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## DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE LIGHT OF PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGE ON THE MARKET

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**Abstract:** In the realm of modern businesses, digital marketing occupies a central and essential place. It represents a strategic component of a company's activity, considering the significant changes in consumer behavior and the business environment generated by the digital revolution.

Digital marketing is an essential component of modern marketing strategies and represents the use of digital channels to promote and market products and services. It has numerous characteristics and particularities that differentiate it from other forms of traditional marketing. Currently, it has become an essential component in the arsenal of tools of modern businesses, offering significant opportunities for growth, innovation, and direct interaction with consumers.

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Increasingly dynamic and influenced by constant changes, emerging markets and traditional business models face increasing pressures, imposing the necessity of rapid adaptation to macro and microeconomic evolutions.

Digitalization no longer represents just a whim but becomes an imperative necessity for companies aspiring to increase revenues and maintain competitiveness in the current environment. Digital transformation has become important to respond to the increasingly complex requirements of the contemporary business environment and to exploit emerging opportunities.

This transition towards digitalization provides companies with innovative tools and technologies to optimize operations, communicate effectively with customers, and adapt strategies in real-time. Thus, digitalization is no longer just an option but becomes the engine that propels businesses towards new horizons and opportunities.

The digital approach has become a competitive advantage, a condition for the survival and long-term success of enterprises characterized by rapid changes and increasingly sophisticated consumer requirements [1].

The significance of digital marketing in business is increasingly imposed by the current necessity to create online visibility and branding for entities from any field of activity. Digital marketing provides a platform for building and strengthening online presence through digital channels such as websites, social networks, blogs, and other online channels; a business can increase visibility and consolidate its brand image. Digital channels facilitate direct communication between the company and its customers. Through social networks, emails, and other digital means, businesses can interact directly, quickly, and efficiently with consumers.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) represents a set of techniques and strategies used to improve the visibility and ranking of a website in search engine results. For digital marketing, the fundamental purpose of SEO is to attract organic (unpaid) traffic to a website by increasing its positioning in search results on different keywords. Optimizing content, site structure, meta descriptions, images, internal links, and other elements aims to provide a better user experience and clear understanding of the content by search engines. This is a continuous and complex process that involves monitoring search engine algorithms, competitor analysis, keyword research, technical optimization of the site, and creating quality content. Effective SEO can lead to an increase in organic traffic, increase the site's authority, and improve the conversion rate. SEO represents the bridge between clients and online companies.

SEM (Search Engine Marketing) is a form of online marketing that involves promoting a website for a fee and includes, alongside unpaid SEO, the paid part for displaying ads in search engine results, such as PPC (Pay-Per-Click) where advertisers pay a fee when users click on their ads. The best-known example of PPC is Google Ads, which displays ads at the top and bottom of Google search results. Through SEM, marketers can target ads to users based on keywords relevant to their products or services. This is a very effective strategy for rapidly generating traffic and increasing visibility in search results, aiming to position websites as close to the top of search results as possible.

In the development of digital marketing, a special place is reserved for Social Media Marketing (SMM), which represents the use of socializing platforms and social networks to promote a product, service, or brand. This type of marketing focuses on creating and distributing content on these platforms to attract and engage target consumers.

To be more effective in customer relations, SMM must create attractive and relevant content for the target audience. This content can include texts, images, videos, and other types of materials that provoke interest and involvement. Marketing on social networks involves managing and constantly updating a company's or organization's social media profiles. This includes regular content posting, responding to questions, and interacting with the online community and may involve paid advertising on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn. This includes paid campaigns to promote ads and obtain greater visibility [2].

It is essential to track the performance of social media campaigns to assess their impact and make adjustments where necessary. This may include analyzing the number of interactions, increasing the number of followers, and other relevant metrics. Social Media Marketing offers unique opportunities to come into direct contact with consumers. Quick responses to questions, feedback, and participation in conversations contribute to building a community and strengthening relationships with customers. Social media channels have become some of the most powerful tools available on the internet for companies operating online.

Analytical tools in digital marketing, such as Google Analytics, Hotjar, Facebook Insights, Google Search Console, and others, are essential for evaluating campaign performance, understanding user behavior, and making informed decisions. Using these tools properly allows marketing specialists to obtain valuable data, make real-time adjustments, and optimize campaigns to achieve set goals.

In planning, implementing, and monitoring digital strategies, a special role belongs to the personnel employed in digital marketing. The department is responsible for managing all aspects related to online marketing, including social media promotion, search engine optimization (SEO), paid advertising, and others.

The SEO (Search Engine Optimization) specialist is responsible for optimizing online content to improve ranking in search engines and influence the growth of the visibility of the company and its products, as well as unpaid individuals.

In the competence of the Social Media specialist is managing social media profiles, creating and distributing content, interacting with the online community, and managing paid campaigns on social media platforms [4].

Managing paid campaigns, such as those for advertising on Google AdWords or other platforms to bring qualified traffic to the site, falls to the PPC (Pay-Per-Click) specialist.

Alongside these, for the smooth running of digital marketing companies, other employees are necessary, such as:

- Content Marketer, who is responsible for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content such as articles, blogs, videos, and infographics to attract and engage the audience;
- Web Analyst (Web Analyst), who monitors and analyzes data to evaluate the performance of campaigns, site traffic, conversions, and other relevant metrics;
- E-mail Marketing Specialist, who is responsible for creating and implementing email marketing campaigns designed to build relationships with customers and encourage specific actions;
- Digital Project Manager, who coordinates the efforts within the digital marketing team, manages budgets, sets goals, and ensures the effective implementation of strategies;

- Graphic Designer (Graphic Designer), who creates attractive visual elements for digital campaigns, including graphics for social media, advertising banners, and other materials, and other specialists.

Each team member must be a specialist trained in a specific field to contribute to achieving the overall digital marketing goals of the organization.

The marketing budget is an essential component of the business strategy and must be managed carefully to achieve the best results in terms of impact and profitability. The marketing budget represents the amount of money allocated for the marketing activities and campaigns of an organization over a certain period of time, usually over the course of a year. It reflects the planned investment in various marketing channels and tactics, as well as the financial resources allocated to achieve the objectives set in the marketing strategy. The most widespread methods of establishing the traditional marketing budget are setting a percentage of income as a fixed sum or as a variable percentage adjusted based on the previous performance of campaigns and can be distributed among various marketing channels, such as online advertising, traditional advertising, events, content marketing, social media, SEO, email marketing, and others.

The online marketing budget represents the amount of money allocated for the implementation of marketing strategies on digital channels. In determining and managing the online marketing budget, clear objectives must first be established. Whether it's increasing site traffic, increasing brand awareness, or conversions, each goal requires a distinct strategy that demands different expenses.

Budget allocation must take into account the target audience and the channels they frequent. For example, if the target audience is active on social media platforms, a significant part of the budget could be allocated for advertising on these platforms.

**Table 1. Specific elements that differentiate traditional marketing from digital marketing:**

| Nr d/o | Dimension                    | Characteristic   |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 1      | Interactivity                | Digital marketing allows two-way interaction between brands and consumers. Through social networks, emails, chats, and comments, there is a more dynamic and direct dialogue between companies and clients.      |
| 2      | Measurability                | One of the major advantages of digital marketing is the ability to precisely measure results. Click rates, conversions, site traffic, and engagement on social networks can be tracked and analyzed.             |
| 3      | Precise targeting            | <i>Digital marketing allows for very precise targeting of the target audience.</i> It's possible to reach people based on demographics, interests, online behavior, geographic location, and many other factors. |
| 4      | Reduced Costs                | Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing can be more cost-effective and may provide a better return on investment (ROI).   |
| 5      | Personalization              | Thanks to the ability to collect and analyze data, digital marketing provides the possibility to personalize messages and content to meet the individual needs and preferences of consumers.                     |
| 6      | Global Access:               | The internet enables reaching global audiences, opening new opportunities for business expansion.  |
| 7      | Rapid Change and Flexibility | Digital marketing campaigns can be adjusted quickly. If a campaign is not working as planned, it can be modified or adapted swiftly to achieve better results.   |
| 8      | Audience Interaction         | <i>Digital marketing facilitates two-way communication with customers.</i> The feedback received from the audience can be invaluable for improving products or services.   |

Source: Developed by authors

It is important not to invest the entire budget in a single channel. Diversifying across multiple channels (SEO, PPC, social media, email marketing, etc.) helps to reach a wider audience and cover more touchpoints with consumers.

Budget allocation must be justified by the return on investment (ROI). It is important to constantly monitor and evaluate results to make adjustments and direct resources towards strategies that bring the best results.

The online environment is dynamic, and trends can evolve rapidly. The budget must offer flexibility to respond to changes in consumer behavior or changes in search engine algorithms.

Therefore, part of the budget must be allocated to training and developing the personnel responsible for implementing and managing online marketing campaigns. Well-trained personnel can significantly contribute to the efficiency of campaigns [5].

As in any activity, it is important to take into account the actions of competitors and adjust the budget in such a way as to remain competitive in the market. Successfully managing the online marketing budget involves a balanced approach tailored to the specific needs and objectives of each business.

Digital marketing is constantly evolving, and success in this field requires constant learning and adaptability to technological changes and online consumer behavior.

The specific features of digital marketing mentioned above demonstrate the advantages and differences brought by digital marketing compared to traditional marketing methods, underlining its potential to effectively influence and interact with the target audience.

MarketResearch.com, an online source providing access to a variety of market studies from different research companies, in its studies aimed at determining the advantages and disadvantages of business digitalization, highlights some advantages and obstacles of it.

Advantages of digitalization development mentioned are [6]:

- Increased customer satisfaction. 67% of companies that have implemented digitalization in customer relations confirm an increase in their satisfaction and consequently an increase in loyal customers.
- Increased convenience. 64% of companies say that employees are much more dedicated to their work due to digital transformation. In Moldova, 40% of companies report that digitalization has already had a major impact on their activities.
- Activity optimization. 46% of Italian companies included in the research state that digitalization has led to a decrease in costs and a simplification of activities.
- 34% of Romanian companies say that digitalization has allowed them to better measure performance indicators, while they have improved operational efficiency.

However, some obstacles have also been highlighted, such as the lack of qualified employees, fear of the unknown. Not enough employees are able to keep up with the implementation of new technologies or understand them, and some directors are too attached to the old organizational culture and are quite reluctant to adopt new technologies. In Moldova, there is a situation where the costs of implementation are seen as too high, and the local business models are not strong enough to support radical changes. Any company that does not adapt to the new reality will inevitably experience poorer performance, a decrease in revenues, or even insolvency.

Digital marketing is the promotion of products and services through digital channels. If your business is promoted through a screen, you are already practicing digital marketing. Since this practice encompasses practically all digital channels, there are many types of digital marketing. For example, digital content marketing relies on blogs to build trust and expertise. Social network marketing uses brand hashtags to increase brand awareness and generate user-created content (UGC). Regardless of the business model or audience, all excellent marketing strategies apply the following four best practices:

1. Identifying the audience. Without an audience, marketing has no reason to exist. The purpose of marketing is to interact with potential customers and convert them into customers. If we do not understand the expectations and needs of the audience, the message is doomed to failure. By identifying the audience, we can meet customer needs. The most successful digital marketing teams collect customer data to refine their digital marketing strategies. Analytics, opinion polls, and comments allow us to learn more about consumers. Digital marketing is the promotion of products and services through digital channels; therefore, if the business is promoted through a screen, you are already practicing digital marketing.

2. Setting goals. Without a goal, marketing campaigns are less targeted. However, targeting is key to success. Therefore, any successful marketing campaign begins with a goal. The goals of the best global digital marketing campaigns are defined using the SMART method: Specific. The goal clearly describes what you want to achieve. Measurable. You need to define a quantifiable indicator that allows

you to determine when your goal is reached. Achievable. The goal is realistic and takes into account the resources and time you have available. Relevant. The goal aligns with your company's priorities and will have a positive impact on your business. Time-bound. You need to achieve the goal by a certain date. Within the SMART method, generic objectives such as "increasing sales" become more concrete objectives, such as "increasing gross margin by 15% by the end of quarter 2". This allows you to more easily assess the success or failure of a campaign. Moreover, this concrete objective is much clearer for marketing teams.

3. Evaluating previous projects. Before planning your new annual campaigns, examine previous campaigns. What worked? What went wrong? What opportunities would you have liked to take advantage of? By examining your previous campaigns, you learn how to design successful future campaigns.

4. The importance of logistics. What logistics should be implemented for the execution of a campaign? While marketing specialists will perform miracles, they must also consider the logistics that could hinder the campaign. These limitations are important in achieving SMART objectives. In the case of e-commerce, an integrated digital strategy that guarantees the conversion of contacts into effective sales is essential. For brands that also have offline sales channels, digital marketing is an extraordinary opportunity. Digital marketing refers to the creation and dissemination of content on digital media channels, for example, websites, landing pages, social networks, email, and mobile applications, as well as promoting that content using a variety of strategies on paid, earned, and owned digital channels, including SEO, SEM, pay-per-click (PPC), advertising, content distribution, social networks, email, text messages, and many others. Digital marketing strategies help marketing agencies to define objectives, target an audience, and develop a suitable digital marketing plan for that audience.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, digital marketing is essential for promoting and strengthening your presence in the market, providing powerful tools for interacting with the audience, managing reputation, customizing messages, and analyzing the effectiveness of campaigns. A strategic and coherent approach in the digital environment can bring significant benefits in building and maintaining a strong brand image. These strategies provide direction to a certain campaign or program and a framework for evaluating results. Currently, everything is digitized, and digital marketing has been integrated into almost all aspects of business, fundamentally changing the way companies communicate with customers and provide value. Consequently, if an agricultural or agri-food enterprise cannot implement and execute a digital marketing strategy on a globalized and continuously developing online market, there is simply no chance of success.

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