



## PLANNING OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FORMATION

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Received 08 January 2019; accepted 09 February 2019

**Abstract.** A sustainable strategy in the digital world is the key to a successful digital marketing campaign. The importance of a digital marketing strategy which stays updated by itself is the novelty of this paper. The problem which we face in today's digital marketing campaigns is majorly related to non-sustainable strategies. Also, choosing a strategy which works best especially for startup companies is another challenging question. The main goal of the paper is to design a digital marketing model which attains the most effective digital marketing strategy for small Lithuanian companies which would help them enter the international market. In order to achieve that goal, experts have been asked to rank different digital marketing strategies available as per their expert opinion. Using these rankings, each strategy's weight is calculated by AHP method and are ranked among different digital marketing models by using TOPSIS. These findings will also help us to design web pages and blog contents as per consumer expectations and requirements. This paper provides a practical guideline which could be used by startup companies as it reaches out all aspects of digital marketing (interlink, social media, platforms, SEO, SEM, Content marketing, pay-per-click, etc) and it also helps sustain the strategy as it continuously gets updated with the most recent searches done by customers. This model analyses and provides both strategies and practical approaches towards a strong digital marketing plan which would benefit startup companies and businesses in terms of publicity and return of investment on marketing.

**Keywords:** Digital marketing model, Digital marketing strategies, Interlink, Digital marketing, Marketing, Business management, SEO

### Introduction

Challenges among traditional marketing models and digital marketing models have started in 2007 in the USA. In the same year \$21.4 Billion was spent from American marketers to online advertising and in 2011 it has reached \$42 Billion. This fact shows that all aggressive marketers enter this market to expand their brand awareness globally. Therefore entering the digital marketing universe needs techniques and accuracy to reach competitors (Heyman, 2009). Customer engagement and connection are major factors after digital marketing planning and design. These findings are in direct correlation with the main goal of this paper, which is to design a digital marketing strategy which constructs a strong path to international market. The literature surrounding digital marketing suggests that in order to provide a reliable and sustainable digital marketing strategy one should consider customer engagement and connection as well as customer satisfaction. Digital marketers today need to create royal customers (Guilherme, 2006) (Petersen, 2014). How does one create such loyal customers is essentially what this paper could bring about. Determining which strategy would be most effective, by considering importance of various methods is essential. Brand awareness will develop gradually by increasing SEO. (Bizer, 2007). Customer value is critical now for every organization because every 18 months new trends and CRM will change to attract customer satisfaction and attention (Reinartz, 2006). International market in developed countries has different significance such as sociopolitical governance, unbranded competition, a chronic shortage of resource etc. Integrated marketing Communication can be an effective tool for marketers decision making and a maximum effect on the audience in campaign marketing (Czaplewski, 2017). Marketing strategies in international entrepreneurial such as co-innovation, customer value acceleration, and expansion in the international market are based on regional market leadership (Yang, 2018). Reduction of these negative impact can cause of increases the number of users to nonusers so using 4 A's marketing

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strategy root will prevent these negative impacts in the marketing in developed countries (Jagdish, 2018). User Generated content is the tool which marketers use for managing their customer's relation and communication.

## **Review of literature**

“Digital marketing” is a branch of marketing which uses digital devices that include different approaches, activities, and systems (Margarino, 2017) At the beginning, it may look simple but practically choosing one of the best strategies out of 10 (Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Search Engine Marketing, Pay-Per-Click advertising, Affiliate Marketing, Email Marketing, Radio Advertising, Television Advertising, Mobile phone advertising) (Harden, 2009) becomes complicated & difficult for any organization because they have to consider multicultural management, language, consumer demand, consumer expectation & trust, and other factors into considerations (Reynolds, 2017). Particularly, when investors want to promote their product in the digital world for their popularity and branding amongst a high range of competitors, they would face an already established competitor who uses the best technique in the digital world successfully and entering this complicated market must be difficult for startup entrepreneurship (Mahajan, 2001).

The decision to choose which digital marketing strategy is the most effective at first glance might be a critical issue for so many small & startup companies marketing managers. A wide range of offers from digital marketing expertise creates confusion for investors in order to make the right decision. The sensitivity of challenges in the digital market globally directly affects business stability & strength in this technical world (Mahajan, 2001). The task of this paper is to analyze different criteria and strategies of digital marketing and the aim is to provide a digital marketing strategy model for startup companies. Two methods are used in this paper, AHP, and TOPSIS. Marketers should upgrade their digital marketing knowledge. The most important perspective of digital marketing to select the effective strategy is to go through different steps. First step is to understand your brand and your company, second step is to implement digital marketing platform to e-mail, social and mobile to convey your content marketing to your customers (Debra, 2015) and the last step is to apply to the entire procedure is to interlink data among three majority groups consumer, competitors and all your platforms to increase the ratio of SEO and content marketing in your digital marketing model. Brand awareness will develop gradually by increasing SEO and content marketing amongst digital consumers (Bizer, 2007).

A marketing strategy is generally defined as a series of actions that help you achieve your company goals through carefully selected online marketing channels. This paper tries to highlight in order to plan a digital marketing strategy, what are the channels and strategies which should be considered.

It's needless to point that a digital marketing strategy is the most essential part of any startup company. Considering the fact that there are various different digital marketing strategies available to choose from, picking up the best could turn out to be quite expensive. This paper has gathered all the necessary information regarding various digital marketing strategies, compared them and analysed them in order to structure a digital marketing strategy which is best suited for startup companies. This paper could be helpful in terms of saving time and energy needed for picking up the best strategy out of all available strategies.

## **Data collection method**

In order to structure a digital marketing model, the primary step taken in this paper was to gather information regarding all available digital marketing strategies. This was done through sending questionnaires to digital marketing experts in the industry. Inclusion criteria for choosing the experts were the following:

5 years of experience in digital marketing (planning & execution)

3 years experience in a managerial position in the marketing department

Holding a master degree in business or related field

Proven record of successful digital marketing campaigns

Total of 5 experts were chosen based on the inclusion criteria from major corporation in Iran and India. The same experts were asked to rank top strategies by using the AHP method. AHP was chosen due to the fact that it can help the author detect any bias in the expert rankings. Once the weight of each strategy was ranked, TOPSIS was used to rank 5 of the most widely used digital marketing models by digital marketers so the reason for the success of each model would be determined. TOPSIS was used due to the fact that different models could be compared with each other considering their individual weights which had been evaluated in AHP.

## AHP analysis

The AHP method as mentioned above is to create a matrix by using the ranking of experts on different strategies or criteria (different strategies in digital marketing considered as criteria) (Hanlon, 2018) (Authors).

Table 1. Construct decision matrix as per expert's evaluation ( Authors)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
A	1	1	1.00	1.00	1	7	7	7	7	7
B	1	1	1	1	1	9	7	9	9	7
C	1	1	1	1	1	9	9	9	9	7
D	1	1	1	1	1	9	7	9	9	7
E	1	1	1	1	1	9	7	9	9	7
F	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	1	3	7	7	1
G	0.14	0.14	0.11	0.14	0.14	0.33	1	9	3	1
H	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.11	1	0.2	0.33
I	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.33	5	1	0.33
J	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1	1	3	3	1
Total	5.71	5.62	5.59	5.62	5.62	45.62	42.44	68.00	57.20	38.67

Table 2. Considered Criteria ( Authors)

A	Social Media Marketing
B	Content Marketing
C	SEO(Search engine Optimization)
D	SEM(Search engine Marketing)
E	PPA(Pay-Per-click advertising)
F	Affiliate Marketing
G	Email Marketing
H	Radio Advertising
I	TV Advertising
J	Mobile phone Advertising

The above table shows expert rankings on different strategies in digital marketing as per their opinion and research which is as follows: Social Media Marketing ,Content marketing,SEO,SEM and PPA are equally important in digital marketing strategies, which means to say that all are considered to be equal to 1 in AHP system ranking. However other strategies like affiliate Marketing, Email Marketing, Radio Advertising, TV Advertising and Mobile phone advertising have much difference in ranking compared to Social Media Marketing ,Content marketing, SEO,SEM and PPA.

From 2017 till the first quarter of 2018 Social Media Marketing the number of users suddenly increased compared to previous years (Debra W. a., 2018). These changes in digital marketing strategies should be considered by an expert to put more focus on Social Media Marketing, Content marketing,SEO, SEM and PPA.

In the next step, expert ranking data in the first step is normalized by using the formula in AHP. The third step is to calculate the weights of each criterion.

Table 3. Calculate the Weight and consistency of normalized decision matrix (Authors)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total	Average	CM
A	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.15	0.165	0.103	0.122	0.181	1.613	0.161	11.622
B	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.165	0.132	0.157	0.181	1.721	0.172	11.821
C	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.212	0.132	0.157	0.181	1.768	0.177	11.916
D	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.165	0.132	0.157	0.181	1.721	0.172	11.821

E	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.165	0.132	0.157	0.181	1.721	0.172	11.821
F	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.071	0.103	0.122	0.026	0.448	0.045	11.814
G	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.007	0.024	0.132	0.052	0.026	0.363	0.036	10.606
H	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.003	0.003	0.015	0.003	0.009	0.137	0.014	10.109
I	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.003	0.008	0.074	0.017	0.009	0.215	0.021	10.158
J	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.022	0.024	0.044	0.052	0.026	0.295	0.029	11.470
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.000	
												CI	0.15
												RI	1.49
												CR	0.10

As a result SEO (search engine optimization) has the highest weight amongst other strategies, however this weight difference is negligible compared to other strategies weight so as a result other strategies such as SEM (search engine marketing), PPA (pay-per-click advertising) and content marketing, all have equally high weight as compared to others.

Radio advertising is the least in weighting among others because as per the opinion of experts, consumer taste, likes and dislikes have been changed as per their lifestyle. Mobile phone advertising is clearly not as popular as it used to be.

### TOPSIS analysis

The weight of the criteria which were calculated by using AHP method is now used in TOPSIS calculation. In this method, 5 models of digital marketing which are most widely used (Hanlon, 2018) are compared with each other. Those digital marketing models are listed below:

1. 4Cs for marketing communication
2. McKinsey's consumer decision journey
3. The honeycomb model
4. RACE planning
5. Hofacker's 5 stage of information planning

Further, by using TOPSIS the data given is analysed. TOPSIS is used to rank the models according to their weights as per the following (Authors)

Table 4. Construct the decision Matrix (Authors)

Weight	0.1613	0.17208	0.1768	0.1721	0.1721	0.0448	0.0363	0.014	0.0215	0.02947
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Model/Criteria	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1.	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	4	5
2.	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	5	5	4
3.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5
4.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
5.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5

Table 5. Considered models ( Authors)

1.	4Cs for marketing communication
2.	McKinsey's consumer decision journey
3.	the honeycomb model
4.	RACE planning
5.	Hofacker's 5 stage of information planning

As shown in the above multi decision making TOPSIS matrix table, different models of digital marketing are considered as alternatives and Digital marketing strategies are assumed as criteria in this matrix. The weights of the criteria in this matrix have already been calculated before by using AHP method and experts have ranked these

qualitative criteria from 1-5. Ranking of qualitative criteria is done by considering the scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. As per expert ranking, the following are placed in order of importance:

4C's for marketing communication used high quality of (A)Social Media Marketing ,(B)Content marketing,(C) SEO,(D)SEM and (E)PPA (J) Mobile phone advertising and less in (I) TV advertising(2) Mckinsey's consumer decision journey used all strategy and considered all type of consumers without focusing on special group of customers(3) The Honey Comb Model used the highest weighted strategy, as well as lower weighted one with less difference (4) RACE planning model, used all strategies in high quality (5) Hofacker's 5 stage of information planning also used all strategies in high quality (Hanlon, 2018).

Finally by using TOPSIS the separation measures from the positive ideal solution and the negative ideal solution and the relative closeness to the positive ideal solution as well as the preference order rankings are calculated.

Table 6. Calculate Pi and ranking of criteria (Authors)

Model/Criteria	s+	s-	PI	Ranking
1	38.1288	10.2871	0.21247	5
2	9.3097	38.9947	0.80727	1
3	19.4973	21.6059	0.52565	3
4	9.43842	31.3635	0.76868	2
5	21.2504	21.0477	0.4976	4

Mckinsey's consumer decision journey is the highest ranked method followed by Race planning as second with minimal difference amongst the two. The honeycomb model and Hofacker's 5 stage of information planning are ranked as the third and fourth respectively and with a large margin, the 4Cs for marketing communication is the 5<sup>th</sup> best ranked digital strategy model.

From the year 2017 onwards, internet users have been increasing in number. The most focused area in digital marketing is customer engagement. Mckinsey's model highly considers customer engagement and demand. If a digital marketing strategy does not revolve entirely around customer engagement and satisfaction, the model is bound to fail. This paper has proven that considering many digital marketing strategies available today, Mckinsey clearly stands out as it essentially focuses primarily on customer engagement.

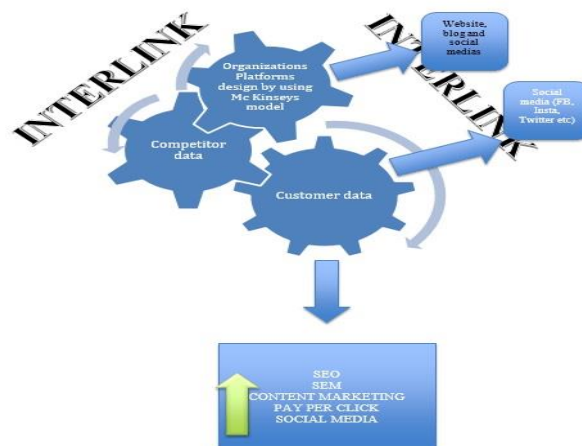


Figure 1. Plan of digital marketing (Authors)

Considering the importance of digital marketing's content generation, Interlink is as crucial. Implementing all of the above information into a business model is this paper's final result.

## Conclusions

There's an increasing need in the digital marketing world for a business model which includes the most engaging strategies of digital marketing. In a rapidly digitalizing environment, no company can afford to ignore customer engagement through digital platforms. Out of many digital marketing strategies, which one to choose for a startup company in Lithuania, could be a devastating question.

This paper, after thorough consideration of the weights of each criterion in AHP and using the same in TOPSIS, concludes that

1. The highest ranked digital marketing strategy is "MC Kinsey's consumer decision journey". This method could be considered as the most suitable digital marketing strategy for a startup company in Lithuania as it is the only model which effectively considers almost all sectors of consumer engagement and reaches out to overshot customers who still insist on using old methods of communication (such as TV and mobile advertisements) as well as digital world users who strongly consider social media platforms as their main source of communication.
2. This paper has demonstrated that the highest ranked criteria of digital marketing, to no surprise, are SEO, SEM, PPA, Social media and content marketing and followed by that we have mobile, TV and radio advertising. However, in order to improve consumer relationships and engagements, it is of extreme importance to consider the shift in consumer's taste through the digital age. It is no longer expected that one would watch an advertisement completely if their attention is not grasped through the first few seconds.
3. Content generation should be essentially considered as the most crucial part of today's impatient social media surfing. Consumer engagement requires understanding the "need" of the consumer in order to gain their attention by implementing strategies which satisfy their "taste" as well. Choosing the most effective model of digital marketing allows startup companies to improve their brand awareness in the international market. If the said company's product is designed in accordance with the latest technological advances, accordingly the digital marketing model for the same product should be in line with the latest developments and advances in the digital marketing universe.
4. Customer satisfaction through means of effective digital marketing approaches is garnered if the business models consider the highest ranked models and strategies.

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