

Digital Marketing Strategies For Small Businesses- An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Success in digital marketing isn't only for big companies with lots of money. In fact, small businesses often have a special edge online. The rapid shift towards digitalization has changed how businesses work, leading new companies to create smart services that help customers grow their businesses. But as, technology and customer knowledge increases, companies need to understand what customers want before offering something valuable. Digital marketing for small businesses can be a bit challenging at the beginning, though it's an important tool that helps them reach their local audience and buyers. However, there were some limitations, such as a lack of up-to-date, local information and the fact that many studies focused more on big companies instead of small businesses. In this study, we will guide you through ways to use your online platforms to make your messages stronger, reach more people, and create lasting connections-even with limited tools or budget. Digital marketing is seen as a powerful way to gain, keep and grow customer relationships. Tools like websites, niche platforms, and online discussion boards are especially helpful for new businesses. This highlights how important it is for business owners, to use these strategies wisely to grow and succeed. A sample of 227 was collected from owners of small businesses. The factors of digital marketing strategies for small businesses are Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing.

Key Words:

Digital marketing strategies, small-businesses, Online platforms, Digitalization, Customer relationships.

Introduction

Jain. (2014), explained that, distributing information about products and services through digital networks and internet connected devices like-computers, smartphones and other online tools and platforms is called digital marketing. Business areas in India's digital marketing field are mostly similar. Some common uses of digital marketing include tracking orders and sales, online banking, payment methods, and managing content. By using tools like search engine optimization (SEO), search engine ads (SEM), content creation, influencer promotions, automated-content, ad campaigns, data-driven marketing, online shopping ads, social media marketing, social media improvement, email-marketing, banner ads, e-books, CDs, and games, thus with more individuals relying on digital gadgets rather than visiting physical outlets, the digital marketing industry has seen considerable growth. Digital marketing also covers offline channels which use digital media, such as TV, mobile phones (through SMS and MMS), as well as ringtones used for callbacks or while waiting on hold. With digital marketing, physical distance is no longer a barrier, so now people and businesses all over the world can be potential buyers or sellers. Malesev & Cherry. (2021), acknowledged that digital marketing is likely to

grow a lot in a country with a quickly growing economy. The rise of digital marketing has strong effect, on how advertising and marketing are done. This present work primarily highlights the core concept of digital marketing, which tend to explore how it supports modern businesses, and leads to examine present-day difficulties using real-life examples. It has completely changed how businesses reach their customers, giving them new chances to grow and succeed. For small businesses or SMEs, it has become an essential way to stay competitive in the today's digital world. Even though with small budgets and limited resources, these businesses can encourage digital marketing to connect with the right people, making their brand known, and keep customers loyal-without spending a lot like traditional marketing usually requires. Klein & Todesco. (2021), argued that the flexibility of digital platforms helps small businesses talk directly with their customers, learn what they like, and adjust their products or services to meet those needs. From creating a solid online presence with a good website to using social media, email-marketing, and search engine ads, there are many options that can be adjusted to fit any budget. But, the main point of success is picking the right mix of strategies that match the business's goals and target audience. This introduction looks at how small businesses can make the most of digital marketing by facing challenges and using modern tools to build strong relationships, get more visitors, and increase sales. Today, digital marketing isn't just a choice for small businesses-it's a necessary way to grow and stay strong in the long run. Therefore, to see and understand the possible advantages of online marketing, small retail business owners need to make sure their work methods keep up with new technology. Ignoring the benefits of online marketing could lead to lower efficiency, loss of income, and poor communication. According to Alzoubi. (2022), to stay ahead of the competition and improve income and communication, small retail business owners need to focus on meeting customer needs by using new and smart technology strategies. In this study, we will also look at the different strategies owned by small retail business owners which they apply on online marketing to boost their sales. The results of this study, will help bring positive social change by improving economic activity, creating stability in the local economy, and reducing the number of small businesses that fail through the smart use of marketing strategies. Also, digital marketing trends keep changing over time, so knowing the different digital marketing methods is very important. In addition, digital measurements help in tracking, evaluating, and improving how a business performs. Because of this, digital metrics are a useful guide for planning and growing a business.

Literature Of Review

The beginning of digital marketing is strongly linked towards technological advancements. Still, the most widely recognized period of digital marketing is 1990s which marks a key turning point, when the Archie search engine was made to list files on FTP websites. Desai & Vidyapeeth. (2019), stated that in the 1980s, computers already had enough space to save large amounts of computer information. Organizations began usage of online methods like database marketing irrespective of relying on small list brokers. These databases helped companies procure and follow customer information more easily, which changed the way buyers and sellers interacted. How so ever, doing it by hand was not very effective. During the 1990s, the phrase "Digital Marketing" began to be used as, server/client models emerged and personal computers became more common, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems started playing a key role in marketing technology. After the Internet was created, marketers were able to collect large amounts of customer data using e-CRM software. Companies were able to update information about what customers wanted, and understand what was most important to their experience. In the 2000s, as more people started using the Internet and the iPhone was

introduced, customers began looking for products and deciding what they needed online before talking to a salesperson. This brought a new challenge for a company's marketing team. However, even though marketing automation has many advantages, many companies still find it, hard to use it properly in their daily work. Digital marketing evolved significantly during the year 2000s and 2010s, as the wide-spread use of devices with internet access led to rapid expansion. Reports from 2012 and 2013, showed that digital marketing was still expanding. Social media platforms like-LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter grew in the 2000s, when people started relying more on digital devices in their everyday lives. Digital marketing is also known as 'online marketing', 'internet marketing', or 'web-marketing'. Within few years, the expression "Digital marketing" has gained widespread use. It involves advertising offerings through electronic means particularly on the web, but also includes mobile devices and modern digital advertising tools. Mocanu & Szakal. (2023), findings stated many digital marketing methods like search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), content creation, content management, campaign advertising, banner ads, data-based marketing, online shopping promotion, social media marketing, improving social media reach, email marketing, e-books, and digital disks and games are becoming more and more popular. Digital marketing has become an important part of business plans in today's digital world. It uses different online platforms and technologies to increase brand awareness, advertise products, and reach marketing goals. For small and medium-sized businesses, digital marketing is very important because it helps them compete well in a connected online market. Despite, so many advancements taking place small businesses still found it, hard to use digital marketing successfully because they have limited resources and skills, because the fast-changing business world with new customer habits and technology was making it even more difficult. Mogoş. (2015), who argued that, digital marketing not only allows small businesses to communicate and connect with customers in a low-cost way, but it also improves their ability to adapt and reach more people in the market. Social media has become a key part of digital marketing plans. Allows brands to talk directly with people, reach more and more customers, and increase their involvement. Brands use social media sites to connect with their audience, share their content, encourage interaction and to build strong relationships. Usage of social media has greatly helped, small businesses deal with problems and reach their marketing goals. Social media helps the above-mentioned businesses, reach a large number of customers, increase brand recognition, improve customer interaction, affect their buying choices, raise sales, and grow their share of the market. Using social media brings both difficulties and big advantages for small and medium businesses. Such strategies are very important towards the success of digital marketing in these businesses. By using social media platforms wisely, these businesses can deal with problems, reach more customers, grow their brand recognition, encourage interaction between them, as well as improve sales.

Consoli. (2017), also suggested that e-commerce or online shopping methods has changed digital marketing plans by giving businesses, new ways to connect with and attract customers. Through e-commerce platforms, small businesses are able to improve their operations on how do they deliver products, advertise their goods and services in a better-way, change prices more easily, and offer better customer support. The move to e-commerce platforms has also created chances for new marketing ideas, like offering personalized products, using customer data for targeted ads, and trying out ways of doing business. For small and medium businesses, using E-commerce can greatly improve their digital marketing results by encouraging them to boost sales, grow their share of the market, and build stronger customer loyalty. Despite so many advantages, small businesses might face difficulties when setting up e-commerce, such as

needing the right technology, keeping online payment safe, and competing with bigger companies. Even with these difficulties, adopting e-commerce can make daily operations smoother, lead to reduction in advertising costs, and eventually raise overall earnings for small and medium businesses. E-commerce has changed how companies handle digital marketing, giving them new ways to reach and connect with customers. Customer trust and loyalty are very important for the success of online businesses. Gaining customers trust can lead to long-term connections and repeat purchases, helping the business stay profitable over time. By paying attention to things like easy use, good value, and quality service, businesses can create trust, encourage customers to interact, and build loyalty towards online shopping. For such businesses, using e-commerce can improve their marketing results, strengthen customer loyalty, and increase profits. By focusing on customer trust, happiness, and loyalty through new e-commerce ideas and good service, businesses can build a strong position in the online market. Mazzarol. (2015), asserted that combination of social media and e-commerce provides small businesses with a strong way to reach more people, connect better with customers, and increase sales. In this field of digital marketing, there are many more strategies and methods to suit different needs of small businesses like- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) which means, improving a website and its content using related keywords which help it, appear higher in search engine results. SEO is very important for making a website easier to find in search results. It helps bring in natural visitors and improves a company's visibility. For small businesses, local SEO is especially useful because it helps them reach customers nearby. Content Marketing involves creating and sharing valuable information through (such as blog posts, infographics, or videos) to be, known as a trusted expert in a specific field. By attracting and engaging people, this content helps turn potential customers into loyal supporters of the brand. Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising involves creating focused ads using platforms like Google ads and social media. Such ads use information like age, interests, and online activity to reach a specific group of people. Building email-list helps a business stay in touch with existing customers, build relationships with potential ones, and promote special offers. It's an effective way to boost sales and build customer loyalty. Dividing and targeting email campaigns leads to better customer response, making them very useful for small businesses that want to build strong relationships with their customers. Influencer marketing is also a key player towards digital marketing strategies for small businesses that helps working with social media influencers who, have a large and engaged audience in the company's target market to promote the business and its products. Digital platforms are growing fast, speeding up change. People in India are spending more time on social media and the internet. Social media plays, a very big role in the growth of digital marketing, with over 467 million Indians using social media and 658 million using the internet. In 2022, India had the largest number of Facebook users, with 239.65 million people. The quickly growing digital market in India shows that digital technology is spreading fast. Online shopping websites now offer all kinds of products and services though, there are more and more e-commerce sites. More and more customers are also picking digital marketing instead of traditional marketing. Gulati & Grover. (2024), stated that tracking how well digital marketing campaigns are doing is very important for small businesses success. Google Analytics provides useful information about the user actions and how campaigns are working, helping businesses improve their plans and strategies. Starting a podcast is a good way to grow your audience. To reach more people and make sharing easier, add the podcast episodes to a blog post on your website with a short summary or notes. Then, share the blog posts on your social media pages. For small businesses, this data helps them use their resources wisely and make better choices. The findings are similar to Taiminen & Karjaluo. (2015), who although asserted that digital marketing has many advantages, small

businesses often deal with problems like lack of knowledge and quickly changing technology. Though digital marketing is changing quickly, platforms, tools and methods can update often, so it's important to stay flexible and ready to adjust your plan when needed. At the same time, try to keep things as simple as possible; otherwise, digital marketing can become very confusing and hard to manage.

Objective

To study the Digital Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses.

Methodology

A sample of 227 participants were collected from people working in different sector business. The method of sampling was "Random sampling" for collection of data and examination was done by "Explanatory Factor Analysis" for results.

Findings

Table 1 demonstrates demographic details, it shows that 52.42% are Male, 47.58% are female. Looking at the age, 29.52% are between 30 to 35 years of age, 40.09% are between 35 to 40 years of age, and 30.39% are above 40 years of age. With regards to Type of Industry, 39.21% are footwear sector, 27.31% are from clothing & apparel, and 33.48% are from Electronics.

Table 1 Respondent's Details

Variables	Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Male	119	52.42%
Female	108	47.58%
Total	227	100
Ages in years		
30 to 35	67	29.52%
35 to 40	91	40.09%
Above 40	69	30.39%
Total	227	100
Type of Industry		
Footwear	89	39.21%
Clothing & Apparel	62	27.31%
Electronics	76	33.48%
Total	227	100

"Factor Analysis"

"KMO and Bartlett's Test"

Table 2 "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy"

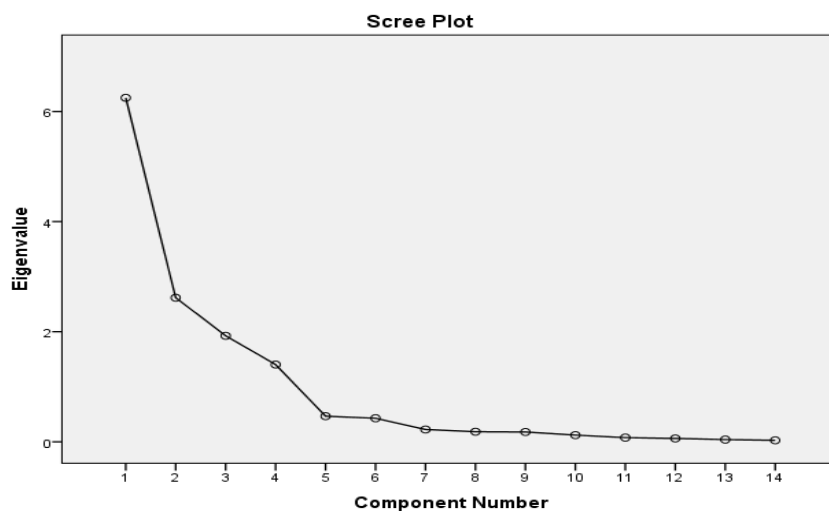
“Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy”		.762
“Bartlett's Test of Sphericity”	“Approx. Chi-Square”	3749.769
	df	91
	Significance	.000

“KMO and Bartlett's Test”, value of KMO is .762 (Table 2).

Table 3 “Total Variance Explained”

“Component”	“Initial Eigenvalues”			“Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings”		
	“Total”	“% Of Variance”	“Cumulative %”	“Total”	“% Of Variance”	“Cumulative %”
1.	6.248	44.629	44.629	3.735	26.677	26.677
2.	2.617	18.693	63.322	3.682	26.302	52.978
3.	1.925	13.753	77.075	2.464	17.597	70.576
4.	1.403	10.021	87.096	2.313	16.520	87.096
5.	.465	3.322	90.418			
6.	.428	3.059	93.477			
7.	.224	1.598	95.075			
8.	.183	1.310	96.384			
9.	.178	1.273	97.658			
10.	.122	.868	98.526			
11.	.077	.547	99.073			
12.	.062	.440	99.514			
13.	.041	.291	99.805			
14.	.027	.195	100.000			

The four factors contribute towards explaining total 87.096% of variance. Variance explained by Strong Online Presence is 26.677%, Social Media Marketing is 26.302, Search Engine Optimization is 17.597%, and Content Marketing is 16.520%. (Table 3).



Scree Plot

Table 4 “Rotated Component Matrix”

S. No.	Statements	Factor Loading	Factor Reliability
	Strong Online Presence		.951
1.	A professional website is mobile-friendly, and fast-loading	.949	
2.	Strong online presence, improve their chances of long-term success and get attention	.889	
3.	Online directories ensure consistent NAP (Name, Address, Phone) listings across platforms	.862	
4.	Good website provides many options that can be adjusted to fit any budget	.857	
	Social Media Marketing		.965
1.	Focusing on SM platforms where your audience is active (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn)	.957	
2.	Post regularly, including promotions, behind-the-scenes, customer stories	.915	
3.	Use paid ads to boost reach and engagement with tight targeting options	.907	
4.	Social media marketing helps in reaching more and more customers, increase their involvement	.892	
	Search Engine Optimization		.876
1.	It is about improving a website and its content using related keywords	.915	
2.	It is about optimizing titles, meta descriptions, headings, and images	.836	
3.	Posting blogs and FAQs targeting search queries your customers use	.813	
	Content Marketing		.828
1.	Positioning business as an expert through blogs, videos, or infographics.	.927	

2.	Product demos, testimonials, and videos on social media	.922	
3.	Encourage customers to share their experiences with brand and product	.651	

Factors of the study and its related variables

Table 4. shows the factors, the first factor of the study is Strong Online Presence, the variables it includes are - a professional website is mobile-friendly, and fast-loading, Strong online presence, improve their chances of long-term success and get attention, Online directories ensure consistent NAP (Name, Address, Phone) listings across platforms, and good website provides many options that can be adjusted to fit any budget. The second factor is Social Media Marketing, it includes variables like Focusing on SM platforms where your audience is active (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn), Post regularly, including promotions, behind-the-scenes, customer stories, Use paid ads to boost reach and engagement with tight targeting options, and social media marketing helps in reaching more and more customers, increase their involvement. Search Engine Optimization is the third factor, its variables are It is about improving a website and its content using related keywords, It is about optimizing titles, meta descriptions, headings, and images, and Posting blogs and FAQs targeting search queries your customers use. The last and fourth factor is Content Marketing, it includes variables like Positioning business as an expert through blogs, videos, or infographics, Product demos, testimonials, and videos on social media, and Encourage customers to share their experiences with brand and product.

Table 5 “Reliability Statistics”

“Cronbach's Alpha”	“Number of Items”
.893	14

Total reliability of 14 items that includes variables for Role of AI-Enabled Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in Customer Engagement 0.893 (Table 5).

“Multiple Regression”

Table 6. “Model Summary”

“Model”	“R”	“R Square”	“Adjusted R Square”	“Std. Error of the Estimate”
1	.776 ^a	.602	.595	.41509

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing

Multiple regressions shows that model explained is 60% of the variance and R Square is .602. (Table 6).

Table 7. “ANOVA”

Table 1. ANOVA						
“Model”		“Sum of Squares”	“df”	“Mean Square”	“F”	“Sig.”
1	Regression	57.838	4	14.460	83.923	.000 ^b
	Residual	38.250	222	.172		
	Total	96.088	226			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall impact of digital marketing strategies on small business
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing

Table 8. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.229	.028		153.504	.000
Strong Online Presence	.442	.028	.677	15.996	.000
Social Media Marketing	.191	.028	.293	6.909	.000
Search Engine Optimization	.085	.028	.130	3.080	.002
Content Marketing	.131	.028	.201	4.755	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Overall impact of digital marketing strategies on small business					

Table 8. shows that all the factors namely Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing are showing significant impact of digital marketing strategies on small business. It is also found that highest impact is shown by Strong Online Presence with beta value .677 followed by Social Media Marketing (.293), Content Marketing (.201), and Search Engine Optimization (.130).

Conclusion

The present research work highlights how important digital marketing strategies are becoming for small businesses, especially in a world where competition is high and most business happens online. In conclusion, this study also shows how important digital marketing is for helping small businesses grow and become more visible in the market. According to Khan et al. (2024), digital marketing acts as a key driver of digital change, helping boost the economy and reach more customers. By using digital platforms to learn about what customers like and how they act, businesses can offer better experiences, make their products better, and use smarter ways to sell. Digital marketing also gives small businesses an affordable way to reach more people, track important results, and improve their profits. Also, using social media and email can help businesses understand which methods work best to reach different groups of people. The findings of the study can help bring positive social change by giving small retail business owners useful ideas for successful online marketing. Business owners may learn smart ways to market online and boost sales. By using new ways to sell and connect with people, small retail owners can grow their online presence, improve their chances of long-term success, get more attention, and attract new customers. The above-mentioned strategies can help you wisely and creatively improve your business plan and highlight what your business provides. . A sample of 227 was collected from owners of small businesses. The factors of digital marketing strategies for small businesses are Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing. The study concludes that Strong Online Presence, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Marketing are showing significant impact of digital marketing strategies on small business.

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