

## **A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID – 19 ON DIGITAL MARKETING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The pandemic has compelled businesses to transition online to showcase their products and services. This, in turn, has prompted brands to create content that is contextual and relevant in order to garner a larger mindshare from their customer base. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic had upended the projections of every business and digital marketing is no exception. The health scare factor accelerated the need to shift gears, pronto. However, this impact for most part was a positive one, rather than what was being witnessed in various other fields such as economy, human resource, etc., Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, brands can no longer create their real-time ambiance for their products or services. They had to shift focus to digital marketing for creating the luxury of their brand for selling products as well as services. Digital marketing is not a quick-fix solution to gain momentum. It does not give you visibility overnight. If you are using digital marketing techniques such as search engine optimization (SEO) or social media marketing (SMM). The outspread of corona virus disease (COVID 19) has affected everyone on the planet. With increased social media engagement and craving for digital content, digital media provided the marketers with lot of opportunities to cash on.

This paper is made with an attempt to highlight, analyze and understand the impact of covid-19 pandemic on digital marketing and advertising as a whole.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Covid-19, Pandemic, Digital Channels.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Digital marketing has transformed the marketing game and touched new heights, so much so that the ones who were not anywhere close to this field does now want to use this to promote their brand. With the shift of marketing techniques from traditional to digital, the process of consumer decision making has also changed beyond recognition. As per reports, as of October 2019, almost 4.48 billion people were active internet users, encompassing 58 per cent of the global population. Digital Advertisement Displays, e-mail Marketing, etc, while the Digital Marketing and Advertising were growing at a steady pace, the outbreak of Covid-19 gave it an unexpected boost, by making the people locked down at home with less or no work hand and influencing a fast paced behaviour shift towards digital platforms, digital media, and digital content. This is for the first time in the history of mankind when more than 70% of countries – which include

developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations – are under lockdown. It has already caused huge unrest in the global economy.

The impact of COVID-19 on Marketers and customers alike face uncertainty surrounding health, social, and economic stability with no immediate end in sight. Marketers are torn between the need to support their brands while remaining keenly aware of the appropriate messaging and action needed during this unprecedented time. Behavioral shifts such as working remotely, spending more time indoors, researching real-time news, juggling kids at home, adapting to homeschooling, avoiding crowded areas, and focusing on health first have all had significant impacts on advertising and marketing efforts.

Digital marketing adds two very important elements to traditional marketing. First, it offers new marketing channels that are entirely online and therefore immune to the COVID-19 social distancing consequences. Second, customers leave a forensic trail of evidence in the form of digital data that enables storing, tracking and monetizing every marketing campaign through its channels. With an enormous amount of data at your disposal, you can make better informed campaign decisions, particularly in this time of crisis when every dollar matters.

Digital marketing expenditures have significantly increased over the years. Despite reduced marketing budgets due to the spread of COVID-19, digital marketing channels will still dominate. People have lost their jobs and are left with no or limited sources of income, companies specifically small and medium cap businesses are shutting down. Giants are putting many of their processes on hold. A number of government organizations, too, have been closed down as a preventive measure for corona virus spreading.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the concept of digital marketing.
2. To analyze the impact of Covid-19 on digital marketing.
3. To analyze the future role of digital marketing post Covid-19.

## **3. SCOPE OF STUDY**

Scope of the study is related to understand the concept of Digital Marketing, and to know the impact, that the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic had/has on digital marketing and also understand the future of digital marketing post Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study is based on the secondary sources of data. Secondary data are collected through published sources like text books, journals, magazines and through the blogs and articles published in website.

#### **5. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

- The study is limited to secondary data.
- Time constraints while collecting the secondary data.
- Generalization of all the data from this study is not preferable.

#### **6. DIGITAL MARKETING**

At a high level, digital marketing refers to advertising delivered through digital channels such as search engines, websites, social media, email, and mobile apps. Using these online media channels, digital marketing is the method by which companies endorse goods, services, and brands. Consumers heavily rely on digital means to research products. For example, think with Google marketing insights found that 48% of consumers start their inquiries on search engines, while 33% look to brand websites and 26% search within mobile applications.

While modern day digital marketing is an enormous system of channels to which marketers simply must onboard their brands, advertising online is much more complex than the channels alone. In order to achieve the true potential of digital marketing, marketers have to dig deep into today's vast and intricate cross-channel world to discover strategies that make an impact through engagement marketing. Engagement marketing is the method of forming meaningful interactions with potential and returning customers based on the data you collect over time. By engaging customers in a digital landscape, you build brand awareness, set yourself as an industry thought leader, and place your business at the forefront when the customer is ready to buy.

By implementing an omnichannel digital marketing strategy, marketers can collect valuable insights into target audience behaviors while opening the door to new methods of customer engagement. Additionally, companies can expect to see an increase in retention. According to a report by Invesp, companies with strong omnichannel customer engagement strategies retain an average of 89% of their customers compared to companies with weak omnichannel programs that have a retention rate of just 33%.

As for the future of digital marketing, we can expect to see a continued increase in the variety of wearable devices available to consumers. Forbes also forecasts that social media will become increasingly conversational in the B2B space, video content will be refined for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes, and email marketing will become even more personalized.

“Digital is at the core of everything in marketing today—it has gone from ‘one of the things marketing does’ to ‘THE thing that marketing does.’”

### **Components of digital marketing:**

Digital marketing spans across a massive network of digital touch points that customers interact with many times a day. To properly utilize these channels, you need to have an understanding of each.

- **Paid search.** Paid search, or pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, typically refers to the sponsored result on the top or side of a search engine results page (SERP). These ads charge you for every click and they can be tailored to appear when certain search terms are entered, so your ads are being targeted to audiences seeking something in particular. These ads can be extremely effective, as they rely on data gleaned from individuals’ online behavior and are used to boost website traffic by delivering relevant ads to the right people at the right time.
- **Search engine optimization (SEO).** SEO is the process of optimizing the content, technical setup, and reach of your website, so that your pages appear at the top of a search engine result for a specific set of keyword terms. By using keywords and phrases, you can use SEO to massively increase visibility and begin a lasting customer relationship. SEO is defined as increasing a website’s rank in online search results, and thus its organic site traffic, by using popular keywords and phrases. Strong SEO strategies are hugely influential in digital marketing campaigns since visibility is the first step to a lasting customer relationship.
- **Content marketing.** Effective content marketing is not outwardly promotional in nature, but rather serves to educate and inspire consumers who are seeking information. When you offer content that is relevant to your audience, it can secure you as a thought leader and a trustworthy source of information, making it less likely that your other marketing efforts will be lost in the static. In the age of the self-directed buyer, content marketing gets three times more leads than paid search advertising, so it’s well worth the additional effort.
- **Social media marketing.** The key to effective social media marketing goes far beyond simply having active social media accounts. You must also be weaving social elements into every aspect of your marketing efforts to create as many peer-to-peer sharing opportunities as possible. The more your audience is inspired to engage with your content, the more likely they are to share it, potentially inspiring their peers to become customers as well.

- **Email marketing.** After more than two decades, email is still the quickest and most direct way to reach customers with critical information. Today, successful email campaigns must be incredibly engaging, relevant, informative, and entertaining to not get buried in your customer's inbox. To succeed, your marketing emails should satisfy five core attributes. They must be trustworthy, relevant, conversational, coordinated across channels, and strategic.
- **Mobile marketing.** Mobile devices are kept in our pockets, sit next to our beds, and are checked constantly throughout the day. This makes marketing on mobile incredibly important—two-thirds of consumers can recall a specific brand they have seen advertised on mobile in the last week—but mobile is also very nuanced considering its intimate nature. SMS, MMS, and in-app marketing are all options to reach your customers on their devices, but beyond that, you must consider the coordination of your marketing efforts across your other digital marketing channels.

### **What Is Unique About Digital Marketing?**

Digital marketing adds two very important elements to traditional marketing. First, it offers new marketing channels that are entirely online and therefore immune to the COVID-19 social distancing consequences. Second, customers leave a forensic trail of evidence in the form of digital data that enables storing, tracking and monetizing every marketing campaign through its channels. With an enormous amount of data at your disposal, you can make better informed campaign decisions, particularly in this time of crisis when every dollar matters.

### **Origin of the virus causing COVID-19 by WHO**

In Wuhan City, China, first human cases of COVID-19, was reported in December 2019 (WHO, 2020). Retrospective inquiries undertaken by Chinese authorities reported human cases with symptoms at the beginning of December 2019. Many of the initial patients were either stall owners, market staff or regular visitors to the market. In December, 2019, biological samples taken from that market and they have been tested + for SARS-CoV-2, further concluding that the market in Wuhan City was the origin of the outbreak. The market has been closed since 1 January 2020. All the reported gene sequences of SARS-CoV-2 isolated from human cases are quite similar. This indicates that the epidemic arose from a single point of introduction in the human population around the time the virus was first reported in humans in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. A good number of studies for understanding the origin of the pandemic outbreak in China are currently being planned, including the study of human with symptoms, environmental sampling from markets and farms in areas where first human cases have been reported, and detailed records of the types of animals sold in the market. The results of these studies are important to prevent further zoonotic introduction of SARS-CoV-2 into the human population.

### **Overall impact of Covid-19**

The planet is facing the greatest human tragedy since the Second World War. Almost every country has been affected by the crippling Corona virus disease (COVID-19). The outbreak from China has gone all over the world. In the last few months, Corona's epicenter has moved from China to Europe to the United States. To date, more than 1.5 million people have been infected by COVID19, and about 80,000 people have died worldwide. Indirectly, billions of people have suffered as a result of the global pandemic of COVID-19. Undoubtedly, this Corona virus has put the world economy at a significant risk. Corona virus is undermining the economic pillars of world trade. Commentators described this epidemic as the result of hyper-globalization or the beginning of de-globalization. Nonetheless, the world is going to face a recession; and, according to some analysts, global losses may surpass the combined First and Second World Wars.

## **7. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON DIGITAL MARKETING**

The impact of COVID-19 on global, regional, and local marketing and advertising stems from a truly human response to a completely unique zeitgeist. Marketers and customers alike face uncertainty surrounding health, social, and economic stability with no immediate end in sight. Marketers are torn between the need to support their brands while remaining keenly aware of the appropriate messaging and action needed during this unprecedented time. Behavioral shifts such as working remotely, spending more time indoors, researching real-time news, juggling kids at home, adapting to homeschooling, avoiding crowded areas, and focusing on health first have all had significant impacts on advertising and marketing efforts.

The unprecedented shift is creating the urgent need for brands and their partners to think outside the box and pivot quickly. Because Perficient's DNA is fundamentally wired to look for positives we've found that these behavior shifts have created real opportunities to digitally connect with customers more than ever before. But doing so comes with the increased responsibility of being both mindfully and socially responsible when it comes to messaging and digital marketing strategies.

Changing customer habits naturally leads to variations in media consumption, which in turn causes marketers and advertisers to revisit their existing marketing efforts. A pandemic undoubtedly propels this notion into high gear as they try to find the best balance between guarding their brand while maintaining a successful business.

The widespread of Covid-19 had a drastic negative impact on on-field marketing activities, mainly due to lockdown. However, this opened the doors for digital marketing as people shifted to digital mediums faster than anticipated. The following point explains the impact of covid-19 on digital marketing and advertising.

### **i. Increased Social Media engagement paved way for increased Social Media Marketing:**

Due to Covid-19 outbreak resulting in lockdown and work from home being in place, people had lot of free time, which they mostly spent on social media. As a result, this provides an opportunity for marketers to capitalize on and better connect with their customers through various Social Media sites, like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, etc.,

**ii. Shift from K.P.I expectations to lifetime value:**

Digital Marketing is traditionally based on analytics and Key Performance Indicators (K.P.I) for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of digital marketing campaigns. However, the outbreak of Corona Virus has devalued the importance of, and emphasis on K.P. I's and increased the importance of Customer Lifetime Value.

**iii. Increased demand for Video and Micro Video Content:**

While the internet revolution lead by Reliance Jio made the internet cheaper, the advent of Covid-19, made people so much so free that they had a lot time to spend now. As a result, the demand for video contents in Video streaming platforms like YouTube has increased tremendously. Similarly, in case of micro video content platforms there has been a huge increase in demand. These things provided the marketers with an opportunity to bank on Video and Micro Video contents to advertise and promote their products and services.

**iv. Increased importance of A.I based Chatbots:**

While the online activities of the people have increased during quarantine, and the majority of the workforce was on work from home status, the companies adopted to A.I based Chat-bots, that would provide necessary assistance to the customers though a preprogrammed chat room. The use of these kinds of chat-bot the customers liking towards these bots has also increased unexpectedly, and as a result, these chat-bots have become a virtual assistant to the customers.

**v. Emphasis of Experiential Marketing:**

As people are spending more time online during this lockdown period, the marketers has to emphasis on making the customers online experience engaging or else the chances are that the customer can get bored soon, if the webpage, landing page or virtual environment does not provide a good experience. Thus, the marketers are heavily emphasizing on making the customers online experience a delightful one when they visit the website, attend webinar, visit curate content hub, visit landing pages etc.,

**vi. Surge in demand for O.T.T. Content Hubs:**

Covid-19 lockdown period also saw a surge in demand for and viewership of Over-The-Top Content Hubs such a Netflix and Amazon Prime. The surge in demand for these O.T.T platforms provides the Digital Marketer with an opportunity to promote and market their products and service through these platforms.

**vii. Increased Product Research among customers:**

Over the last few months the people are spending more time in researching about products and services online. Thus, it's forcing brands and marketers to manage their online reputation effectively and be responsive towards the customer reviews and requests and avoid any possible backlash.

### **How the covid-19 is driving new changes in digital marketing**

Covid-19 lock down has halted many business processes starting from manufacturing, supply chain to logistics, and marketing. Some businesses have closed or paused their digital marketing activities temporarily, citing the health concerns of their employees. If you are on that side, what you will have in the end is drastically decreased online traffic, sales, engagement, conversation, and pushed down search ranking.

Digital marketing is not a quick-fix solution to gain momentum. It does not give you visibility overnight. If you are using digital marketing techniques such as search engine optimization (SEO) or social media marketing (SMM) – I believe you are already aware that your implementations take three to four months' time to give results.

### **Post Covid-19 Digital Marketing Trends That Will Drive the Future:**

Digital marketing has become one of the best forms of marketing because people spend a significant amount of their time online. The world also has been transformed into a global village since many business activities are conducted online without the need to travel from one location to the other.

Many online marketing companies can help businesses across all industries to reach their target audience online and establish a strong online presence that will guarantee more sales, more revenue, and more profit.

There are many digital marketing techniques, and the effectiveness of each method depends on how you lay your strategies and your plan. As a business owner, we should ensure that marketing strategy is in line with current online marketing trends. In the year 2020, COVID-19 has directly affected the marketing resulting in new digital marketing trends that businesses have employed to thrive. Here are digital marketing trends that will drive business growth in the future.

#### **1. Email Marketing**

Email marketing is one of the best components of digital marketing with the best ROI. Businesses across almost all industries continue to use email marketing to present their brands to their customers and potential customers alike. It is also one of the best digital marketing techniques that will drive the future. Email Marketing provides a direct connection between



brands and their potential customers and customers alike. Those who buy goods and services advertised through the email spend 138% more than those who do not receive the advert offers.

## **2. Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing has become one of the best forms of digital marketing in today's digital world. This type of marketing involves using an influence with a substantial number of followers on various social media platforms. The influencer can recommend your products or service to their followers. Research shows that 93% of advertising agencies used influencer marketing to create awareness of goods and services.

## **3. Use of Chatbot**

Chatbot marketing is a method of creating awareness of goods and services by using an application installed on a computer. In modern days, the chatbot uses videos, text, etc. to communicate between the client and the brand. Many websites are now using chatbots, and more and more brands are jumping into the bandwagon. Chatbots can be integrated into a company's website to allow communication between the company and its clients. One advantage of using AI Chatbots is that there is virtual assistance that responds to clients anytime any day making it effective and convenient.

## **4. Pay per click (PPC)**

Pay per Click or simply PPC is another digital marketing trend where brands pay money every time their ad is clicked. The higher the traffic on the page the higher the number of clicks and this translates into high earnings. In pay per click advertisement, search engine advertising is the most commonly used method.

## **5. Video marketing**

Many people like watching videos than reading words or listening to audio. This makes video marketing effective in conveying information about your products. This form of online marketing can be used on YouTube, Face book, Twitter, and Instagram because they are video supporting channels. Engaging videos that are catchy are more appealing to the audience making it easy to convey the message about a brand.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

As COVID-19 has spent the greater part of this year on a world-wide tour, the impacts on the global economy have been widely felt. While many industries have already made commendable come-backs from the crippling impacts of the first couple months of the global public health crisis, there have been longer lasting – potentially permanent – shifts to how we market brands, interact with our customers, and conduct business. The study started with the aim to analyze the different issues related to digital marketing. The impact of COVID-19 on global, regional, and local marketing and advertising stems from a truly human response to a completely unique zeitgeist. Marketers and customers alike face uncertainty surrounding health, social, and economic stability with no immediate end in sight. Marketers are torn between the need to support their brands while remaining keenly aware of the appropriate messaging and action needed during this unprecedented time. In the year 2020, COVID-19 has directly affected the marketing resulting in new digital marketing trends that businesses have employed to thrive. Here are digital marketing trends that will drive business growth in the future

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