

## DIGITAL MARKETING PAVING WAY FOR STARTUPS

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### ABSTRACT

*Customers have moved from planning a purchase for days – to searching for a product or a service due to a cue that is coming across them...*

*That may be a notification on the smartphone or a display ad on the search engine or a mail in the inbox that says – Your cart is missing you!*

*We are living into an age where everything's seems to change so fast and that's the only winning mantra- reaching the right buyer or target group, at the right time with the right content. Traditional marketing is not the thing of the past but its something that can be complemented with all digital marketing activities.*

### EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital, Online and Internet marketing are three different things. From the era of online shopping and e commerce to having an Internet connectivity for doing online marketing everything was a part of digital. Then came the concept of any marketing that happens via a digital gadget so that's digital marketing- may be an SMS from a marketer that reminds you of a nascent need or want; that's digital marketing. So we can say that any marketing that happens, be it online selling with the presence of internet or without it, happening on a digital device is digital marketing. According to the Digital Marketing Institute, "Digital Marketing is the use of digital channels to promote or market products and services to targeted consumers and businesses."

Presently the Indian digital marketing industry is valued at US\$ 3.2 billion and is expected to reach US\$ 5.7 billion by 2023. As the endemic puts things to normal the change in media habits and consumer behavior pattern are here to stay. It all began in 1990s the world was changing and a term internet was being born. People started searching for information on the internet and Web 1.0 was platform was being developed. Everything was with a click on a internet and

the finger tips navigated the pages to read and absorb every piece of news or information that came across. First marketing activity was a clickable banner ad that went live in 1993 and soon after this Yahoo was launched in the year 1994. Yahoo saw a positive acceptance in the market and a wave of searching things on the internet encompassed every buyer big or small. In the first year yahoo got more than one million hits and being a search engine people started eyeing a space on the search engine and thus digital marketing became more popular. 1995 CSNL launched its internet services in India, which was the origin of digital marketing in India.

More search engines were launched by 1996, also tools like HotBot, LookSmart, and Alexa came into the global market. Google was started in 1998 and after sometime the internet bubble burst to evaporate small players in the market. The platforms improved in terms of interface of user communication and interaction. Web 2.0, enabled people to become active participants rather than passive users and allowed users to interact with other users and businesses. This change increased the scope of digital marketing activities.

In 2011, Google came up with a term ZMOT-Zero Moment of Truth. ZMOT refers to the moment in the buying process when the consumer researches a product prior to purchase.

The moment any entrepreneur has an idea that's viable and feasible the next thing is to capture the mind share but how? Today the entry barriers are substantially low in all cloud based services be it a cloud kitchen or a CRM software. Digital marketing is a boon for startups as it magnifies the reach, focused campaigns, connect with the right audience that's most active on digital platforms and also the efforts of each rupee spent can be measured with the help of metrics and optimized. Also the venture requires certain changes as it navigates through the market and there may be requirements in changing the promotions that can be very well navigated while using digital marketing as compared to traditional marketing ways.

According to the official website of Indian Brand Equity Foundation, the number of MSME registered is approximated at 6.3 crores as of April 2021. The rate of MSME registration has grown at a CAGR of 18.5% from 2019 to 2020. The sector contributes to 29% of the GDP in both national and international trade. Advantage of brand and technology would lead to creating a brand image, increase sales and finally better revenues for the startups.

Certain features like unique, prudent financial spending, limited funds, tech based, want a quick identity and mind share of buyers characterize startups. These conditions create the necessity of having marketing ideas and strategies that are focused, measurable, flexible, optimized and offer a better ROI.

There are various digital marketing tools and techniques that the startups can use to create an identity of the brand, build brand equity and also create communities that aim at resonance.

## **WEBSITE IS THE NEW DESTINATION**

From giving business cards as an introduction in old days; today we introduce our venture by providing the web address, QR Code, Instagram profile, a

whatsapp card or a LinkedIn profile id to the new age investors, customers and stakeholders. Website design involves looking at the wire framing, UX/UI interface and the on page optimization that the marketers have to look at. When a startup registers the company name with the ROC they should do a prior review of the domain availability. The domain name ideally should be related and meaningful and indicative of the company name or business name.

Various website optimization mechanism are available with SEO experts that help in creating tags and content that's SEO enabled and the keywords are also hand picked for getting better ranking on search engine result pages. Any campaign that the startup wants to run on various digital platforms the landing of traffic is on the website that should have an engagement else the bounce on the website will lead to a poor quality score impacting page rank. SEO both the components of off page and on page should be optimized. The tags be it Title, Meta, Header and Alt tags should be having the keywords as per keyword listing.

The trend has changed from bidding for short tail keywords to long tail keywords. Startups have a limited budget, which has to be optimized in marketing efforts. When the companies choose the keywords in a PPC (Pay per click) campaign the traffic volume is not the only things that should be looked at. The relevancy of the traffic is also that has to be a focus area. Short tail keywords can be chosen to get a good traffic to the website but add-ons of long tail keywords will have limited traffic but relevancy will be good leading to a better conversion and engagement.

## SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

The company that has just launched a product or a service can optimize search results using the on page and off page organically but it will take time. As the brand awareness and equity is not built overnight. Going on the Google search the visitor enters the name of a brand that enjoys the top of mind recall. And the new brands have to struggle getting that space.

SEO has to be complemented by SEM efforts. Ranking at the top of the search results is one of the main objectives of search engine marketing. SEM seeks to boost a website's visibility, brand awareness, raise the likelihood of a user clicking on their website, and get ahead of competitors by doing so—or a mix of the three.

When we hear the word "search engine marketing," we usually think of paid tactics for improving a website's ranks. This is most commonly used to refer to pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. For every click made by a viewer money is paid to the search engine based on the bidding methods. The startups would choose the best keywords that would lead to the landing page. While creating an effective SEM strategy certain things to be focused – goals to be identified, choose keywords that are proper magnets to traffic, include negative keywords, define a landing page that leads to a proper engagement, A/B testing of copy so that a better ad can be run and finally managing the effectiveness to reach desired results.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Each and every person spends a high time on social media platforms. Be it engaging with brands or creating brand communities. Social media marketing holds a lot of important in developing new brands. The platforms have unique features to target the ads to individuals based on other parameters along with demographic characteristics. The other targeting variables that can be used are - interests, education, location, media habits, entertainment and magazines read.

Instagram is a popular platform for Gen Z and also for millennials. Whenever the social media marketing is aimed at the objective should be defined along the PLC and the platform should be chosen accordingly. Facebook still enjoys giving brands a canvas for a mass reach and also has a user-friendly dashboard. Twitter should be used as a conversation led platform where the response time has to be low. The social media marketing should be used to divert the traffic to the website or the landing page where a text form can be used to capture leads. There are various tools that can be used to suggest the trending hash tags that may boost a social media post. Later a chapter explains in detail branding via social media marketing.

## CONTENT BASED MARKETING STRATEGY

All brands are omnipresent on digital marketing today. The differentiation factor is the content that is present that leads to engagement, conversions and advocacy.

When starting a business, wise management of resources is a primary concern. In this regard, you will be pleased to know that content marketing for startups is much more profitable than traditional alternatives. Some experts say it can be as much as 62% cheaper.

In particular, startups need to go the extra mile to market themselves to win potential customers. No matter how good your product or service is, it won't succeed if you can't reach your target audience. We often see cases where the brand started off well but left the job. They ignore the fact that constant visibility is necessary to survive in the minds of consumers.

Creating the right content that connects with the target audience helps in a better conversion in the sales funnel. It also attracts the consumers to the brand and also helps in creating trust and loyalty.

Content marketing for startups helps you create a strategy so you can communicate with your audience consistently. You'll be able to reinforce your message and help your customers move up the sales funnel. Remember that it's not enough to get noticed, your brand needs to be familiar to the public. In addition to logo recognition, you need to be aware of your value proposition and how it meets their needs. Content marketing for startups is particularly effective at forging and nurturing these relationships. When your target audience can recognize your brand and identify your differentiating attributes, they are more likely to become customers. If your brand doesn't capture the attention of your target audience, you won't be able to grow your business. Remember that customer value is not limited to sales. This is their amplification

potential. A satisfied consumer or someone in your audience convinced by your message can help increase awareness of your brand.

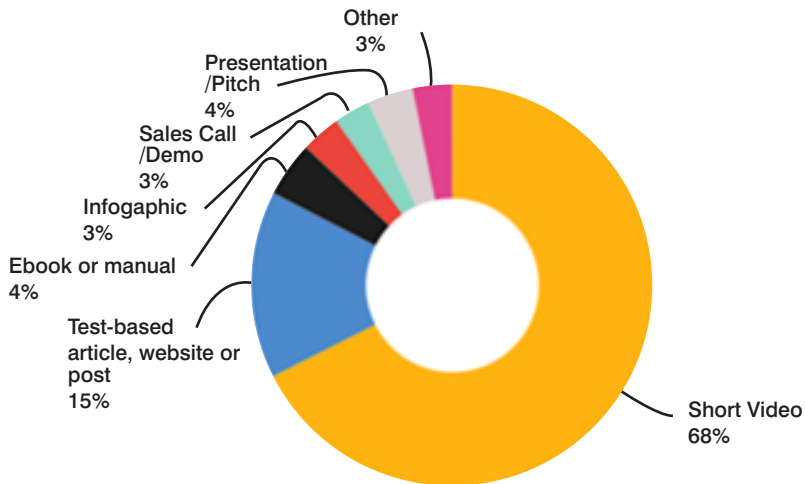
This is why content marketing for startups must clearly define who the target audience is. Knowing your audience's demographics is key to creating pieces of content that speak to their interests and values. You also need to identify the media they typically use and their digital consumption habits. Whenever you provide useful data beyond a simple sales pitch, your message will be perceived as credible and objectionable. People appreciate this and reward it with their trust. Your brand reputation will benefit and sooner or later it will affect sales.

Startups can use various tactics to achieve this:

- Highlight the history of your company or its founder
- Position yourself as an innovator in your industry
- Do Highlight your organization's culture
- Based on testimonials from employees, customers, and more.

The variability of the content basket is a winning factor in creating a higher connect. Video as a content has become widely popular by Gen Z and the target audience of today.

### How do you Most prefer to learn about a new product or service?



(Image Source: Hubspot)

## LEAD MAGNET

Initial days for any organization are difficult and penetrating a segment. Cracking the first few clients and getting leads are crucial for sustainability. Digital marketing campaigns are primarily targeted for two reasons- brand awareness and lead generation.

“Subscribe to our newsletter!” no longer works as a list-building tactic. Consumers are more tired than ever with the increasing volume of emails they receive. Who wants an inbox full of spam or irrelevant offers? No, thanks.

For capturing the lead the landing page should be well designed but whenever we need the contact details of the clients- *What are we giving them in return?*

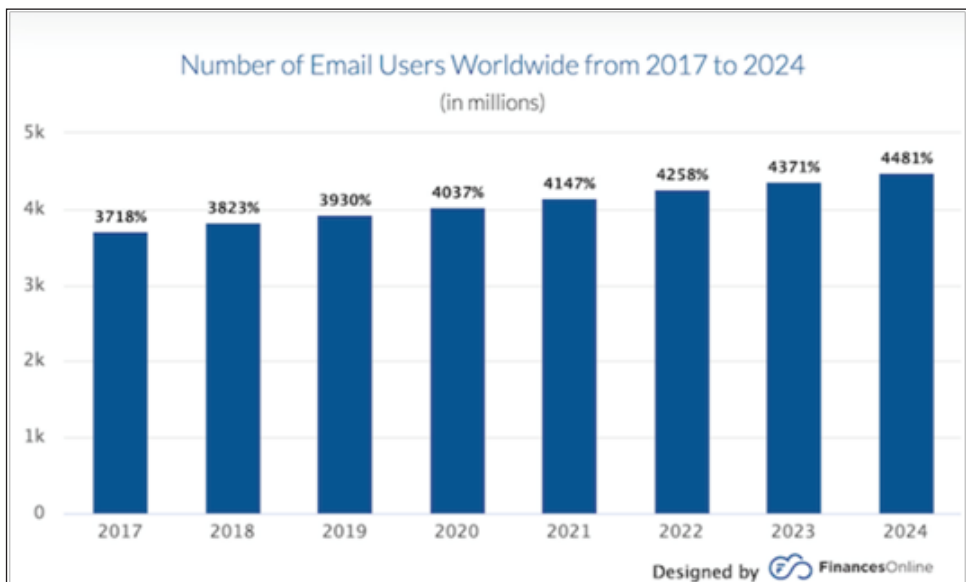
A lead magnet is a marketing term for a free item or service offered for the purpose of collecting contact information; For example, lead magnets could be free trial subscriptions, samples, white papers, newsletters and consultations. Marketers use lead magnets to generate leads.

Lead magnets can be offered via email marketing campaigns or app downloads or while subscribing the services of a particular tool and these leads that are captured can be further nudged and nurtured to get a sales conversion. While designing the lead magnets few things should be remembered :

- Lead magnet should be of utility and attraction to the user
- Expert insight or customized return gift that cant be available of a Google search engine. For example – giving a tarot card draw free !! rather than a regular reading based on zodiac sign
- Lead magnet should be linked to the business of the start-up that’s for which it is known for

## EMAIL MARKETING

Marketing via mails still remains a favorite digital marketing strategy for a lot of companies, be it apparel, insurance, healthcare or astrology. A well designed email marketing does create a connect with a specific target of the audience that believes in being well informed before taking any purchase decision rather than being attracted by some social media ads alone.



Various tools like Mailchimp, Mailerlite or any other can be used. The emails have a low click-through rate. Creating the mail list, a HTML template of the email content and designing a well interest-evoking subject of the mail, would lead to an affective strategy.

Some important pointers to be kept in mind while designing the email campaign are:

- Using a good email software
- Segmenting the emails based on the various target groups
- Defining the goal of the email campaign- awareness, lead generation, conversion and advocacy
- Personalized email to the users
- Subject should be interesting
- The mail should be from a person rather than an automated mail
- Not use words that can spam the mail like- sex or many punctuation marks
- Always include the Unsubscribe button as we are talking about permission marketing today.

A new report by Yes Lifecycle Marketing reveals that *trigger emails* generate 5 times the click-through, almost double the open rate and triple the click-to-open rate of non-trigger or Business As Usual (BAU) communications.

Below is a brief description of the types of trigger emails we think are must-do's, including four we believe are stand alone email marketing strategies in their own right.

- Order confirmation emails
- Abandoned cart emails
- Welcome emails
- Thank you emails
- Win-back or re-engagement campaigns

## **HOOK THE PROSPECT**

Digital tool help the companies to micro target the individuals as per their interest, entertainment and media patterns accurately. There is a Hook's Framework that talks about connecting with a visitor and then keeping the person at various phases of Trigger, Action, Variable Benefit and Investment.





Source: *Hooked*, by Nir Eyal,

The Hook framework connects your solution to the user's problem and forms a routine. It consists of components: *Trigger*, *Action*, *Reward* and *Investment*. Trigger is something the user sees, feels, or thinks. They may be used to experiencing their favorite product and overlook the attractions that first bring them. The trigger can be a SMS of maybe of cars24 that pops on the smartphone of the use that makes him think that should he sell his old car and buy a new one. This is an external.

If users do not take action, the Trigger is useless. Action is the minimum interaction the user needs to have with your product to be rewarded.

Reward can be considered as the objective for the user. There are many tunings you can do to manufacture the desire for this reward, beyond just helping the user achieve their goal with the interaction.

Whenever users invest their time, efforts, data or money, they are more likely to return. The investment stage is the fourth step in the Hook model. This stage is typically more about asking your users for more data or a kind of service you want your users to undertake.

You should always ask for more data from users if you want to hook your user to your product. Also at this stage something in return should be offered to the user so that a continued relationship is possible.

## RETARGETING CAMPAIGNS

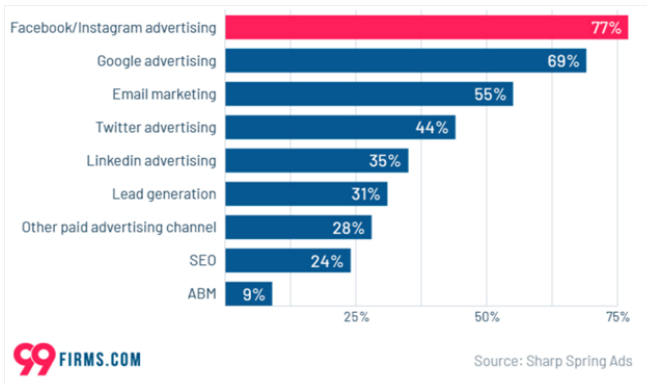
In todays world of digital marketing the content that we see is not the entire whole, we are sent the content that we like to see and it matches with the user interests and personality. This is possible with the access to data of consumers be



it any saving cookies or contact information. Retargeting is a refined audience-targeting tool that appeals to potential buyers, and more importantly, keeps them coming back. While these retargeting statistics suggest that it might not be the most potent advertising tool out there, as part of an integrated digital strategy, it most certainly delivers.

Once the individual has shown interest in the brand, they can be retargeted with the help of two kinds of campaigns- pixel based and list based.

Pixel based are the most common, where the 'cookie-id' is saved in the JavaScript form and once the individual has left the page, the ads are displayed on his social media pages and search engine page as well. Chasing the individual with the help of retargeting campaigns has a good recall and conversions and is widely used by various platforms as stated by Sharp Spring Ads shown in the figure below.



Focusing on your audience retargeting strategy is vital if you want to see them make it all the way through the sales funnel.

The blend of retargeting and Artificial Intelligence is the most popular tool that helps entrepreneurs cope with cart abandonment in digital commerce.

## CASE STUDY: TOUR MY INDIA

Travel and Tourism has moved from a vacation benefit driven industry to a leisure and luxury oriented sector. Many companies fight for the mind share of the traveller. The company had an objective of creating brand awareness and education on travelling and bringing the relevant traffic to the website. The website had a poor listing on the search engine and was struggling to be noticed by valued customers.

They hired a digital agency with the purpose to increase page ranks and also to engage the relevant prospects so that the conversion metrics was enhanced. The first action plan was to do an in depth analysis of the site's current performance & drawbacks, defining the user persona & targets, analysis of the competitors landscape & devising the marketing approach.

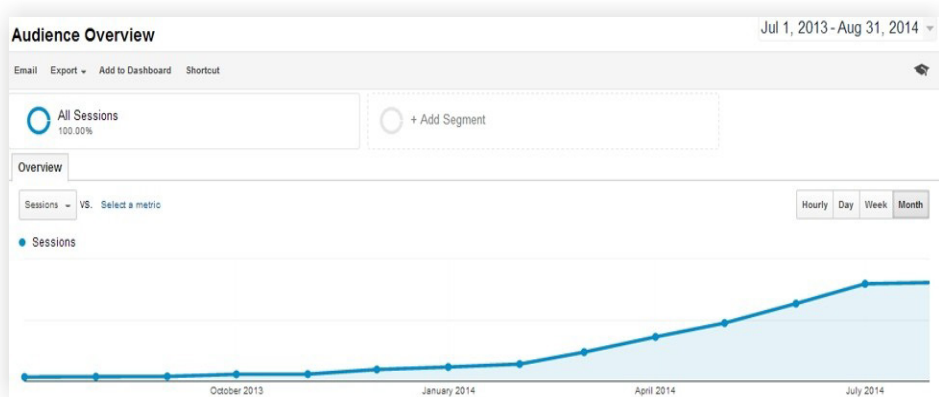
### Three things that were done by the digital strategist:

- keyword listing and site optimization

- SEO optimization
- Landing page optimization

After the digital marketing consultant implemented on the above three areas mentioned the results were very different: Traffic improved by 1,328%, Conversions by 1,407%.

The traffic went up drastically by 1,328% with 621% more page views showcasing the improved user experience.



Site started ranking on top search results on Google & Yahoo, organic traffic started pouring in. Organic non-paid traffic improved by 1,844% & leads by an amazing figure of 1,281%. Social media campaigns also performed very well driving 2,912% more traffic via social referrals & 843% more leads.

\With integrated marketing efforts, continual analysis & smart budget allocation among them, the ROI increased drastically.

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