

**Assessing the Impact of Digital Marketing in Generating a High
Customer Base of Online Retailers: A Case Study of eBay**

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Explore how digital marketing fuels a formidable customer base for online retailers, with eBay as a prime case study. Uncover the strategic nuances that propel unmatched growth and engagement in e-commerce. In the rapidly changing realm of e-commerce, the influence of digital marketing on sculpting and broadening the customer base of online retailers is paramount. The evolution of consumer behaviour, propelled by technological advancements, has necessitated a strategic and dynamic approach to marketing. This blog aims to explore the fascinating case study of eBay, a trailblazer in the online retail landscape. By delving into eBay's journey, we seek to analyze and comprehend the profound impact of digital marketing strategies in acquiring and retaining a colossal customer base. As the digital marketplace continues to evolve, understanding the intricacies of eBay's success provides valuable insights into the indispensable role of digital marketing in the thriving world of online retail.

[Influence of Social Networks on Online Purchasing Behavior of Consumers](#)

Established in 1995, eBay is a testament to the internet's transformative power on traditional commerce. From its roots as an online auction platform, eBay has metamorphosed into a global marketplace connecting buyers and sellers across diverse product categories. eBay's adept use of digital marketing strategies is central to this evolution, which has played a pivotal role in the platform's sustained success. This case study will meticulously dissect eBay's digital marketing endeavours, including search engine optimization, social media engagement, email campaigns, content creation, paid advertising, mobile optimization, and data analytics. By doing so, we aim to unravel the intricate web of tactics that has enabled eBay to stay relevant and thrive in the competitive landscape of online retail.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of digital marketing on the augmentation of a substantial customer base for eBay, positioning it as a significant economic force in digital marketing. Recognized for its interactive, targeted, and measurable attributes, digital marketing is a multifaceted strategy for brand promotion, sales enhancement, and customer retention. Numerous studies underscore the role of digital marketing in cultivating a loyal customer base, forming the focal point of evaluation in this study.

As an integral component of business organizations, digital marketing is pivotal in attracting sales and customers. The research identifies key factors within the domain of digital marketing that directly influence eBay's customer base. Employing a qualitative research design, the study undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of digital marketing on customer acquisition in the context of eBay. Primary data extracted through interviews serves as the foundation for this assessment.

[Loyalty Program in Building Customer Loyalty within Grocery Retailing Setting](#)

The study advocates for eBay's strategic focus on recruiting skilled individuals well-versed in social media and digital marketing basics. These talents are envisioned as pivotal contributors

who can comprehend customer reviews and engage effectively, amplifying the online retailer's customer base. This research contributes valuable insights for optimizing digital marketing strategies, fostering enhanced customer relationships, and promoting sustainable growth for eBay.

INTRODUCTION

This investigation is centred on a case study of eBay, examining the impact of digital marketing on establishing a loyal customer base for online retailers (Kannan, 2017). Digital marketing serves various purposes, such as shaping customer preferences, brand promotion, customer retention, and boosting sales. Kannan (2017) emphasizes that major multinational entities like Facebook, Google, Amazon, eBay, and Alibaba have become influential economic players through their adept use of digital marketing. Consequently, digital marketing is now an integral component of every business organization, playing a crucial role in customer attraction and sales generation. Moreover, the significance of digital marketing is underscored by its ability to allow companies to tailor marketing campaigns according to their budget, effectively reaching a wider audience.

Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) point out that businesses used to rely on methods that lacked guaranteed success. Digital marketing has transformed this landscape, providing businesses with the tools for achieving effective conversion rates, particularly through social media channels. As Stephen (2016) cited, eBay exemplifies this trend by employing successful digital marketing strategies to expand its customer base and drive sales. The online socialization trend offers organizations valuable insights into understanding [customer buying behaviour](#).

Research Problem

The research problem stems from a notable omission in the existing literature, where the role of digital marketing and its effects on organizations have not been sufficiently addressed. This underscores a compelling need to delve into this aspect. Additionally, a considerable gap exists in the literature regarding the effectiveness of social media and digital marketing in cultivating a loyal customer base. Karjaluoto et al. (2015) emphasize the crucial role played by digital marketing in influencing customer behaviour. However, there is a dearth of research specifically exploring the influence of digital marketing on the customer base, exacerbated by the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of the digital marketing and social media landscape. Consequently, there is a requirement to restructure the literature related to various digital marketing concepts. This study aims to fill these gaps in the existing literature, addressing the limited research on the impact of digital marketing on the customer base, as observed in Kannan's (2017) framework, which provides a comprehensive overview of digital marketing but lacks an in-depth exploration of its influence on the customer base.

Aims and Objectives

This research seeks to assess the potential of digital marketing in establishing a loyal customer base for online retailers, focusing on eBay as a case study. The objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. Identify the essential factors within digital marketing that directly influence eBay customers.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing in cultivating a substantial customer base, as illustrated in the eBay case study.
3. Offer recommendations to eBay, suggesting improvements to their digital marketing strategies to enhance and expand their customer base.

Research Questions

1. What specific digital marketing factors directly influenced eBay customers?
2. To what extent can digital marketing contribute to establishing a loyal customer base, as evidenced by the eBay case study?
3. What recommendations can eBay implement to enhance its customer base by refining its digital marketing strategies?

The Rationale of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to future research on digital marketing practices, aiming to bridge gaps within the current literature. The dynamic nature of the digital marketing industry, marked by swift innovations, underscores the need for marketing educators to stay abreast of evolving trends and changes (Kannan, 2017). Moreover, Pradhan et al. (2018) highlight clear research gaps in the understanding of digital marketing, particularly in small to medium enterprises, adding to the importance of this study.

The study gains further relevance by shedding light on the role of digital marketing in corporations like eBay. As emphasized by Hill and Alexander (2017), contemporary organizations increasingly recognize the paramount importance of customer satisfaction. Consequently, this research strongly emphasises the application of digital marketing for customer acquisition and retention. The findings of this study hold potential significance by offering valuable recommendations related to digital marketing practices for diverse organizations.

Significance of the Study

The study holds significance as eBay benefits from implementing the recommendations and suggestions put forth by the researcher, thereby enhancing its digital marketing strategies and expanding its customer base. Additionally, the research's importance extends beyond a singular organization, as various entities can leverage their findings to implement diverse marketing

strategies, ultimately boosting sales and refining their brand image. Furthermore, the current research underscores the impact of digital marketing practices employed by the online retail platform eBay, emphasizing their role in acquiring and cultivating an expanded customer base.

Structure of Study

Chapter One provides a contextual background for the research, offering a concise overview of how digital marketing contributes to creating a loyal customer base for online retailers. It outlines the study's objectives, research problems, and questions and briefly justifies and underscores the significance of the research.

Chapter Two, the literature review, delves into the concepts, benefits, and impact of digital marketing. It specifically explores the influence of digital marketing on eBay customers and introduces the theoretical framework guiding the study.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, covering the philosophical approach, design, and methodology employed in the study. It discusses the data collection methods and conducts a detailed analysis of the gathered data. The chapter also addresses research limitations, reliability, and validity, concluding with a discussion of ethical considerations and a summary.

Chapter Four engages in a thorough analysis of the data derived from the study.

Finally, Chapter Five serves as the detailed conclusion of the entire study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the marketing industry evolved, organizations embraced diverse strategies and techniques to enhance their existing customer base and attract new customers (Baltes, 2015). Similarly, the retail sector recognized the potential for growth and expansion within the business landscape. Furthermore, the retail industry, which involves selling goods to consumers through various channels to maximize profit, has undergone a significant transformation with a substantial online presence, necessitating extensive digital marketing (Yasmin et al., 2015). Multinational organizations and start-ups have adopted digital marketing strategies to build substantial customer bases, leveraging its additional features for effective customer acquisition and product promotion across diverse channels (Kingsnorth, 2019).

Traditional marketing methods often incur additional costs, budget constraints, and time for product promotion (Todor, 2016). In contrast, digital marketing offers organizations a streamlined approach to showcase their products and attract consumers. The study also incorporates an assessment of the digital marketing strategies employed by eBay to understand their impact on online retailers.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of the five D's of DM is the overall effective digital marketing theory linked to the customers and their interaction with the brands on digital platforms. Digital devices are the

stages where the customers interact with their brand of choice, such as smartphones, tablets, consoles, laptops, etc. A digital platform is where customers and consumers spend most of their time, such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc. Digital media is the communication channel where brands engage with customers through content and DM. Digital data 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), how information is transmitted to customers through digital media enables companies to create a potential online presence.

Digital marketing is a measurable, interactive, targeted marketing technique (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 Efendioglu (2016), traditional marketing methods have challenges and difficulties in measuring generated results; in some cases, the results are not measured. Moreover, traditional marketing involves businesses promoting and advertising their products on commercials, print media, and radio. These methods are 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).

Website Attributes on Consumer Buying Pattern

Furthermore, digital marketing 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, digital marketing strategies are supposed to improve with time (De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg and Holthof, 2018). Therefore, according to Edelman and Heller (2015), DM is similar to traditional marketing methods, but the crucial difference is the use 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 effectively deploy 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). Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing is considered a cost-efficient marketing method.

Furthermore, marketing and advertising costs are the most expensive part of 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 than traditional marketing methods and provides a diverse impact. The digital presence of brands online gives customers 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 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 the opportunity 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 (Sauraat al., 2017). DM impacts people's daily activities and can influence their buying behaviour. Similarly, digital marketing affects people's purchases, interactions, work and habits. Moreover, research studies have found it more supportive towards the hypothesis that Digital marketing creates a loyal customer base than 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 produced by the brand or an organization tempts potential customers to try the organisation's or business's product or service. Therefore, according to Vien (2015), every company must implement strategies through which Digital marketing creates a loyal and strong customer base. Similarly, the impact of DM can be analyzed by assessing customer brand awareness. 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 to engage with their clients, customers or consumers globally.

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, tracking the customer is essential in how digital marketing creates a loyal customer base because it provides details regarding the potential customer base. eBay has successfully attained 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 eBay's DM strategy 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 attract 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 with 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 who monitor and plan marketing campaigns.

Summary

The literature review chapter highlights the important aspects of assessing how Digital marketing creates a 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 describes digital marketing techniques and underlines its usage in retail industries. The benefits of the DM are discussed, various advantages of digital marketing are mentioned, 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 the generation of a high customer base; thus, this section describes the various factors that affect the customers eBay. In addition, the literature review mentions the theoretical and conceptual framework that figuratively focuses on the different conclusions of the research.

METHODOLOGY

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 qualitative, 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 incorporates 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 creates a 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 applies to the philosophy of interpretivism and permits the researcher to explore the horizons of the research area. Moreover, the qualitative research design can extract important data in a non-numeric form (Rahman, 2017). Furthermore, the qualitative research design was suitable for this study because it is exploratory, 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 how Digital marketing creates a loyal customer base for 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 to use and apply data effectively. 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 for this research. Moreover, the primary data collection method is considered relevant for the study because it aims to produce accurate results according to the researcher's curiosity. The primary data collection method allows the researchers to extract data from the interviews and surveys easily (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 preferences (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 minimal (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 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 creates a 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 results were based on the participants' interviews. 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 followed the ethical constructs for this study to ensure that the data has been referenced properly according to the author's study. 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 study procedures, and the researcher planned out the key questions 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.

Summary

The chapter on the methodology briefly and descriptively highlights the different research paradigms used to perform this study. In addition, it introduces the topic, mentioning the various research methods employed in how Digital marketing creates a 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 study's primary data collection method. Therefore, the thematic analysis method is used due to the primary and qualitative data analysis methods highlighted in the study. 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 the researcher kept in mind.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The preceding chapter delineated the methods for gathering and analyzing research data. The present chapter elucidates the outcomes of interviews conducted with eBay's marketing team members. Thematic analysis was the chosen technique for scrutinizing these interviews, enabling the researchers to derive meaningful themes from the interview questions. Thematic analysis is the preferred method for researchers, especially when analyzing diverse perspectives, opinions, and values individuals express.

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 related to eBay's effective digital marketing practices, the respondents were asked about their opinions about the effectiveness of digital marketing practices. One of the respondents provided answers with the following statement.

“I think digital marketing is effective because it can reach a wide range of audiences. For instance, whenever our digital marketing team at eBay sits down at marketing meetings, we 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.”

In identifying the factors related to performing digital marketing activities on eBay, many respondents stated that the main factors for making an effective digital marketing strategy are understanding the audience's demands and developing a marketing message to generate the desired result.

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“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 positively impacted 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 digital techniques. As marketers, we can now communicate and put forward our services and products without 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; eBay has been driving global marketing. We always plan to engage and communicate with our customers and provide a 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.”

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

“At eBay, we ensure 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 fully explore the options available on our website.”

It is also stated by different respondents that,

“At eBay, we engage more customers through digital marketing practices of social media. As the number of smartphone users is increasing daily, eBay's digital marketing department has customized its advertisements to support smartphone users effectively. Our website is developed to support all types of browsers used on smartphones. In this manner, we can 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, it still 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.

“eBay's marketing department always seeks to develop and implement new marketing strategies to 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, 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 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, start-ups and even the big corporate brands are employing 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 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 an effective method to maintain an engaging customer connection. As a marketer, I must create presentable content for the users, providing them a positive and engaging experience. In my experience as a marketer, this method is more likely to increase customer retention.”

Discussion

Kee and Yazdanifard (2015) explained in their study that the previous decade had observed a change in buyers' actions to satisfy their needs. Buyers are looking for online product marketing to make purchases easily. This 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 selecting 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 Walmart, which are expanding their market online and offering their services around the globe (Lee and Kotler, 2015).

Research on digital marketing practices identified the importance of digital platforms supporting the company's growth after satisfying its consumers' needs (Donnelly *et al.* 2015). Yet, Piercy (2016) also discussed that effective 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 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).

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

Summary

The current chapter discusses the results and discussion of the qualitative study. 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 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, the study puts forth the following recommendations for eBay:

1. **Talent Acquisition and Training:** eBay should prioritize recruiting skilled individuals well-versed in social media or digital marketing fundamentals. This will enable the

company to comprehend customer reviews and actively engage with them, fostering an expansion of their customer base.

2. **Diversified Digital Advertising:** The company should advance its digital marketing efforts by diversifying advertising placement beyond social media platforms. Exploring non-social media websites for effective digital marketing strategies can contribute to overall market advancement. eBay should invest in enhancing digital marketing practices, accompanied by an increased budget to foster business growth.
3. **Enhanced Customer Engagement:** eBay should consistently boost customer engagement to gain a competitive edge and foster customer loyalty. Utilizing sponsored posts on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, sharing compelling daily content, and prioritizing audience interaction over direct sales can contribute to building a stronger connection with the target audience.
4. **Strategic Allocation of Marketing Budget:** The company should focus on allocating its marketing budget for digital advertising strategies such as email, remarketing, and retargeting. Analyzing customer purchasing habits will enable targeted marketing to ideal customers, accurately measuring campaign scope and total return on investment.
5. **Interactive Content through Social Media:** eBay should leverage live-streaming videos, instructional content, and product services on social media platforms to sustain customer engagement and bring ideal customers into the company's online environment.
6. **Customer Financing Initiatives:** Consideration should be given to customer financing for online retailers, catering to customers with budget constraints. This approach enables eBay to attract customers who prefer breaking down purchases into smaller payments.
7. **Personalized Content Creation:** Focus on creating personalized content to maintain a meaningful connection with customers, ensuring a positive and engaging user experience.
8. **Brand Scaling through Social Media:** eBay should strategically leverage the opportunities presented by social media to scale its brand. By establishing and enhancing a compelling brand image on social media platforms, the company can encourage customer-initiated interactions and engagement, fostering a sense of freedom among users in their interactions with the brand.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to assess the role of digital marketing in cultivating a loyal customer base, focusing specifically on eBay as an online retailer. The research held significance in exploring the impact of digital marketing on digital retailers, with eBay serving as a key case study in the context of the evolving digital landscape.

The study's objectives were delineated into three key facets. The primary objectives were centred around identifying the pivotal factors within digital marketing that directly influenced eBay customers and evaluating the overall impact of digital marketing in fostering a robust customer base within the eBay case study.

The findings of the research, elucidated below, emanated from a thorough investigation:

Objective 1: Identifying Key Factors in Digital Marketing for eBay Customers

Identifying key factors in digital marketing, including continuous technological innovation and a customer-centric strategy, proved instrumental in attracting and retaining customers for eBay.

Technological Innovation

eBay's continuous technological innovation emerged as a major factor in attracting customers. The company's persistent efforts in innovating its digital marketing strategies, such as making its services available on mobile phones, provided customers with 24/7 accessibility. The prevalence of smartphones facilitated convenient access to eBay's services, contributing significantly to customer attraction.

Customer-Centric Strategy

eBay's commitment to a customer-centric strategy was pivotal in building its customer base. The company focused on delivering optimal service, ensuring an easy-to-use and user-friendly website, and leveraging different channels, including social media platforms, to engage customers effectively. Regular communication, query resolution, and feedback mechanisms formed the cornerstone of eBay's customer-centric approach, earning it recognition as a dominant digital retailer.

Channel-Centric Marketing

Adopting channel-centric marketing strategies, particularly through social media platforms, contributed to a positive perception in the minds of the general public. eBay's presence and engagement on various social media channels reinforced its brand image and facilitated broader interaction with the target audience.

Budget Allocation for Marketing

Recognizing the impact of digital marketing, eBay allocated a significant budget to its marketing campaigns, resulting in a substantial return on investment. The strategic allocation of resources toward marketing initiatives, encompassing diverse expenses to spread awareness, contributed to eBay's leading position in the online retail business.

Professional Marketing Team

The success of eBay's marketing campaigns was attributed to its professional marketing team. Trained and experienced professionals were vital in conceiving and executing effective

marketing strategies, contributing to eBay's global recognition and respect in the digital retail sector.

Technological Adoption

eBay heavily relied on up-to-date technology for marketing operations. Consistent enhancements to the website and other platforms and the introduction of state-of-the-art software positioned eBay as a frontrunner in leveraging advanced marketing opportunities.

Objective 2: Evaluating Digital Marketing's Impact on eBay's Customer Base

Digital marketing was pivotal in propelling eBay's global expansion and fostering customer loyalty, shaping the platform's remarkable success in digital retail.

Market Advancement through Digital Marketing

eBay substantially benefited from the introduction of digital marketing, aligning with other successful digital brands in the era of digital technology. Digital marketing facilitates global reach, enabling organizations to target diverse customers in minimal time. eBay's efficient use of digital marketing, particularly through social media, was pivotal in establishing and expanding its customer base.

Global Expansion

Digital marketing enabled eBay's global expansion, reaching customers in diverse locations, including remote and less connected areas. Leveraging digital marketing opportunities, eBay successfully penetrated markets where traditional marketing outreach would have been challenging. The platform strategically targeted regions with minimal urban exposure, broadening its customer base significantly.

Trust and Satisfaction

eBay's presence on social media platforms, combined with active engagement and query resolution, enhanced customer trust and satisfaction. The platform's utilization of digital marketing tools contributed to the growth of its customer base by consistently meeting customer demands, resulting in unparalleled satisfaction and loyalty.

Market Recognition

As a digital retailer, eBay's reliance on digital marketing campaigns, surpassing traditional methods, catapulted the company to the forefront. Effective planning and execution and continuous enhancements in marketing strategies allowed eBay to maintain a prominent market position. Digital marketing played a pivotal role in eBay's ongoing success by meeting customer demands and fostering unwavering loyalty.

In summary, eBay's adept use of digital marketing, characterized by technological innovation, customer-centric approaches, strategic budget allocation, and global outreach, has not only

contributed to its current stature but continues to drive its success in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

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- To identify the key factors pertinent to digital marketing that directly impacted eBay's customers.
- To evaluate the impact of digital marketing in generating a high customer base about the eBay case study.
- To provide recommendations for eBay that they can use to increase their customer base by improving their digital marketing strategies.

Interview Questions Transcripts

Transcript 1

Interviewer: Why do you think digital marketing is more effective than traditional marketing methods?

Respondent 1: Digital marketing is effective because it can reach various audiences. For instance, whenever our digital marketing team at eBay sits down at marketing meetings, we 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.

Interviewer: Why do you consider digital marketing as an effective means of communication with 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 can promote the product in the international market without communication barriers. Social media platforms remove these communication barriers. Social media is a powerful tool for digital marketing, and our digital marketing team makes sure to capitalize on this digital medium fully. Digital marketing through different social media channels allows us to gain customers from

various ethnic backgrounds without engaging in time-consuming activities. Our customers also occasionally engage with us and our brand on digital mediums.

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

Respondent 1: Yes, it is because this is a digital age, and 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, understand customer reviews, and effectively engage with them. At eBay, we hire talented digital marketing individuals who adapt easily to our marketing philosophies.

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

Respondent 1: That is an interesting question; eBay has been driving global marketing. We always plan to engage and communicate with our customers and provide a 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. We also need to gain a competitive advantage by engaging with our customers regularly. Because most of our marketing traffic comes 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 cheaper than traditional marketing?

Respondent 1: Digital marketing is way cheaper than traditional marketing methods; it saves time and additional costs and can gain a large customer base worldwide. But you still require a budget to run the digital marketing campaigns on social media. But of course, that budget costs less than traditional marketing methods and has a wide approach. On the other hand, traditional marketing methods have limited interaction with the customers, radio and print adverts are expensive, and measuring the marketing campaign results is not possible.

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, start-ups and big corporate brands employ social media and digital marketing to communicate with customers and their product consumers online. Also, 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 engaging. Even most of the content goes viral very quickly, which helps the brands establish their image and gain an increased customer base.

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

Respondent 1: Any organization or an individual must plan a marketing budget. Planning a marketing budget allows marketers to gain an important perspective on their target audience.

Planning a budget makes the overall marketing experience creative and engaging, provides clear perspectives regarding the marketing campaign, and ensures that our campaign stays on target with the estimated costs and actual costs. We at eBay also know that spending money to make money is important, which makes us competent in marketing planning and budgeting.

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

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

Transcript 2

Interviewer: Why do you think digital marketing is more effective than traditional marketing methods?

Respondent 2: I consider digital marketing more effective than traditional marketing methods because it has a distinct and creative approach. Nowadays, digital marketing methods are used more than traditional methods because they create brand awareness among customers and consumers. We at eBay also consider the tactics and strategies of digital marketing to be more effective than 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.

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

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

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

Respondent 2: Yes, they should; it is important but also unnecessary because digital marketing is quite easy to understand, and brands should focus on hiring individuals that fit the organization, and the rest of the staff can be trained easily. However, the companies must ensure they hire the right fit for the organization. At eBay, we have a very collaborative environment;

everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. Digital marketing tasks are not labour-intensive and require a relaxed and laid-back attitude. So, I believe 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 social media content?

Respondent 2: We at eBay always ensure 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.

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

Respondent 2: Yes, a big yes. Digital marketing is way cheaper than traditional marketing methods. It is cost-efficient, less time-consuming, creative and engaging. Digital marketing is a package that, like any other marketing method, requires budgeting, but the results are also measurable and generate accurate ROI. Digital marketing allows us to gain a worldwide audience's attention without spending 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: Today, people trust other customers and their experiences more than the direct advertisement of the brand. So, people are inclined to buy a certain type of product or service just displayed as the product or service. With social media constantly evolving the digital landscape, in the future, most businesses and organizations will depend on their ability to create digitally enhanced products or services. AI might be most important in improving the overall digital marketing experience.

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

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, 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.

Interviewer: What are the effective methods to retain customers through 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 an effective method to maintain an engaging customer connection. As a marketer, I must create presentable content for the users, which provides them with a positive and engaging user experience. In my experience as a marketer, this method is more likely to increase customer retention.