moreover, allocating the market budget is an accurate method for analyzing the scope of the marketing campaigns and measuring total ROI.

- eBay company should focus on bringing their ideal customers into their company's environment by sharing live streaming videos, instructional videos and product services on social media platforms to keep their customers engaged.
- eBay company should focus on customer financing for online retailers. This company can reach customers who do not have enough money to buy expensive services and products and attract customers who break purchases in small payments.
- eBay company should focus on creating personalized content to maintain an engaging connection with customers and create presentable content for the users that will provide the company with a positive and engaging user experience.
- eBay company should focus more on scaling its brand by utilizing the opportunities provided by social media. Moreover, eBay should ensure that the digital presence of brands online provides the customers with a certain level of brand interaction as the interaction of online users allows the customers a level of freedom relating to initiating contact and engagement with the brand. eBay company should focus on creating and enhancing the proper brand image on social media platforms among its target customers and audiences.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The study aimed to evaluate Digital marketing create loyal [customer base](#) for online retailers, particularly eBay. The research was significant when the impact of digital marketing on digital retailers was considered. As an online retailer, eBay has reached great heights in this advanced digital age; thus, the study's aims were specific to eBay. The purpose of the study was divided into three objectives. The two main objectives were identifying the key factors pertinent to digital marketing that had a direct impact on the customers of eBay and evaluating the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base with regard to the case study of eBay. The results of the findings of the objectives after thorough research are discussed below.

Conclusion

The first objective was to identify the key factors pertinent to digital marketing that had a direct impact on customers of eBay. One of the major factors regarding digital marketing that helped eBay in attracting customers was its continuous technological innovation. Throughout its time as a digital retailer, eBay brought innovation to its digital marketing strategies. eBay has continuously innovated its marketing strategy, which has helped the service provider gain more customers. It has made its website available on mobile phones to make it available 24/7. In the current age, almost every individual owns and uses a smartphone; thus, the availability of eBay services on smartphones has helped individuals in availing eBay services anytime they want. The feasibility of purchasing products online and delivering them to the doorstep has immensely helped eBay generate customers for its service. Another factor that helped eBay develop its [customer base](#) is its customer-centric strategy. eBay is focused on providing optimal service to its customer.

Similarly, when marketing, it attracts customers with its easy-to-use and user-friendly website. It further uses different means, such as social media platforms, to generate and increase its customer base. eBay has understood its market from in and out and has used its resources to solve its customers' needs most profitably. eBay regularly communicates with its customers, solves their queries, and receives feedback. Its main focus is on providing the most optimal service to its customers with no flaws. Over the years, eBay has gained immense respect worldwide and has been recognized as a dominant digital retailer because of its efficient customer-centric service.

Furthermore, eBay also uses a channel-centric marketing strategy to generate a customer base. It has a presence on different social media websites where it deals with its customers, solves their queries, and receives feedback. eBay uses channel-centric and customer-centric strategies when attracting customers. It communicates with its customers on different channels, which tends to create a positive perception in the minds of the general public.

eBay is a billion-dollar company that focuses on providing efficient service; thus, it spends extensive budgets on its business. eBay values the impact digital marketing has had on its customer base; thus, it spends a significant amount of budget on its marketing campaign to further increase its market share and retain its current customers. The budget eBay allotted for its marketing campaign has paid off, with eBay leading the online retail business. Different sorts of expenses that eBay incurred to spread the word about its service have eventually paid off as it serves customers throughout the globe and receive quality feedback. Another important factor that contributed to eBay's success was its marketing team. eBay operates with a professional marketing team of professionals in the field. These professionals are vital for the success of eBay's marketing campaigns as they engineer these campaigns from the start till the end. eBay

hires and trains professional who deals with business processes, and its employees are trained and experienced to implement successful and flawless marketing strategies that provide fruitful results for the company.

Furthermore, eBay has relied heavily on up-to-date technology for its marketing operations. It enhances its website and other marketing platforms from time to time to have a competitive edge in the market. eBay further introduces state-of-the-art software for its operations that significantly markets the eBay service through its advanced opportunities.

The second objective was to evaluate the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base with regard to the case study of eBay. eBay has benefited immensely from the introduction of digital marketing. Different organizations, along with eBay emerged as successful digital brands during the era of digital technology. These organizations made effective use of digital marketing and successfully attracted customers across the globe. The digital age changed the entire structure of marketing. With this technology, the organization were able to reach many different customers in minimum time.

Moreover, digital marketing has provided different opportunities for organizations. Organizations are now able to reach remote places of the world. eBay has made efficient use of digital marketing to market its service. eBay itself is digital retail and is a product of the advancement of technology and has used marketing strategies effectively to be known worldwide. The entire work process of eBay is done through online means, and it has successfully attained innovation in its business model. Almost the whole customer base of eBay has been generated through digital marketing. eBay uses different digital means, particularly social media, to market its product. It uses the same medium to engage and further develop customer relationships. eBay's presence on social media has helped it further improve its service.

Its customers receive daily feedback on social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and many more. It additionally uses the social media platform to solve its customers' queries, which has significantly enhanced the trust and satisfaction level of the customers towards eBay.

eBay, over the years, has immensely grown its customer base by effectively using [digital marketing](#) tools. It now operates in many countries and provides premium customer service. Accomplishing the feat of working in so many countries has been difficult for all organisations. However, with the introduction of digital marketing and the decreasing significance of traditional marketing, many organizations, including eBay, have set foot in different countries. In recent times, eBay has utilized digital marketing for its expansion. eBay grabbed many opportunities that were provided by digital marketing. eBay is now targeting areas with minimal contact with the urban world. With digital marketing, people living in dessert, forests, mountains, small villages and other remote places are now eBay customers.

Furthermore, with its entrance into the global market, eBay has gained immense respect worldwide and has been recognized as a dominant digital retailer. eBay has used its digital marketing strategies effectively and has gained respect from professionals over the globe. eBay has understood its market from in and out and has used its resources to solve its customers' needs most profitably. As a digital retailer, eBay almost entirely relied on its digital marketing campaigns as traditional marketing is becoming obsolete. With effective planning and proper execution, eBay conducted successful marketing campaigns in its initial period. Since then, it has further enhanced its marketing strategies and approaches, which it uses to stay at the top in the market when serving its customers with effective and efficient delivery of products. With the

help of digital marketing, eBay continues to meet customer demand, creating unparalleled satisfaction and loyalty.

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- To identify the key factors pertinent to digital marketing that had a direct impact on the customers of eBay.
- To evaluate the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base with regards to the case study of eBay.
- To provide recommendations for eBay which they can use to increase their customer base through improving their digital marketing strategies.

Interview Questions Transcripts

Transcript 1

Interviewer: In your opinion, why do you think that digital marketing is more effective than the traditional methods of marketing?

Respondent 1: I think that digital marketing is effective because it has the capability to reach a wide range of audiences. For instance, whenever our digital marketing team at eBay sits down at the marketing meetings we always know our target audience in advance. Personally, for me, digital marketing has been an effective tool that creates advertisement opportunities for brands to

reach their target audience in this digital age. For us at eBay, digital marketing is cost-efficient and saves time, whereas the methods of traditional marketing lead to extra costs, time, and budget for product promotion.

Interviewer: Why do you consider digital marketing as an effective means of communication with the customers?

Respondent 1: We at eBay consider digital marketing as an effective means of communication because it allows us to explore the target audience with diverse backgrounds and cultures. We are able to promote the product in the international market without the barriers of communication. These barriers of communication are removed by the social media platforms. The social media is a powerful tool for digital marketing and our digital marketing team makes sure to fully capitalize on this digital medium. Because digital marketing through different social media channels allows us to gain customers from various ethnic backgrounds without even engaging in time-consuming activities. Our customers also occasionally engage with us and our brand on digital mediums.

Interviewer: Is it important that the organizations should hire talented and skilled marketing individuals to execute the marketing processes?

Respondent 1: Yes, it kind of is because this is a digital age and the organizations these days rarely spend on traditional marketing methods. So, it becomes important for us to hire individuals who know the basics of social media marketing and are able to understand customer

reviews and engage with them in an effective manner. We at eBay always make sure to hire talented digital marketing individuals who are able to easily adapt to our marketing philosophies.

Interviewer: How is eBay planning to engage customers with their social media content?

Respondent 1: That is an interesting question, over the years eBay has been driving global marketing. We always plan to engage and communicate with our customers and provide a proper personalized experience. We also consider social media as one of the massive opportunities for us to scale our brand. Because the majority of the Millennials prefer shopping online and customers are spending chunks of their time on social media. It is also important for us to gain a competitive advantage by engaging with our customers regularly. Because most of our marketing traffic is coming from social platforms. Also, traffic is expected to increase over the coming years. Now you get how important social media is for us.

Interviewer: In your opinion, is digital marketing considered cheaper than traditional marketing?

Respondent 1: Yes, of course, digital marketing is way cheaper than the traditional methods of marketing, it saves time, additional costs and has the capability to gain a large customer base from any part of the world. But you still require a budget to run the digital marketing campaigns on social media. But of course, that budget costs less than the traditional methods of marketing and has a very wide approach. On the other hand, traditional methods of marketing have a

limited amount of interaction with the customers, radio and print adverts are expensive, and it is also not possible to measure the results of the marketing campaign.

Interviewer: Why is digital marketing considered as the thing of the future?

Respondent 1: Yes, it is very much a thing of the future, because even today in the present start-ups and even the big corporate brands are employing the use of social media and digital marketing as the way to communicate with the customers and their product consumers online. Also, the artificial intelligence is expected to improve in the coming years, which will provide assistance to digital marketers. The video content is also increasing very rapidly, and the content they create these days is also very engaging. Even most of the content gets viral very quickly, which helps the brands to establish their image and gain an increased customer base.

Interviewer: How important is it to plan a marketing budget in advance?

Respondent1: It is crucial for any organization or an individual to plan a marketing budget in advance. Because planning a marketing budget allows the marketers to already gain important perspective on their target audience. Planning a budget in advance makes the overall marketing experience creative and engaging and provides clear perspectives regarding the marketing campaign, and also ensures that whether our campaign is staying on the target with the estimated costs and actual costs. We at eBay also know that it is important to spend money to make money, which makes us competent in marketing planning and budgeting.

Interviewer: What are the effective methods to retain customers through the process of digital marketing?

Respondent 1: Social media and digital marketing are an important investment for us and the majority of our customers are moving towards the digital platforms. So we have also implemented such strategies to engage with our customers. We consider tracking important because it provides us with further details regarding our potential customer base. Also, we retain customers by uploading regular digital content and try to follow up with our existing customers.

Transcript 2

Interviewer: In your opinion why do you think that digital marketing is more effective than the traditional methods of marketing?

Respondent 2: I consider digital marketing to be more effective than the traditional methods of marketing because it has an approach that is very distinct and creative. Now in this day and age, the digital marketing methods are used more than the traditional methods because it creates brand awareness among the customer and consumers of the brand. We at eBay also consider the tactics and strategies of digital marketing to be more effective than the traditional methods. There are many aspects of digital marketing which makes it stand out from the traditional marketing methods. However, one of the most distinctive features of digital marketing is that marketing campaigns can be monitored with accuracy.

Interviewer: Why do you consider digital marketing as an effective means of communication with the customers?

Respondent 2: I still remember that whenever I went past a billboard or an advertisement the communication was in the manner of a monologue. However, that is not the case with digital marketing. Digital marketing encourages open communication through social media, email marketing, and different digital techniques. We as marketers are now able to communicate and put forward our services and products without any hesitation. Digital marketing also allows consumers and customers to communicate and provide requirements, queries, and even engage with the brand without any filter or barrier. At eBay, we consider digital marketing as an interactive form of marketing method, we communicate with the consumers, identify their needs and gain important feedback regarding the product or services we are offering.

Interviewer: Is it important that the organizations should hire talented and skilled marketing individuals to execute the marketing processes?

Respondent 2: Yes, they should, it is important, but also not necessary because digital marketing is quite easy to understand and brands should focus on hiring individuals that are the right fit for the organization and the rest of the stuff can be trained easily. But the companies need to make sure that they hire the right fit for the organization. Here at eBay, we have a very collaborative environment and everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. The digital marketing tasks are not very labor-intensive and require a very relaxed and laid-back kind of attitude. So, in my opinion, the marketers you hire should have a strong understanding of communication and creativity and the rest is just fine.

Interviewer: How is eBay planning to engage customers with their social media content?

Respondent 2: We at eBay always make sure that our customers receive a personalized customer experience. However, we cannot act too biased towards the buyer and also towards the seller. We are committed to creating a balance and a good experience for both of them. We also post regular everyday stuff on social media and create an interactive user experience for our customers. We have also created an interactive website that is easy to understand for our customers and allows them to fully explore the options available on our website.

Interviewer: In your opinion is digital marketing considered cheaper than traditional marketing?

Respondent 2: Yes, a big yes. Digital marketing is way cheaper than the traditional methods of marketing. It is cost-efficient, less time consuming, creative and engaging. Digital marketing is a package which of course like any other marketing method requires budgeting, but the results are also measurable and generate accurate ROI. Digital marketing allows us to gain the attention of a worldwide audience without having to spend on billboards, TV advertisements, print, and radio. Also, I believe that digital marketing has much more interaction with the consumers and the results are easily measurable.

Interviewer: Why is digital marketing considered as the thing of the future?

Respondent 2: People these days trust other customers and their experiences more than the direct advertisement of the brand. So, people are inclined towards buying a certain type of

product or service that is just simply displayed as the product or service. With social media constantly evolving, the digital landscape, in the future, most of the businesses and organizations are going to depend on their ability to create digitally enhanced product or services. I believe that AI might play the most important role in improving the overall digital marketing experience.

Interviewer: How important is it to plan a marketing budget in advance?

Respondent 2: To reach our customers' different strategies and steps are required to identify their needs. Processes like this require good marketing acumen and a better understanding of the marketing campaigns and the proper marketing campaigns require an accurate marketing budget. So, as marketers it is our responsibility to plan out the marketing budgets in advance. By doing so, we assure that the campaign is moving in the right direction. Most of us at eBay believe that planning a marketing budget in advance is an accurate method to analyze the overall scope of the marketing campaigns and measure the total ROI.

Interviewer: What are the effective methods to retain customers through the process of digital marketing?

Respondent 2: The methods to retain customers through digital marketing are diverse. Such methods usually involve the creation of personalized content, which is suitable for the customers. Properly executed personalized content can be considered as an effective method to maintain an engaging connection with the customers. As a marketer, it is my duty to create presentable

content for the users, which provides them a positive and engaging user experience. In my experience as a marketer, this method is more likely to increase customer retention.