

# CHAPTER 1 THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF DIGITAL MARKETING



Marketing involves raising the visibility of a product or service in order to convince buyers that it is preferable to any alternatives. The internet is a vital component to the marketing mix of any business. It is one of the main places to promote products or services to potential customers. However, the vast amount of information on the internet makes it easy for products and services to go unnoticed. For a product or service to be noticed it is important to consider what is said, who it is said to; how it is said, where and when it is said.

## ■ Recognise Information Overload

People are constantly bombarded with information from many different sources. Information overload occurs when the information or “input” exceeds a person’s processing capacity. This information overload makes it easy to overlook a product or service, even when it is relevant. A buyer may not take in a company’s marketing message. This is where visual images become important; a good visual image will capture the reader’s attention and compel them to read on. Another important aspect involves placing the product or service in as many places as possible to attract the target audience’s attention. A website should be easy to navigate for people using a variety of devices.

A webpage’s wording must be powerful, succinct, and informative. Remember in today’s global market, there are many other companies who are vying for customer attention.

## ■ Become Readily Accessible

When people search for things on the internet, some things are easier to find than others. This may be the case when they are specifically searching for a business. The more ways that people can find a business, the more likely that business is to succeed. Prospective customers will search for services in different places and using different search terms. A business needs to predetermine how customers will search for them and build different pathways that lead customers to the business’s web page or social media pages.

# DIGITAL MARKETING

There are many different forms of digital marketing that can be used to reach new customers or re-engage and maintain current customer relationships. These include:

## Online Marketing

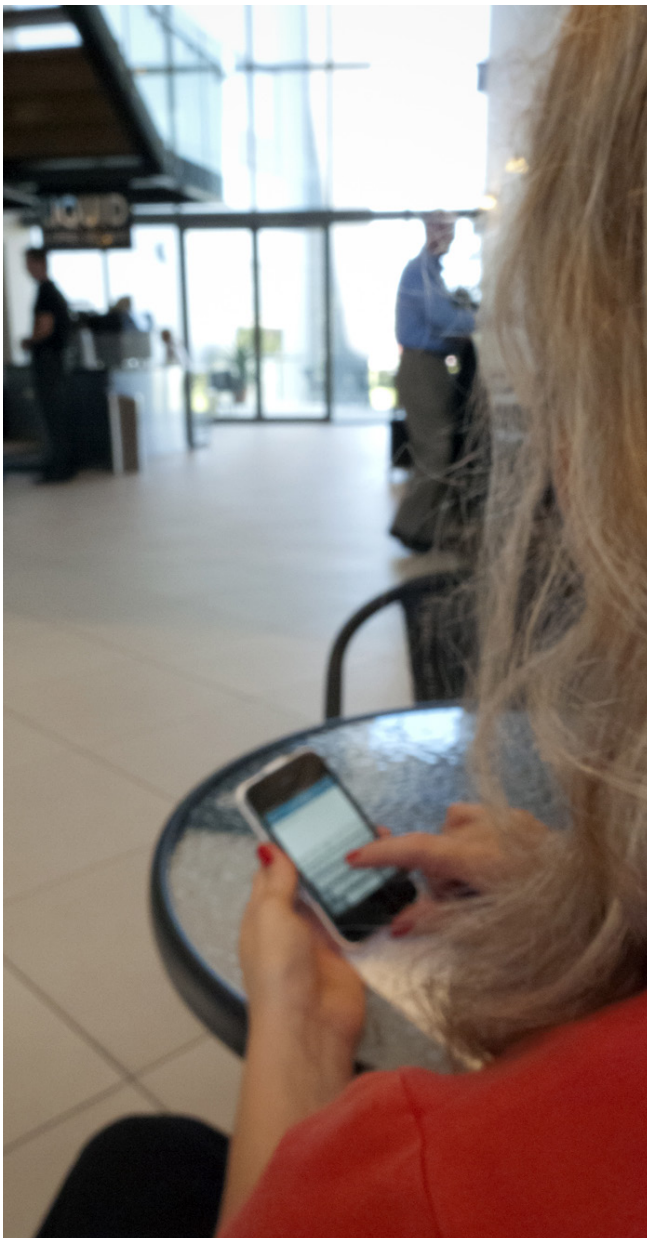
Online marketing is also known as internet marketing or web advertising. This is a newer form of marketing that uses the internet to deliver promotional messages or services to customers. Online marketing works through digital channels such as search engines, email, websites, and social media. Many people were initially reluctant to invest large resources into advertising their businesses or products online. However, this has now changed. People now rely on the internet to advertise product and services. Even small businesses (such as tradespeople) advertise on the internet. This is mainly due to customer accessibility. Customers like the ease with which they can (usually) find what they are looking for on the internet. So, if the local plumber realises this (and advertises on the internet), they may be the first person the customer contacts. Online searches are often convenient for the customer, as they can access key information such as locality of the service, a website, phone number and customer reviews at the click of a button. This type of quick and easy access is essential to most customers today. Internet marketing can help a business reach, attract, and convert online audiences. It may not be the only method of advertising used, but it is considered a common and effective tool for reaching new customers.

Online marketing may involve promoting or selling online, including:

- Business websites and targeted landing pages
- Advertisements – placed on anything viewed over the internet from websites to newsletters, search engine advertising, social media, games, and blogs etc.
- Newsletters
- Social media accounts
- Blogs
- Online shops
- Direct communication (talking with someone) or messaging (e.g. phone, Viber, Skype, texting), online chat
- Video conferencing
- Broadcasting –TV, radio, video, podcasts (e.g. You Tube), corporate TV programs etc.
- Sponsorships
- Games/gaming
- Directory listings (Free or Paid)
- Subscription services
- Emailing
- Review sites
- Affiliate marketing

Online marketing relies on a range of communication tools and access

platforms that allow businesses to reach and build relationships with new customers. Businesses can also cultivate brand loyalty by maintaining relationships with existing customers. The access platforms include smart phones, computers, laptops, and tablets. These hardware platforms are used by internet marketers to deliver marketing content and allow some form of interaction with customers. Customer interaction may occur via various communication tools such as websites, blogs, newsletters, e-mail, instant messaging, Twitter, and other social media platforms.



## Social Media

Social media can be a great marketing tool. Social media is an internet-based computer technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. It gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. It also allows people to communicate with friends, family, and like-minded people easily.

In addition to providing companies with opportunities to network with their target audience, social media also provides companies with targeted advertising opportunities. It is a great platform for businesses to advertise their products or services to customers and to inform them of new developments or special offers. Many advertisements can be targeted based on age, gender, interests, location, and other audience segmentation data. This is useful as companies can ensure that the advertisements placed will reach their desired audience. This ensures that the valuable marketing budget is not wasted.

There are many different social media platforms and new ones appear each week. Companies need to select the right platform for their audience, so that marketing time, energy, money, and effort are utilised effectively.

## Building and Maintaining Networks

The internet is an excellent way to reach potential new customers. However, it is still important to maintain existing customer relationships and develop

a loyal, long-term customer base. It costs five times more to attract a new customer than it does to keep an existing one.

Maintaining customers can be achieved by using email, blogging and social media tactics to increase brand awareness, cultivate a strong online community and retain customer loyalty. For example, personalised emails can be sent to past customers to offer them discounts on previously purchased products, wish them a happy birthday, or remind them of upcoming events or a new sales campaign that might interest them.

## Mobile Application Software (App)

An app is a specifically designed software program that is created to work on a smart phone or tablet. App development plays a key role in digital marketing. Apps can be used for information, education, entertainment, or as a mobile platform for customers to access a company's website. Apps can be used to engage customers or attract new customers. Some companies develop apps in order to provide information and education; to simplify the buying process; share special promotions and coupons; use push notifications, and even for mining customer data. The incorporation of app development in marketing strategies is a key consideration.

## Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Search Engine Optimisation or SEO is a way of ensuring that a company's website performs well in terms of search

engine ranking and where the website appears when somebody types in a search term. There are many factors that can affect a website's SEO, and many ways in which a company can optimise their website to ensure that it achieves a high ranking. SEO is an evolving process that changes regularly. Algorithms are released monthly that can change the way websites are ranked. As this is an important factor in internet marketing, we discuss SEO in more detail later in this e-book.

## Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search Engine Marketing or SEM is paid advertising that can ensure that a website appears towards the beginning of the search results on a search engine. The search results to a search engine search return with paid and unpaid search results. Advertised webpages usually appear in the top two to three lines and may also appear along the side of a web-browser (this also depends upon whether the potential customer is using a computer, tablet, or smart phone). Ultimately, companies bid for the highest place based on key words that people are searching for. This will be discussed in more detail later in this e-book.

## Direct Marketing via Email

Email is a way of delivering a message to a targeted audience that can be specific or personalised to the customer. With the help of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) databases and web platforms, direct marketing can be customised to the customer, delivering messages based on their needs.