



HFDA Academy: New View

Marcell Tóth: Declining Demand, Accelerated Marketing

What you need to know about digital marketing:

The role of digital marketing in business has become even more important due to the outbreak of the pandemic. This can be perfectly seen reflected in our consumer habits, it's enough to just think about the amount of time we spend online. Using marketing as a business function can be done effectively when it appears on platforms that get people's attention - and at the moment, online space is the venue where businesses can achieve their business goals with digital marketing solutions.

One of the basic rules of marketing is relevance, which requires companies to target consumers with their message at the right time, place and channel, with the message being of use to the receiver - be it a blog post, a Google search hit, a Facebook live session, or a funny Instagram post. Companies should strive to create content that brings them closer to their potential customers. For example, as a designer, one can write an article about how readers can live up their homes during an epidemic, or with a help of a Facebook live session, viewers can view the process of how a product is made.

Due to its specifics, the sum allocated on online marketing can be considered as an investment rather than an expense. The reason for this lies in its aspects of measurability and planning. In the world of online marketing, the effectiveness of any tool can be quantified through conversion measurement, and therefore its effectiveness in reaching business goals can be measured of nearly any digital marketing tool. Users pay-per-click for ads on digital platforms, and by doing so a complete picture of their most successful campaign elements can be identified. This is what gives digital marketing its cost-effective nature, coupled with a high level of flexibility, as ads can be activated and paused at any given time, and can also be used with a low budget. Another argument in favour of digital solutions is to target potential customers as accurately as possible based on their previous online searches and online behaviour, thanks to data-driven information.

Digital marketing has a myriad of channels — social media, influencer marketing, and search engine optimization — are all tools that can help increase sales. During the current period, it's worthwhile to spend a higher amount on implementing and using these tools, as the virtual, online space can bring new customers while personal selling takes a back seat. The key to successful digital marketing is interactivity – which is the best possible way for consumers to commit to a brand. Interactive content - such as co-creating or designing with followers - engages users to increase clicks and, last but not least, it provides an experience for the audience. Influencer marketing can also be an excellent tool to reach a given target audience, however, it is important that the opinion leader representing the product needs to fit in seamlessly with the brand, otherwise no real results can be expected. Content marketing can also be an effective tool.

Industry players should also be open to share written or visual content that provide answers and insights reflecting on a given consumer problem. This requires the use of keywords that are highly likely to appear in users' searches. This method is called an intent-based marketing. Furthermore, display ads can also contribute to gaining customers: mainly remarketing which creates a target audience based on the previous users of the website and advertises and encourages to purchase with visual content.

Adapting to consumer habits

Marketing is cannot be separated from the process of adapting to consumer needs. One of the consequences of the pandemic is the rise of online shopping – and due to this new situation, companies will also have to conduct their marketing activities in a virtual space. Today's consumers can best be classified along with three criteria, and identifying these characteristics determine the success of digital marketing. Curiosity is the number one attribute of today's customers: they maximise the opportunity of gathering information and are happy to become informed about a product that is relevant to them, however, they also have very high expectations, as they enjoy a wide range of freedom when choosing a product and can switch to another brand at any time. In addition, consumers also prove to be impatient, so speed is crucial in meeting business goals, as this is the one of the main foundations that user experience is built on. The third consumer attitude is related to the concept of digitization. Customers prefer digital options, such as e-invoices, e-contracts, and contactless payment.

In current times, companies need to make sure they pay even more attention to meeting the needs of their consumers at a high level. The situation caused by the pandemic has provided an opportunity for businesses to engage in value creation they previously had no time for - yet which is essential to increasing customer satisfaction - such as market research and product development. The time consumers spend online has increased, providing an excellent opportunity for companies to build closer relationships with their potential customers and pay attention to consumer needs, for example through quizzes and questionnaires. Based on the obtained results of these methods, industry players can rethink their product portfolios to ensure they can meet consumer needs in the future.

The trends and processes in the crisis:

- Self-reflection, however instead of being bitter, live for a creative passion
- The elements of trust gain value
- The domestic product as a USP is not enough, competing with foreign competitors is now also an aspect - domestic creativity and the usage of raw materials is important
- The possibility of product structure change

The impact of the pandemic on consumers

The crisis is also having a significant impact on consumer attitudes, overriding the conventional. A general need for self-reflection and internalization attention, which is a good opportunity for designers to indulge in their creative passions.

In these uncertain times, the elements of online trust - including online recommendations - are gaining value as consumers have become more distrustful as the result of the unexpected situation, and prefer to spend their income on trusted brands as a result. Due to these changes, businesses need to strive for caring communication and to appear on digital channels as a caring brand.

It is also worthwhile to be present on several channels at the same time and to visit forums. A further consequence of the virus situation is the spread of sustainability: consumers may become more receptive to “green” products, so taking environmental considerations into account will be a competitive advantage in the future. It is now clear that the role of digitization in business processes has grown and content strategy has reached a high level of importance, making it worthwhile to modify online marketing strategies.