

14

CHAPTER

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN DIGITAL MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

The digital marketing landscape has changed drastically in the last few years; SEO, SEM, PPC, content marketing, and everything else that encompasses the digital marketing landscape, have witnessed a dramatic shift. The development of technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, Big Data, visual search, etc. have revolutionized the traditional digital marketing methods. The Internet has become a place where every business is marketing to reach its customers online, and this easy access to the Internet has saturated the web with 1.8 billion websites.¹ This huge number means that for every 4 people alive, there is 1 website on the Internet. This saturation of the web is a major reason behind the continuous technological advancements in digital marketing. These advancements have shaken digital marketing to its core and have significantly improved how marketing is done. Let's dive deep into these advancements.

VOICE SEARCH

Siri, Alexa, Google OK, Cortana, Amazon Echo are the few names that almost everybody is familiar with these days. These voice recognizing devices are the technological advancements that have completely automated the way marketing is done online and changed the way people search for products or information. The thought of speaking into a smart-phone to find the required information or product is

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the chapter, you would be able to:

- Explain the latest trends in digital marketing such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain technology.
- Craft a complete marketing campaign using the latest technological advancements.
- Attract the newer tech-savvy generation using technologies like Augmented reality, Virtual reality, Voice search and Beacon technology.
- Ease your marketing process using marketing automation and CRM.

in itself intriguing. The audience sitting online does not want to waste much time in typing to look for something online and hence, prefer searching it by speaking to the device. As a result, voice search has become the latest searching pattern. This convenient technology is actively utilized all over the world and according to Gartner; about 30%² of product searches will be done without a screen by the year 2020. This section will discuss in detail about the voice search, its impact on digital marketing and the future.

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

Statistics show that every day, 3.5 billion searches³ are made on Google, out of which almost a third of the searches are made via voice. Voice search is the voice recognition technology underlying different spoken dialog systems (SDS) that allows the users to find relevant answers to the spoken queries. The information is stored on large databases and the query made through voice command is compared with the fields in the database to obtain the relevant answers.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The voice search technology uses deep neural network (DNN) technology, which is modelled on languages and sounds.

At the very beginning, the customer's utterance is recognized using an automatic speech recognizer (ASR) and then, it is transcribed into text. After the recognition, analysis of the speech received is done. It analyses whether the speech is a command or a question. After the identification is done, a connection to the search engines is created to get the most relevant answer to the query. Once the answer is obtained, it is translated into the required format and is shared with the user.

Figure 14.1 describes the process in detail.

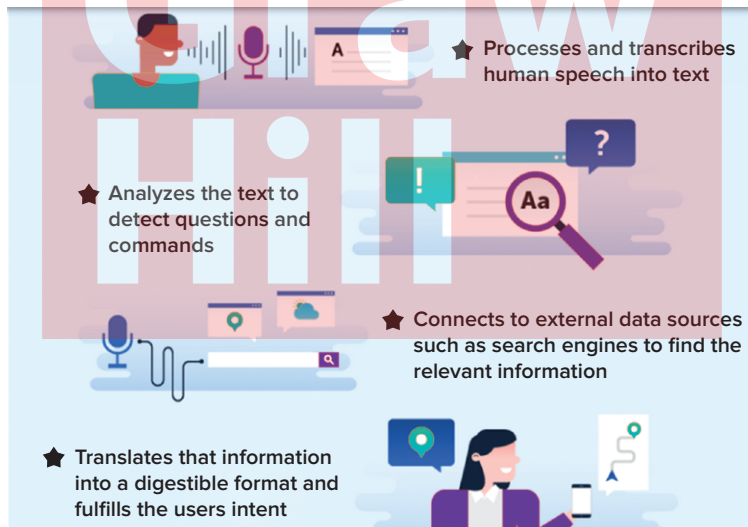


Figure 14.1 Voice Search Process

IMPACT OF VOICE SEARCH ON DIGITAL MARKETING

Let us examine how voice search is impacting digital marketing landscape and making it imperative for businesses to incorporate a voice search strategy.

Increased Brand Awareness and Strengthened Customer Loyalty

Voice search delivers answers to customer queries quickly, enabling customers to prefer the brand offering seamless interaction and saving their time and efforts. The ability of voice assistants to remember the customers' past inquiries due to the leveraging of artificial intelligence (AI) and advances in natural language processing (NLP) has proved to deliver more relevant and useful information than keyword search. NLP is the part of AI that enables the computer program to understand the human language as it is spoken. This strengthens customer loyalty and further leads to word of mouth as satisfied customers then share their experiences in social network.

Enabled New Form of Selling

Voice recognition device such as Alexa already has a few built-in sales features that are getting better with time. The best example of this is the Alexa feature created by Domino's, which enables the customers to quickly and easily order their favourite pizza without even using their smartphones. The user can launch Domino's by speaking into the device, which then connects the users with the pizza brand's AI personality Dom, who allows them to place the pizza order. This has increased the brand's customer database as it enables the customers to quickly place an order just by speaking. So, voice search has brought in a new form of advertising that satisfies the needs and queries of the customers within a few seconds (Figure 14.2).



Figure 14.2 Domino's Enabled Customers to Order Pizza Using Amazon Alexa

Source: We Are Social

Improved B2B Sales⁴

The voice search technology is quickly transforming the enterprises, improving internal communication, driving B2B sales and also enabling the companies to connect with international companies using translation features. B2B sales are a little complex but the voice technology carries the potential to provide the buyer with required answers with just voice interaction, reducing the friction the buying process. It saves the time of the buyer and improves the sales as the buyer no more has to go through a series of prompts and menus to configure the desired product.

Improved Customer Experience

By taking lesser time than text-based software to interact with the customers, and being more natural and seamless, the voice interactions have enhanced the overall customer experience. Many brands have incorporated voice search in their marketing strategy to target busy customers and provide them with a stellar experience. For example, Whirlpool has collaborated with Amazon for creating intelligent and voice-activated appliances that actively converse with the customers, answer their queries and guide them⁵

FUTURE OF VOICE SEARCH

It is predicted that by 2020, 50% of the online searches⁶ will be done via voice search. It is hence on its path to becoming the dominant search method. Responses are expected to become more and more personalized in the future based on the past pattern of their voice interactions. Voice interaction with cars, lamps, washing machines, etc. will soon become a reality.

There have been more advancements apart from voice search, and companies are using newer ways to interact with customers and enhance their experience. Let's look at these newer developments.

BEACON TECHNOLOGY

With the launch of iBeacon technology by Apple in the year 2013, Beacons have been creating a buzz. The Beacon technology has been changing the way companies are interacting with their customers and this technology is expected to grow in the future. According to the predictions by the *Global Market Insights*, Beacon technology is expected to surpass \$25 billion by the year 2024. These figures show the potential this technology carries to transform the marketing landscape soon. Figure 14.3 shows the basic functioning of Beacon technology in retail.

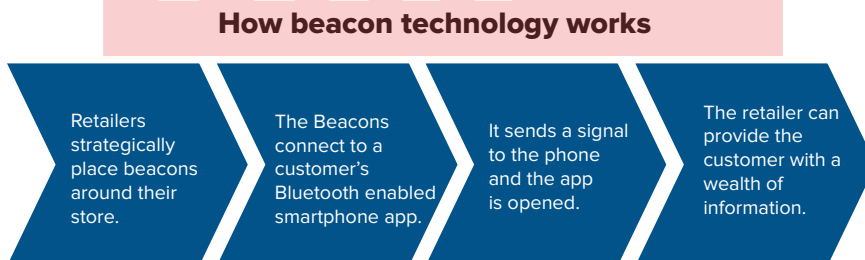


Figure 14.3 How Beacon Technology Works in Retail

Source: Business Insider, "How Beacon Technology Works," <https://www.shopify.ca/retail/the-ultimate-guide-to-using-beacon-technology-for-retail-stores>

WHAT IS BEACON TECHNOLOGY?

Beacons are small wireless transmitters that use a low-energy Bluetooth technology to transmit signals to the nearby smart devices. This technology has enabled marketers to do proximity marketing.

HOW DOES THE TECHNOLOGY WORK?

Beacons are small computers consisting of a CPU, batteries and a radio, which work by repeatedly broadcasting out an identifier. The identifier is a unique ID number, which is recognized by the smartphone as unique to the Beacon. As Beacons are a part of the indoor positioning system, proximity technology is used by them to detect a human presence in the proximity and neighbouring area and transmit set actions to them.⁷

Whenever a customer walks in or near the place where the indoor positioning system has been set, the smartphone is detected by the Beacon and it sends a code with a message via Bluetooth to the detected smartphone. The messages received by smartphones can only be seen with a mobile app. Some of the popular mobile apps are iBeacon app, indoor navigation app or an Eddystone app.⁸

Things required for using Beacon technology⁹:

1. At least one Beacon device
2. A mobile app such as Apple iBeacon, Google Eddystone, etc.
3. User's permission

BENEFITS OF BEACON TECHNOLOGY IN DIGITAL MARKETING¹⁰

Beacon technology is a promising technology and carries great potential to benefit every industry (Figure 14.4). Here are a few benefits of the same:

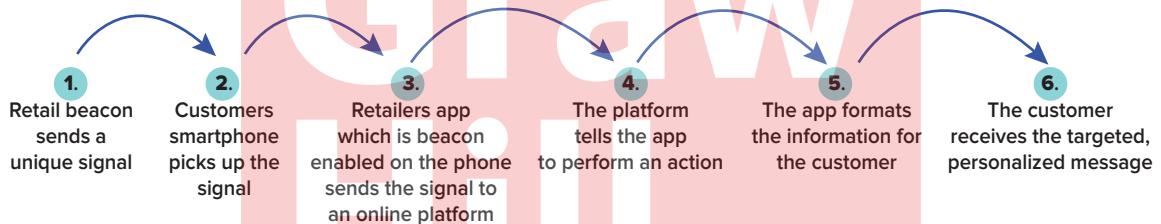


Figure 14.4 Beacon Technology and Digital Marketing

Source: Happiest Minds, "Beacon Technology and Digital Marketing," <https://www.happiestminds.com/Insights/Beacons-technology/>

1. **Effective Out-of-Store Marketing** – The main selling point of the Beacon technology is its ability to deliver all the information marketers want to extend to the existing and potential customers within the range of the Beacon. The message can be a simple alert letting the customers know that they are nearby the shop or letting them know about the discounts, loyalty programmes and competitions the shop is running. This location-based technology enables marketers to personalize the out-of-store marketing.
2. **Detailed Data Gathering** – Beacon technology makes it possible for the marketers to gather detailed information about which section of the shop is more engaging to the customers. This data can be used to improve product listings and in-store layout. The data analysis can help the marketers to refine the customer experience, tailor marketing campaigns and improve the in-store conversion rate.

- 3. Improves Customer Experience** – Beacons personalize the customer experience through targeted ads and improve the overall shopping experience. Targeted ads and offers from favourite brands also build trust, familiarity and loyalty among the customers (Figure 14.5).

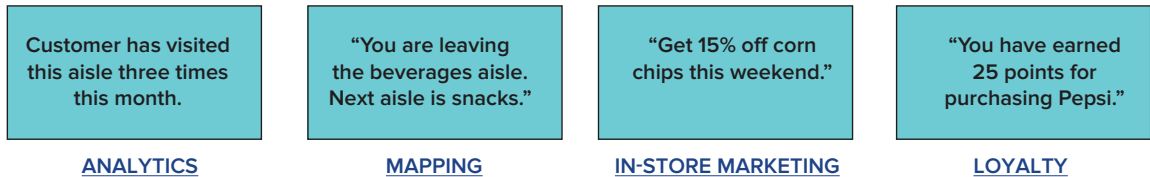


Figure 14.5 Improved Customer Experience Using Beacon Technology

Source: Estimate, "Improved Customer Experience Using Beacon Technology", <https://estimate.com/>

- 4. Improved Google My Business Listing** – If one has a Beacon installed in their business, it will help improve their Google My Business listing. Beacon helps track popular visiting times to one's locations, which improves the accuracy of data shown in the listing. Beacon also enables one to request users to upload photos of the venue and help one gather more data on check-ins done at one's venue (Figure 14.6).

An updated listing is vital for local SEO. Hence, using a Beacon can help one's Google My Business listing to stand out from the others.

Beacon technology is still relatively fresh, but the possibilities of this technology in proximity marketing and location-based marketing are enormous. Marketers can leverage the data received through the Beacons and utilize it to improve the business.



Figure 14.6 Google My Business

EXAMPLES

iBeacons find their way into McDonald's¹¹

McDonald's experienced surge in their sales after implementing iBeacon in their 26 outlets in Columbus, Georgia. The company tested iBeacon technology with its customers for 4 weeks pushing special deals for McChicken Sandwiches and Chicken McNuggets. The iBeacon-powered promotions resulted in increased sales of McChicken Sandwiches by 8% and of Chicken McNuggets by 7.5% (Figure 14.7).

Using Beacon Technology, Pepsi.co Targeted Taste Testers

Pepsi modernized its approach by using marketing channels such as Beacons and digital Billboard to tie the customers to the point-of-sale.

The company ran a two-part campaign in the Netherlands that encouraged the customers to take a blind test to compare the taste between Coke and Pepsi. The campaign was launched using a Beacon deployed on the tasting machine and also involved an exclusively developed app to receive and be a part of the campaign.

The second-part of the campaign focused on retargeting. When a returning customer again walks in the mall in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and the Hague, using the Beacon technology unique IDs were created for the users who already logged in from the app. This unique ID triggered the digital display when a taste tester walks in the mall.



Figure 14.7 McDonald's

Throughout the campaign period, Pepsi paid only when the ad got displayed. Using the Beacon technology, the campaign was very successful, impactful and cost-effective.

Beacon Technology Beyond Retail Stores

Beacon marketing technology started gaining popularity by 2016 in various fields beyond retail stores, like sports arenas, hotels, airports and bank branches. Marketers relying on mobile apps to reach their customers saw the potential that Beacon technology offered.

For instance, at Levi's Stadium, which is the home ground of the San Francisco 49ers, the installation of thousands of Beacons made it easy for fans to locate their seats and also to have food and drinks delivered to them.

Within seven months of adopting the Beacon marketing technology, the stadium's app was downloaded 183,000 times, which led to a 30% adoption rate and a \$1.25 million increase in concession revenue.¹²

Beacon technology proves to be a success because of the location of the user and the timing of the ads displayed. Since location and time play a huge role in the success of a marketing campaign, let's now look at the micro-moment marketing concept, which is also based on perfect time and location.

MICRO-MOMENT MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is one of the most variable aspects of marketing. Micro-moments take place when a reflexive action is taken to a device to react to a need to do, learn, buy or watch something. There are moments like 'I want to know', 'I want to buy', 'I want to do', 'I want to go', etc., which occur while the consumers surf the Internet. These are intent-rich moments when a customer shapes his preferences and makes a buying decision. Hence these moments play an important role in shaping the future of brands. Buyers these days want immediate gratification and hence are making decisions faster than ever.

WHY COMPANIES NEED MICRO-MOMENTS IN THEIR MARKETING STRATEGY?

With an average user checking their mobile over 150 times a day, there are many high-intent moments that can be shaped into game-changer events for brands. These are the moments when potential customers have higher expectations with lesser patience. Each of these moments plays a very critical role for the brands to sell their products¹³ (Figure 14.8). If a brand's competitors leave knowledge gaps, marketers could leverage

these opportunities to fill these gaps with the help of micro-moment marketing techniques. The brands that take complete advantage of these situations can gain a huge competitive edge.



Figure 14.8 Different Micro-moments

Source: Google, "Different Micro-moments," <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/consumer-journey/micro-moments-understand-new-consumer-behavior/>

BENEFITS OF MICRO-MOMENTS¹⁴

Brands can benefit in the following ways from the micro-moment marketing strategy.

- 1. Most Customers are not Committed to A Single Brand** – 90% of the smartphone users do not have a specific brand in mind while looking for brand information online.¹⁵
- 2. One Can Aim at the Customers of Their Competitors** – 1 out of 3 smartphone users have purchased a product of a company or brand other than what they intended to buy in the first place because they received brand information from other sources at the right time.
- 3. Can Be A Great Help in Increasing Brand Awareness** – More than half of the smartphone users have come across new brands while randomly conducting searches on their phones.

These are just a few major benefits of micro-moment marketing, which gets a brand name chosen by being there at these 'moments' to help the customer in decision-making and get the audience to acknowledge the services offered by the brand.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LEVERAGING MICRO-MOMENT MARKETING IN THE BUSINESSES

Industry trends show that content marketers and teams are putting more emphasis on the value of content rather than the production quality – meaning that in a world of selfies and user-generated content, everything one shares with consumers doesn't need runway-level production.

- 1. Be Ready** – Marketers must always be ready and updated about their whereabouts and how to effectively convert possible situations into useful marketing platforms.¹⁶
For example, Adidas pointed out social media possibilities for the World Cup about six months beforehand. The company planned out specific reactions to a few obvious events that were about to occur like the scoring of goals, etc. This gave the company enough time to come up with relevant good-quality advertisements that they used during the Cup matches.
- 2. Focus on Events that Occur Around the World, Every Happening** – There are multiple events that occur worldwide every day; focus on these events and connect better with own crowd.

For example, Amul, a dairy-based company, focuses majorly on various events that occur on a daily basis and puts out relevant ads every day. Here's an example.

3. **Focus on Time Advertising Based on Unexpected Happenings** – Focus on events that occur on an unexpected note, keep track of the changes and swoop right in when the customer is in need. When people are denied a service, they tend to look for other services at their time of need.

For example, Red Roof Inn, a hotel service based company focused on flight cancellations that leave around 90,000 US passengers unattended every day. The company tracked flight timings and cancellations on a real-time basis and put out ads at the very moment when it discovered flight cancellations. The ads put out, 'Stranded in the airport? Come stay with us!', which resulted in a 60% increase in hotel bookings.¹⁷

4. **Focus on Sports Events:** Sports events draw a major crowd that share the same excitement about the matches. Micro-moment marketing can be used during these events, but one needs to make sure that it does not strike off as an interruption to the customer.

For example, during the 2013 Super Bowl, there was an unexpected power cut that lasted almost 30 minutes. This could have been a disaster for many advertisers but Oreo took to social media and seized the moment. Oreo tweeted, 'Power Out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark' with the photo as seen in Figure 14.9, leading to about 15,000 retweets in 14 hours. Oreo did not know that the power cut would occur, but they had a 15-member social media team that were giving constant updates about the match. They acted at the right moment, which was only possible because they were ready.¹⁸

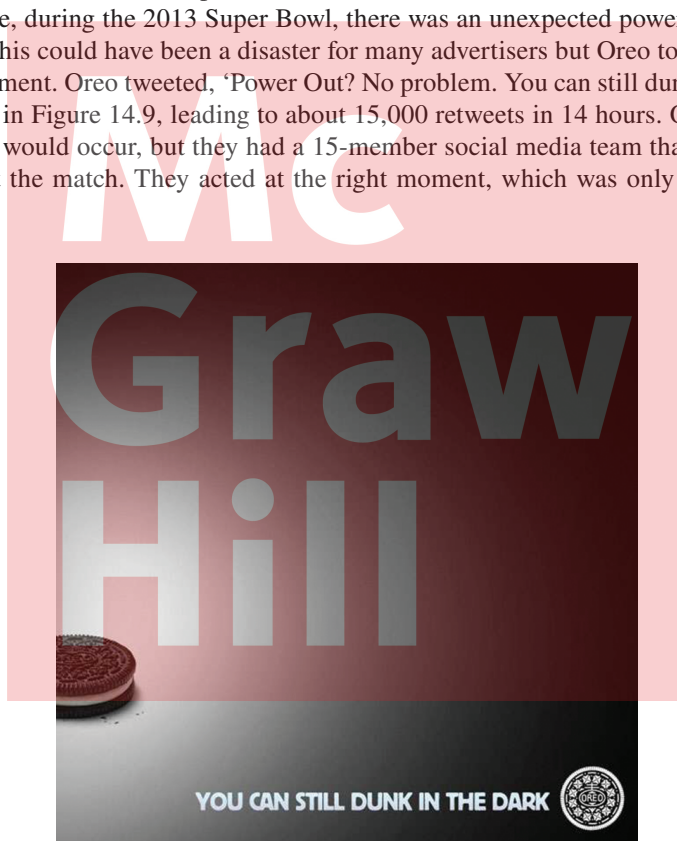


Figure 14.9 Oreo Creative Moment Marketing Ad

Source: Mondelez International

5. **Focus on I-Want-To Moments:** Focus on people who want to get away for a while or people who want to know about the product, people who are focusing on going on a trip. Increase the marketing intensity during holiday periods when people are looking for a weekend getaway or a long trip.

For example, Virgin America wanted to increase the number of ticket bookings on its Airbus A320. They focused on the 'I-want-to-get-away' people and put out a test-drive advertisement that allowed people

to use Google Cardboard and get a good 360° view of their flight. This new experience generated over 600,000 interactions and a 15% overall lift in unique site visitors compared to the year prior.¹⁹

6. **Focus on the Location of Users:** Live location tracking and displaying ads is the most relevant type of marketing as people are always on the lookout when outside.

For example, when people searched for 'coffee near me', Dunkin Donuts, a fast food firm, provided a location-based map with real-time updates on waiting time, which allowed users to decide and take their move accordingly. Such steps help in improving customer relationship, which is of huge value to any company.

Exhibit

Goal – Improve and increase brand awareness of Oreo and drive sales in the UK market.

Implementation – Oreo took to Twitter to tweet about the birth of HRH Prince George of Cambridge and connected with the UK crowd. They smartly used their biscuit right next to the milk bottle that the baby would be drinking from and tweeted, 'LONG LIVE THE CREME' (Figure 14.10).



Figure 14.10 Oreo's Tweet

Source: Mondelez International via Oreo Cookie Twitter

Result – Using micro-moment marketing strategy, one can see from the image Oreo got around 600 retweets, and they built a good relationship with their UK crowd.²⁰

Exhibit

Goal – Gary Lineker, a former English football player, said he would present the Match of the Day with just his pants if Leicester city had won the championship. Walkers wanted to use this opportunity to improve and increase brand awareness, boost reach and strengthen its relationship with customers.

Implementation – Walkers started a ‘Countdown to kit-off’ campaign, which featured a dynamic ad of Gary Lineker covered only by multiple packets of chips that kept disappearing as and when Leicester got closer to clinching the championship. When Leicester city won the championship, Walkers revealed the whole body of Gary Lineker and covered only his modesty with their limited edition Salt and Victory chips.



Figure 14.11 Walkers Ad Campaign

Source: Walkers

Result – The campaign gained an increase in brand awareness by around 9% and helped Walkers achieve all their objectives. The brand also highlighted their Leicester City team sponsorship in the process.

Exhibit

Goal – Royal Mail wanted to increase their stamp sales and increase their popularity in the mailing sector.

Implementation – Royal Mail took to a series of micro-moments marketing campaign. They declared that they would release stamps congratulating each gold medal that a Briton won during the London 2012 Olympic Games. The company produced stamps the day after each win, which usually took about 18 months.

Result – The clever marketing campaign helped drive £21 million, which was 75% more than what the company had expected beforehand. Out of the £21 million made, £8 million was from new customers and Royal Mail successfully delivered a whole new generation of Stamp Collectors.²¹

CASE STUDY

The time when FIAT planned to come back to the market worked in its favour. At that time in America, gas prices were spiralling upwards and Americans were interested in small, efficient city cars. This made the company's disadvantages work as its strengths. For publicizing the new car, the company deployed online ads for desktop as well as mobiles by optimizing them with terms such as a city car, branded, small car,

etc., to reach the potential clients in those micro-moments of research. The ad's opening on desktop took the visitors to the online car configurator of the company. And on smartphones, the ad took the visitors to the nearest dealership allowing them to physically see the car, inspect its features and then buy it.



Figure 14.12 FIAT Car

Results

Using a micro-moment marketing strategy, the car manufacturing company's FIAT 500 achieved significant success in America and witnessed a tremendous 127% in unaided recall. The success of FIAT 500 in America after 28 years shows the power mi-

cro-moment marketing strategy holds in the present tech-savvy time.²²

Today a single user uses a lot of devices; it is becoming more and more difficult for marketers to market their product efficiently. This problem is solved by cross-device marketing.

CROSS-DEVICE MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

It is the type of marketing in which customers are identified across various devices and advertisements and promotions are designed to run on each device seamlessly.

WHY IS CROSS-DEVICE MARKETING REQUIRED?

One of the most challenging issues is the fragmented nature of today's marketing ecosystem. Many of the platforms treat the same user as a separate person when they operate from a different device. This causes a huge decrease in the efficiency of the marketing campaign as the same user is constantly switching between numerous devices.

Consider the following statistics:²³

- Over 70% consumers use more than three devices.
- 31% of consumers tend to switch devices when they discover, research and purchase products.
- 52% of consumers want to see the same content from brands but device-optimized.
- Households have an average of 5.7 Internet-connected devices.

Cross-device marketing solves this issue by meeting the customers at the device they are sitting at. This allows the companies to market their products to the target audience at the right time, through the perfect channel and at the appropriate device (Figure 14.13).



Figure 14.13 Cross-Device Marketing

CROSS-DEVICE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

A company decides to optimize their ad spend for desktop vs. mobile. The traditional device report revealed that majority of the customers are using a desktop to make a booking for a trip. They therefore went ahead with optimizing desktop ads.

But the cross-device marketing reports revealed that almost all interactions began on mobile and conversion was typically completed later on a desktop. Hence the company should have focused more on mobile ads than desktop ads.

This example clearly shows how consumers now use multiple devices for a single purchase; this reveals a lot of potential to identify the different devices linked to the user and market through the identified channels efficiently to create a smooth experience for the user and convert the potential buyers into customers.²⁴

IDENTITY RESOLUTION

Cross-device identity resolutions enable us to identify the user behind devices, which is the necessary step for marketers to smoothen and personalize the experience of a customer (Figure 14.14).



Figure 14.14 Linking Different Devices to a User

Different devices are linked to a specific user. This is done after studying a lot of data through different approaches. An effective cross-device ID solution gathers all the attributes of a customer and correlates them to a 360° view of the customer's behaviour. The database that holds the customer profiles and all the already known identifiers that correlate with individual customers is known as **Identity Graph**.

Identity Graphs' ownership is probably its most important consideration. All social networks, ad partners and data providers boast of their own Identity Graph solutions. The issue in working with third-party identity graphs is that they limit the insights and capabilities revealed by the data. These constraints frustrate the marketers as they are not provided with much insightful data about the customer. This encourages the brands to have their own identity graphs.

Some of the identifiers linked with an Identity Graph are:

- Personal details such as name, social media usernames, email IDs, etc. These data are shared by the customers when they register with the brand's website or app.
- Location data revealing the residential and office addresses, which are collected from the daily commuting and check-ins on social media. This reveals the customers' preferred devices used in a particular area and at a particular time.
- Digital data such as IP addresses associated with devices, cookies, pixel tags give insights into the user's browsing history and purchasing patterns.

Cross-device ID solutions use two methods to match devices with particular people²⁵:

1. **Probabilistic Approach** – It uses a series of data such as IP addresses, age, browser versions, etc. to evaluate the probability that the two devices belong to a particular user. This approach is less accurate, but it has a wider reach making it ideal for behavioural targeting.
2. **Deterministic Approach** – It uses the known data of a customer such as email IDs, customer ID, payment transactions, etc. to match the devices to a particular user. This gives a way more accurate view of the customer than the probabilistic method. This method is the gold standard when it comes to matching.

BENEFITS OF CROSS-DEVICE MARKETING²⁶

1. **Smooth and Delightful Experience for Customers** – If the marketers have a unified view of the customers across the devices, they can personalize their communication. They can apply what they learn about each individual's habits and purchasing patterns at opportune moments.
2. **Improved Targeting** – Suppose a marketer wishes to serve an ad six times to a particular user in a campaign, but the user uses three different devices – a smartphone, a laptop and a desktop. Without recognizing that it is the same user using all the three devices, the same ad might be shown up to 18 times to the user. This will irritate the user and have an effect exactly opposite to the outcome the advertiser was hoping for. Cross-device identification allows the marketer to avoid such situations. With cross-device identification the marketer also saves on marketing budget, which improves the Return on Ad spend.
3. **Understand the Customer's Complete Journey** – By successfully identifying the users across devices, marketers can react to needs, wants and desires at each stage of a buyer's journey.

GOOGLE SIGNALS IN GOOGLE ANALYTICS

To get a report on cross-device journeys for signed-in Google users, we need to activate Google Signals in the Google Analytics platform.

1. Sign into Google Analytics.
2. Go to property column > Tracking Info > Data Collection
3. Read about Google Signals, and press continue.

CROSS-SCREEN MARKETING

A significant shift in consumer behaviour in recent times has been the increase in the number of screens in a user's life. Multi-screen campaigns run across multiple screens including mobile, televisions, laptops, desktops, etc. at the same point of time.

It is not right to assume that the users see televisions, laptops, mobiles and tablets as interchangeable devices. Each of the devices serves a specific purpose for a user and marketers should try to understand what these specific needs are to effectively target a device for marketing.²⁷

Mobile

Mobiles are always close to us physically, sadly (not sad for the marketers) they are the last thing we look at before sleeping and the first thing we look at after waking up.

Mobiles are said to be the future of marketing, but the truth is that the era has already arrived. The number of mobiles in the world outnumbers the number of computers by a big margin. Most of the searches for products and services begin on a mobile phone, people look for buying products and services while they are travelling, listening to music and even during any kind of break they take from work. That makes mobile marketing a must for the brand's campaign.

Laptop and Desktop

Through the last two decades, laptops and desktops have become our go-to library, doctors, travel agents, etc. All the workplaces are filled with laptops and desktops and people spend the majority of their work time in front of these screens.

Customer's journey most of the times ends on a laptop or desktop as they feel more confident finalizing a purchase paying for it on a laptop.

Television

TV has been that old reliable friend in every household that we grew up watching. After a long day at work, people turn to their televisions to relax and entertain themselves.

Some people believe that televisions have become an obsolete channel for marketing, but this is not true; it is still alive and well. Ads on website and online media only reach a specific customer set. There is still a huge chunk of the population that spends a lot of time in front of televisions. TVs allow the marketer to broaden their reach to a much bigger audience.

BEST PRACTICES – COMBINE AND CONQUER²⁸

The ideal marketing campaign is the one that uses a combination of marketing vehicles.

Digital marketing is fantastic at reaching a very narrow and specific audience. It will identify a gym-loving person who spends his money on supplements; then, it will deliver him very personalized and specific ads. But online marketing campaigns have trouble reaching masses and expanding their audience. This is where the role of ads on television assumes significance.

1. **Be Consistent** – This is the key when it comes to combining digital and TV campaigns. If a user sees a brand's TV ad and decides to look it up on Google, it should give him the same look and feel. Televisions act as a huge driver to the web.
2. **Be Direct** – The ad should have a defined purpose; viewers should clearly understand where to log in, why should they want to do it, etc. After viewing the introductory ad on a TV, they should know how to learn more about the product on the web.
3. **Focus on the Bigger Picture** – Televisions allow the brands to introduce and explain their brand's message, they add to the creditability of the brand.

TV advertising is established and is here to stay. Online marketing has its own benefits, but it works best only as a part of the combined approach. Marketers should capitalize on cross-screen marketing to have a high-impact marketing campaign.

CUSTOMER DATA PLATFORM

A customer data platform (CDP) connects all sources and types of customer data. It could be internal/external, structured/unstructured, batch/streaming. This structured data is then made available to other marketing systems as can be seen in Figure 14.15. This enables us to have a comprehensive view and have a clearer understanding of the customers. CDP allows the brand to provide more customized content and delivery.²⁹

CDP integrates data from a variety of first-, second-, and third-party sources to build customer profiles. These sources include the marketer's CRM (customer relationship management) and DMP (data management platform), transactional systems, website forms, mail and activity on social media, and more as shown in Figure 14.15. CDPs offer a completely unified, immediately available view of all kinds of customer data, enabling marketers to take action in real time.

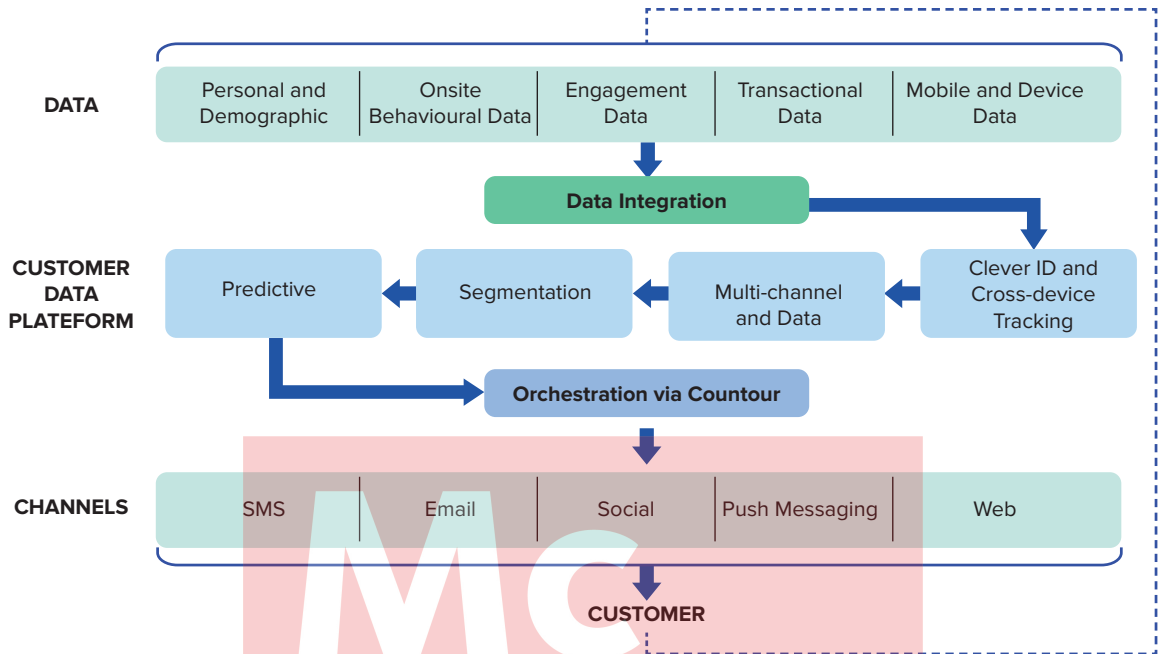


Figure 14.15 Functioning of a CDP

Source: Econsultancy, "Functioning of a CDP," <https://econsultancy.com/what-is-a-customer-data-platform-how-is-it-different-from-a-dmp-or-crm/>

CORE CAPABILITIES OF A CDP³⁰

CDPs' information output revolves around customer-centric marketing, which implies putting the customer at the centre of the brand's business flywheel as can be understood from Figure 14.16. CDPs can enable the organization to achieve the same.

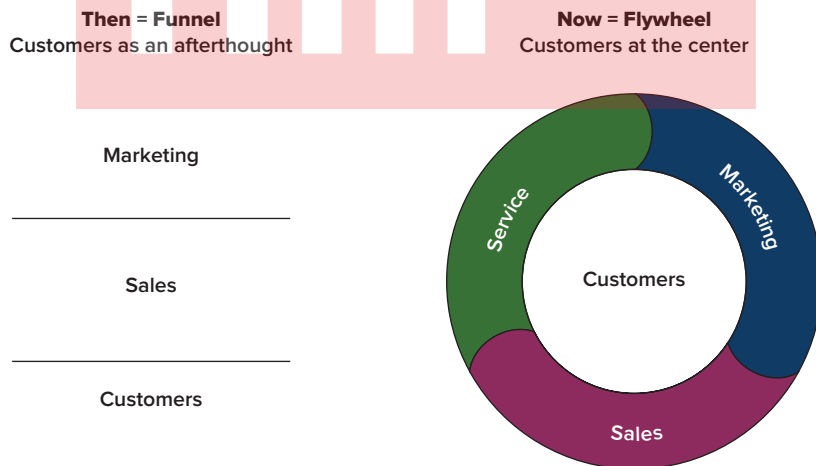


Figure 14.16 Funnel and Flywheel Perspective of Customers

1. It gathers data from various sources into a single platform and provides a 360° view of the customer. Data are brought in from various sources, refined and combined to create a single customer profile.
2. Avoid data silos and unify customer profiles across the system: Sometimes data are available to a single department of an organization and it is isolated from the other departments; those data sets are referred to as data silos. Silos reduce the accuracy of customer profile data, create a less collaborative environment, slow the pace and productivity of the organization. CDPs can help the organization avoid this problem. One can be confident that one's data are accurate and accessible by all as the CDP will unify the brand's customer data and employees.
3. Improved Marketing Campaigns: CDPs allow users to predict the optimum next move for a customer. It's likely that the organization has multiple marketing efforts happening at once. It can take a lot of energy and time trying to communicate with each other on the data the marketer uses for and collects from these separate marketing efforts. That's where the role of CDP comes in. CDPs can unify various marketing efforts by providing consolidated and accurate data.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CRM, DMP, CDP AND MARKETING AUTOMATION

CRM systems are built to engage with customers; this is on the basis of historical and general customer data to create a persistent customer profile. They aren't built to ingest huge volumes of data from other sources such as a CDP. A CRM acts as one of many data sources for a CDP.

DMPs focus primarily on anonymous interactions and are used by digital advertisers, marketers and publishers to store and manage audience and campaign data. DMPs rely on anonymous, third-party data to segment and build audiences that look like first-party customers. DMPs were primarily made to target and retarget anonymous users for advertising purposes, whereas CDPs make a database of identified customers, which is to be used for things more than just advertising.

Marketing automation platforms, which, like CDPs, are designed for marketer's use, focus on collecting digital channel data and executing digital campaigns. Marketing automation platforms do not offer the cross-channel (i.e. online/offline data) capabilities that are native to CDPs (Figure 14.17).

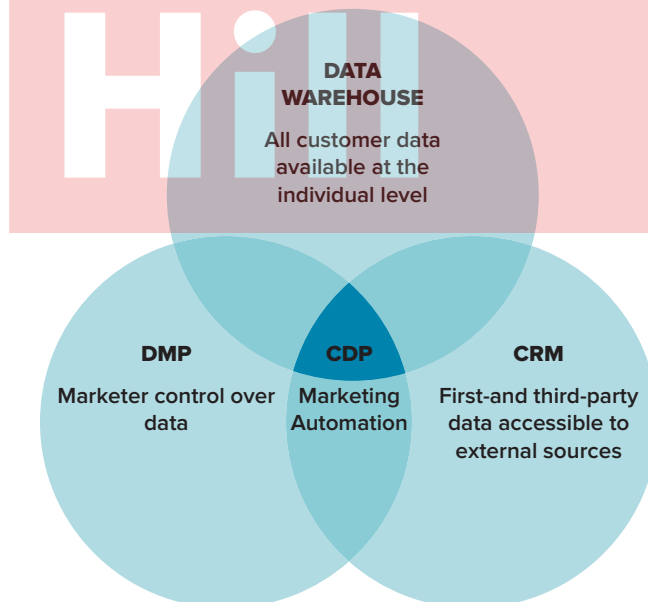


Figure 14.17 Venn Diagram Displaying How CDPs Differ from Other Marketing Technologies

Figure 14.18 shows the feature comparison in CRM, CDP, DMP.

	Data Warehouse	Custom Integration	DMP	CRM	CDP
Unified Customer Data	↑	↓	↓	↔	↑
Persistent	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Packaged system	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
Real-time Capability	↓	↔	↑	↓	↑
Open Access	↑	↓	↑	↔	↑

Figure 14.18 Feature Analysis in DMP, CRM and CDP

EXAMPLES OF CDP SOFTWARE

Segment

It was launched back in 2013 by a group of four engineers and is now one of the leaders in the CDP market. It allows integration with over 200 tools including Google Analytics, Slack and Salesforce, they also boast of an open-source platform so that developers can build new integrations if they want. This enables marketers to personalize campaigns, chat with the customers, analyse the product usage, etc.

Today, Segment is being used across 71 countries by over 19,000 companies from fast-growing start-ups such as Instacart, to huge established businesses such as Levi's.

Tealium AudienceStream CDP

Tealium AudienceStream is Tealium's CDP, which is made to provide unified customer profiles and has all the core capabilities of a CDP. It offers a very user-friendly interface to set up segments for enhanced customer targeting. It is very easy to create audiences based on behaviour once you have configured the data sources with the required data points. The process is explained in Figure 14.19.

It is the ultimate solution to centralize your data and activate your audiences in real time with the help of your existing marketing technology stack.

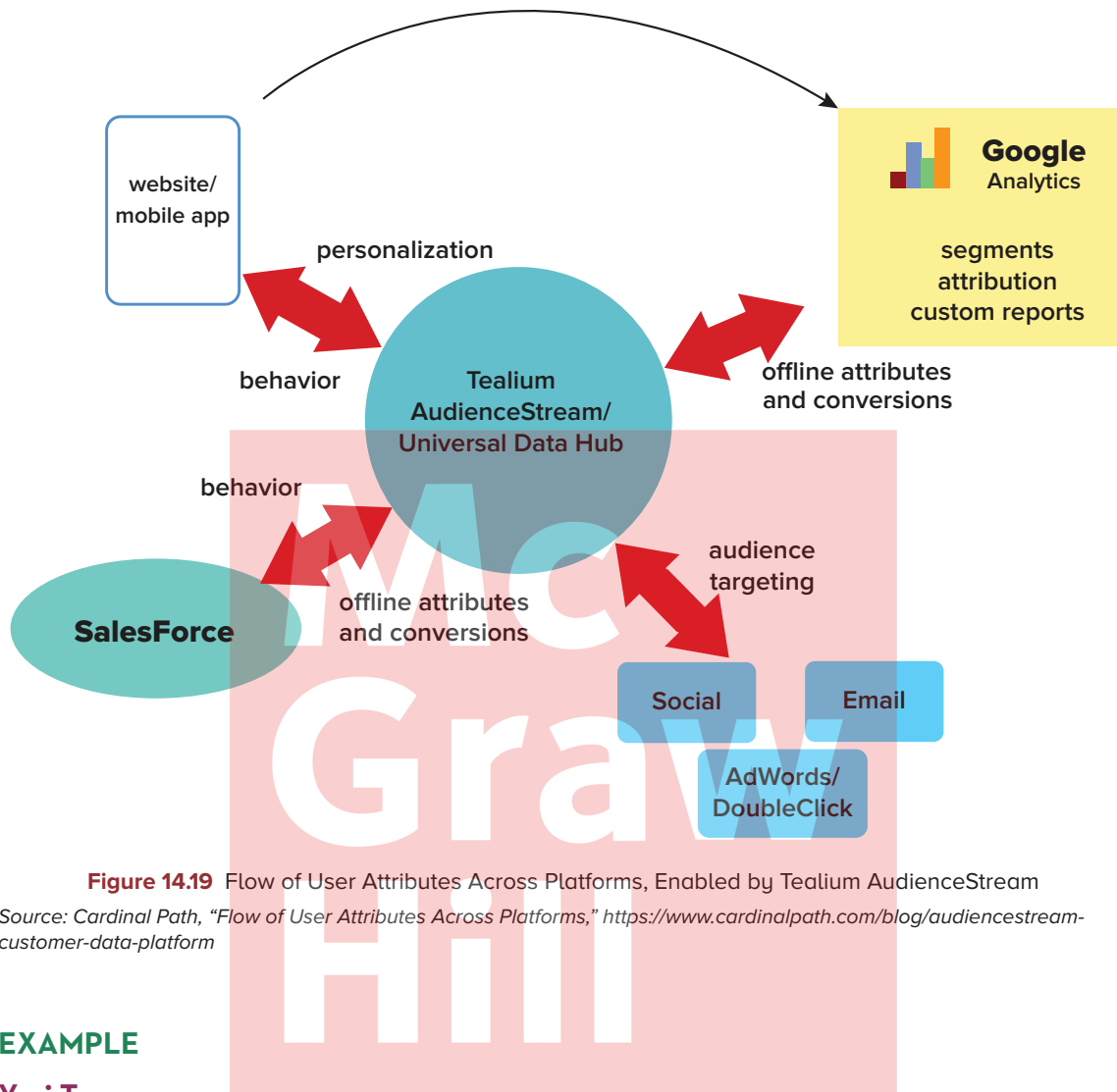


Figure 14.19 Flow of User Attributes Across Platforms, Enabled by Tealium AudienceStream

Source: Cardinal Path, "Flow of User Attributes Across Platforms," <https://www.cardinalpath.com/blog/audiencestream-customer-data-platform>

EXAMPLE

Yezi Tea

In 2013, Meiqin Weng and Boris Musa founded Yezi Tea, an online-only tea distribution company that brings premium Chinese teas to the United States and Canada.

Weng and Musa needed to find their audience. They first needed to educate potential customers on what makes a truly satisfying cup of tea. To do just that, Weng and Musa deployed the device that people turn to for knowledge: the computer. While their site is optimized for mobile phones and tablets, Musa knew that in the first stage of his business, he needed to focus on desktops and laptops as the primary screens to help them find and educate their audience.

The computer lends itself to educational interactions because it's a place where most consumers have years of experience conducting research; they're less focused on the device and subsequently more likely to lend their attention to deeper content.

Musa said most traffic is currently coming from desktop computers, though he's seeing an increase in tablet and mobile usage. As he gains more repeat customers, he expects their comfort levels in ordering through tablet and mobile will only increase – especially as the relationships Yezi builds with these customers become less about education over time and more about experiential exploration on tablets and personal utility on mobile phones.

Focusing on desktops and laptops in the initial stages of their business, rather than getting too caught up in building mobile apps and tablet campaigns, has enabled Weng and Musa to focus on the basics first: identifying and building an educated audience. Close monitoring also helps them glean which segments respond to their tests best. Weng and Musa heavily leverage niche tea communities such as Steepster and networks like Reddit in order to monitor chatter about their brand and stay in touch with customers who have questions.

With the exponentially increasing number of brands and users, we need smarter and smarter marketing campaigns to reach out to the customers. AI can help the brands do that.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is transforming the digital marketing landscape drastically. Whenever a Google search is made, Facebook newsfeed is checked or a product recommendation pops up from Amazon, AI is lurking in the background. Let's dive in and look into some areas of digital marketing in which AI is getting intertwined.

AI IN ADVERTISING

Industries across the globe have been leveraging AI in the best possible way to advertise their products and services.

Let's try to understand what AI can do with Google's example.³¹

Google has been using AI for a long time to extract detailed information from users, which can be used by marketers to analyse and then plan a marketing campaign accordingly. Google collects users' data via Google Analytics, Android, Google Chrome and YouTube. The procedure adopted by Google in the use of AI with Google Ads can be defined in terms of a pyramid, being divided into three levels from bottom to the top: bidding, targeting and messaging, as shown in Figure 14.20.

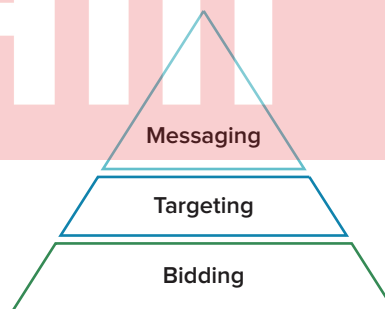


Figure 14.20 AI Process

Bidding

It is important to know how much bidding should be made for a keyword, or how much amount is needed to be paid for an ad. It is advised to use Smart Bidding Strategies, which uses AI, for bidding. Unlike the way bids were made earlier, where the price of a bid was increased or decreased manually based on the reports

obtained; Google's AI has enhanced the way it is done. It looks deeper into the user data obtained by channels such as Android, Chrome, YouTube and Google Analytics for analyses. After the analyses, it records attributes such as the location of a user, apps which the user uses on the smartphone, searches done on browser and YouTube to drive decisions for the bid. Marketers are just needed to set the marketing objective and the AI takes care of the rest.

Targeting

The older targeting approach was based on broad demographics such as age group and gender; it did not consider the intent of the end consumers. AI has brought into the picture the value of the intent of the target customers. The user data that Google collects are used by the AI to predict a consumer's next step. This allows improved targeting for the marketers, as they get to know user interests, like if a person is a cricket fan or basketball fan, if the person is soon going to be a parent, etc. Using such predictions made by the AI, marketers can fix the price in a sale or a lead. Once all of this gets sorted out, Google shows an ad to the right person at the right time.

Messaging

Not just for the analytical aspects of online marketing, AI also comes into practice for understanding meanings and context. Messaging forms the top layer of the pyramid. Google AI can understand messages, their contexts and related subtle details. Google provides an AI for messaging in the form of responsive search ads or responsive display ads. It requires 15 headlines and four descriptions, following which the technology can make combinations. These responsive ads require parameters that are AI specific. Google's AI can derive the best ad keeping the user in mind.

AI FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING³²

Social media platforms have become the priority of every business to have an effective presence on. Various AI-enabled tools such as the analytics tools Unmetric, Nudge, etc., have automated almost all the tasks of social media marketers using AI. Some of the ways in which social media marketing uses AI are as follows.

Customer Service

Customers interact with businesses on a one-to-one basis on social media. However, it is not always possible for businesses to answer large number of customer queries, and this is where AI comes to the rescue. AI prioritizes customer queries, helps businesses understand whether these queries are coming from genuine people or not. Such tools help businesses provide enhanced services, engaging them for a longer time and increasing the chances of conversion. For instance, if we type 'pizza' in Dominos' Facebook Messenger's installed chatbot, it opens up the procedure for ordering a pizza (Figure 14.21). The use of AI has enabled the company to provide completely automated services throughout the day.

Social Listening

Social listening monitors the brand's social media channels for direct mentions of the brand's name or customer's feedback or any discussions regarding specific keywords and topics and then analyses the obtained data to gain insights and act accordingly. Social listening finds the root cause behind the conversations happening on social media platforms and helps marketers to plan a marketing strategy accordingly. Tools such as Mention, Hootsuite, etc. not only monitor the social media channels but also carry out analysis, using which marketers stay ahead of their competition. These tools are powered by AI.

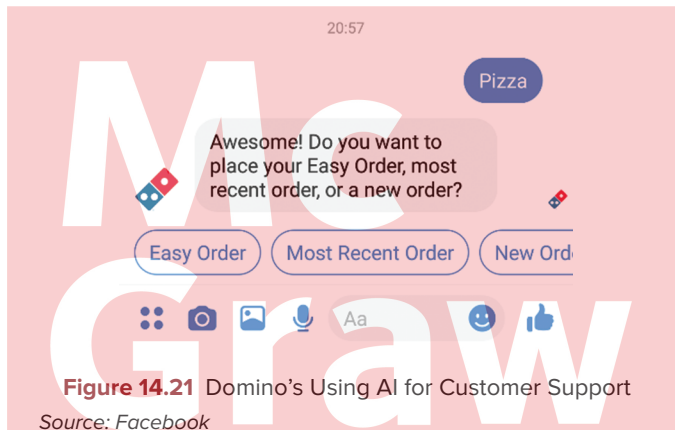
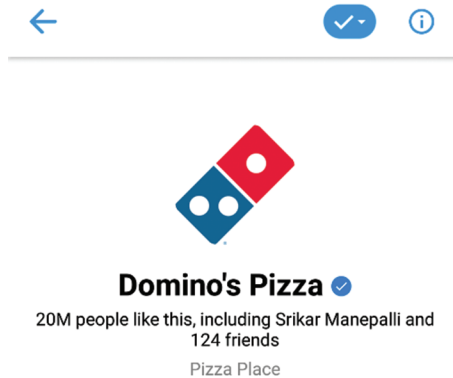


Figure 14.21 Domino's Using AI for Customer Support

Source: Facebook

Competitor Analysis

In the present competitive time, it is important to monitor the activities of competitors and plan the marketing strategy accordingly. It reveals their weaknesses and strengths. This monitoring and analysis is a time-consuming, tiring process. AI-backed tools are there to pacify the efforts to a certain extent. Tools such as Buzzsumo, SEMRush, Linkody, etc., give a detailed analysis of the content strategy followed by a certain brand, its backlinks and much more, giving you an opportunity to stay a step ahead of the competitors.

RECOMMENDATION ENGINES IN AI³³

While growing up, we all went for shopping for clothes with a person who would keep suggesting what would look good on us. So finally deciding on a cloth was a time-consuming task. With the coming of e-commerce platforms on the Internet, the experience of shopping underwent a change – it now takes lesser time. E-commerce allows people to buy anything in a matter of a few scrolls and clicks. A lot of advices on the kind of purchase a customer can make is sent in the mailbox and news feed of the potential customer. Once the customer purchases an item from an e-commerce platform, the customer would be receiving suggestions about similar products in the future.

In such cases, the concept of Recommendation engine comes into practice. It is a marketing tool that is mostly used by e-commerce or business platforms but presently finds usage in several other domains such as navigation systems, traffic control systems, and in entertainment as well. Some of the popular examples

of recommendation systems include Facebook's 'People You May Know', 'Other Movies You May Enjoy' on Netflix, 'Jobs You May Be Interested In' on the LinkedIn feed, and 'Recommended Videos' on YouTube.

In order to provide customers with suggestions, two types of filtering are performed by AI that power recommendation engines:

1. **Content-based Filtering** – It is based on items that customers want to purchase on e-commerce platforms and the keywords customers used to search that item. It also considers the customers' preferences.
2. **Collaborative Filtering** – This kind of filtering emphasizes activities and behaviours of the customers. Following this, predictions are made on what a customer would prefer to purchase based on choices made by similar customers.

There are many applications of AI in the digital marketing landscape; chatbot is one example. Let's find out more about chatbots.

CHATBOTS

Customers may choose to get in touch with companies on their social platforms, websites, or on telephonic call. But being available 24 × 7 for customer service can be an issue for companies, knowing that it would require a person to attend queries by every passing minute. In such cases, chatbots find good use.

A chatbot is a kind of conversational interface that allows interaction with the software in a natural language that is understandable by humans; unlike a programming language like JavaScript or a GUI (graphical user interface) for example.

They automate conversations with visitors on websites and social media, bringing consistency in user experience. When a customer service team is unable to respond to a customer, chatbots fill in the space to entertain the customer on their behalf.

Depicts an interaction that a user is having with a chatbot. The user first asks a question to the computer software in natural language (here, English) and the software on the other end takes the interaction forward by understanding the user's context and expressions.

WHY CHATBOTS?

In online advertising, chatbots can work as an important marketing tool. They can enhance the engagement on an online ad, bringing a good return on investment.

For instance, ads that are displayed on Facebook provide marketers with the option to take users to Facebook Messenger, where they can interact with the bot and complete their inquiry. When this bot interaction occurs, marketers get contact details of the users and can contact them later to occasion more conversions.

USES OF CHATBOTS³⁴

The basic use of chatbots came about for answering queries posed by the customers, like providing information about a product or a company. But there are uses of chatbots for purposes other than answering queries. Here are some ways in which chatbots are used apart from just answering queries and doubts.

For Selling Products – H&M, a prominent fashion brand, uses a chatbot for having quizzes about what kind of fashion customers relate with. Once the chatbot gathers enough information from the customers, it comes up with suggestions that align with customers' responses.

Obtaining Insights from Customers – Chatbots can analyse a customer's online behaviour and purchasing pattern. Once it garners enough customer data, it's easy to understand what kind of products they like. It can also grasp what kind of queries customers come up with during their online journeys. Such insights help to improve the marketing process.

Galvin, an AI-powered chatbot developed by Insites Consulting, is injected into the Twitter platform that works to keep users updated with consumer research, which it extracts from a database that contains consumer insights of an organization.³⁵

Personalization – Brand loyalty increases when customers recognize that brands tailor content and offerings according to their needs. Chatbots give a human touch to the customer when they are online.

Rue21, an AI-powered chatbot³⁶ designed by mode.ai, works on the basis of knowing the fashion preferences of customers, and responds to them with recommendations and suggestions about dresses.

Enhancing Engagement – The definition of engagement changes when chatbots jump into the scenario. Taking an example of Disney's *Zootopia*, a Facebook Messenger bot was created to raise a buzz about the movie and provide some fun for the users. The persona taken was that of Officer Judy Hopps, which was a character from the animated film and users were seen to be spending as long as 10 minutes interacting with the chatbot.

Filtering Leads from Prospects – Identifying leads from a list of prospects could be tedious and tricky. Chatbots in such cases help customers in filtering out leads from prospects by asking questions regarding their preference for products. This data is then forwarded to the sales department of the organization to improve efficiency. Clustaar, a bot generation platform, provides a framework to design chatbots as per its clients' requirements. The platform maintains conversations with prospects at the right time and helps in understanding the offers that are made by a business.³⁷

ADVANTAGES³⁸

In a survey conducted, 63.9% of the respondents accepted that instant messaging using chatbots should be provided by companies, and 49.4% agreed that to connect with a company they preferred using a messaging application to making a phone call.³⁹ Let's find out why. Following are some of the advantages of chatbots.

1. **Always Active** – Unlike humans, chatbots are available all the time to attend inquiries, doubts or queries from customers.
2. **A New Alternative for Interacting with the Audience** – In comparison to rolling out a form on a website for users and having a two-way communication based on their requirements, chatbots allow better interaction opportunities for companies.
3. **Improved Marketing Strategy** – Chatbots collect vital details from the users. Be it their likes, needs or apprehensions, if subtle details are known about customers as stated earlier, they can be leveraged to make suitable corrections in the marketing strategy of an organization without much expenses on human resources and efforts.
4. **Easier to Build than Apps** – Mobile applications require a higher investment of time and money to be ready for use and come up with updates. Chatbots are based out of a server and are easier to create in comparison to applications.

DISADVANTAGES

1. **Installation Cost** – Every chatbot needs to be programmed with respect to the domain of work they will be used in, such as health care, fashion, education, etc. The initial investment is quite high for installing chatbots. Not only this, the changes required post-installation also increase the overhead costs.

2. **Zero Decision-making Capabilities** – Chatbots cannot make a decision on their own. One such instance was encountered with Twitter where a Microsoft-powered chatbot received several misogynistic and racist entries from Twitter users, which affected the chatbot such that it acquired a similar tone.
3. **Zero Memory Retention** – Chatbots cannot retain the conversations that have occurred before. If a user returns to a chatbot after some period of time, the conversation will resume not from where it was left last time, but from the start.

CREATING CHATBOTS

Defining the Goal

The first step is to come up with a concrete objective that you would want your chatbot to accomplish. This involves encapsulating use-cases. Do we want a chatbot for customer service? Or for spreading the word about a new product, or is it about generating new valuable leads? This step involves working closely with the marketing team regarding social media handles and websites.

Plan Out a Content Strategy

Plan out what kind of interaction you want your chatbot to do with your customer. This can begin with frequently asked questions. Consult the customer service team, since they sit at the doorstep through which customers clear their doubts.

Coming up with a Personality and Voice

This is done to give chatbots a human touch and feel. Many companies assign a name to their chatbot.

Messaging

The first message or the opening message should be framed in a way that it would engage users to go further with the thread. This could begin by asking about what they are looking for, to coming up with optional responses that would determine further actions in the interaction. Adding visual content such as GIFs can work in favour as it increases chances of the user feeling more connected.

Action Buttons

Once the conversation between the chatbot and the user is over, providing action buttons is the next step of the process. This takes the user to a goal. These buttons can vary from taking customers to a page of a website, or a product catalogue to name a few.

Testing

Suggestive of the name, it involves knowing whether the users can find relevant information through chatbots or not. Chatbots mostly come with a preview feature, allowing for a mock drill.

CHATBOTS FOR FACEBOOK MESSENGER

On the Facebook platform, chatbots can be linked to Facebook pages in order to take forward personal communications. Companies can leverage this to their advantage where they can direct people to their websites, provide easier ways for looking into FAQs, or provide suggestions for the products. There are many bot platforms like Chatfuel, etc. available for creating AI chatbots for Facebook Messenger.

CHATBOTS FOR WEBSITES

Marketers can integrate chatbots with their websites. For instance, www.botsify.com provides a framework for designing a chatbot, in which marketers can choose a field of information that they wish to

take up from the prospects. The process helps in designing the bot, its name, texture and the welcoming note. The data obtained from the chatbot can be sent to an email address or can get stored in Google Spreadsheet.

Most technological advancements such as voice search, chatbots or Beacon technology used for marketing have the ability to gather user data, which has led to the creation of huge reserves of user data. This is referred to as Big Data. Let's find out more about it in the following section.

BIG DATA

It has been estimated that around 90% of the data in the world came into existence in the last two years. 80% of the data is unstructured and difficult to analyse. The reason that we are storing such huge amounts of data today is to make intelligent decisions irrespective of the field that one is involved in. This is where the concept of Big Data comes in.⁴⁰

INTRODUCTION

Big Data is the term that is used for the data that is huge and grows exponentially with time. It includes complex and large data sets, which are quite impossible to process and store by the traditional data management tools. The data comes from a myriad of sources such as server log files, traditional databases, website visits, emails, social media engagements and practically anything else. Every action that a user takes leaves a digital footprint, and all of it is stored somewhere as part of Big Data.

Big Data is an important cornerstone for AI. It finds correlations and patterns in the historical data and provides insights that could be very useful for various purposes in a business.

To gather insights from such a vast amount of data, we need to process it in a way that traditional systems could not have done. Big Data is all about extracting useful insights by finding patterns and correlations that were earlier being missed out in the traditional systems.



Figure 14.22 Data is the New Oil

BIG DATA FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Technology has advanced in power and reduced in pricing. The Big Data analysis was initially feasible only for the government and huge companies such as Google and Walmart. But now companies like Amazon and Microsoft offer affordable cloud-based services that enable small businesses to build their own Big Data systems and gather new insights.

Many solutions have come up for small businesses to gather, analyse and gain insights. Some examples are SAS, ClearStory Data and Apache Hadoop. Some of these will be discussed later in detail.

BENEFITS OF BIG DATA

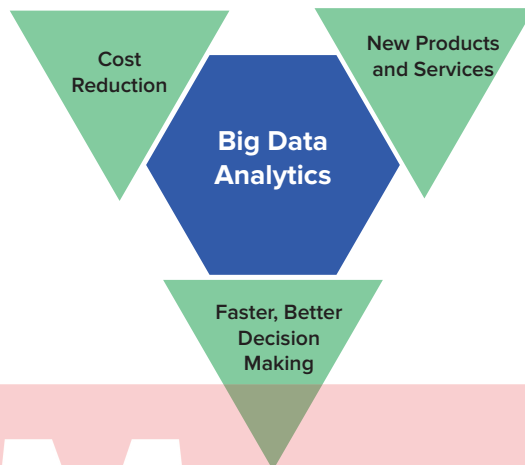


Figure 14.23 Benefits of Big Data Analytics

Source: SAS, “Benefits of Big Data Analytics,” https://www.sas.com/en_lu/insights/analytics/big-data-analytics.html

Many companies, small and large, have started using Big Data and analysis to gain more insights to help the organization and its customers.

Figure 14.23 shows some of the benefits of Big Data; let’s look at them in detail:

- **Cost Reduction** – Technologies such as Apache Hadoop, and also the cloud-based analytics, enable huge cost saving to the process of storing a huge quantity of data.
- **Quicker and Informed Decisions** – The high speed of software such as Hadoop and the analytics software enables businesses to make smart decisions based on what they have inferred from the analysis.
- **New Services and Products** – Big Data analytics enables more and more companies to gauge the customers’ needs and market conditions and create new products.
- **Control Online Reputation** – Big Data analytics can help your company improve its online presence. It does so by performing sentiment analysis against very high volumes of online data.

BIG DATA, BIGGER MARKETING

With advancements in technology, strategizing digital marketing is completely based on data, and decisions are taken after analysing the information provided by the collected data. With the increase in customer characteristics and number of outputs, there is a large amount of unstructured and structured data generated to be processed. Traditional data processing tools do not carry the potential to process such a huge amount of data. Let’s take a look at the ways Big Data can be leveraged in digital marketing planning.

- **Knowledge about Customer Psychology**
With advancements in technology and improvement in IoT applications, chatbots, etc., companies have gained access to a huge amount of data related to their potential customers’ online activities and overall behaviour. This data needs to be analysed in the right way to extract useful insights, and Big Data analytics helps analyse this data easily. With its advanced capabilities, companies can map the entire customer journey and evaluate the touch points that convert into a sale. This way, quality engineers can help the brands to make data-driven decisions to create more leads (Figure 14.24).

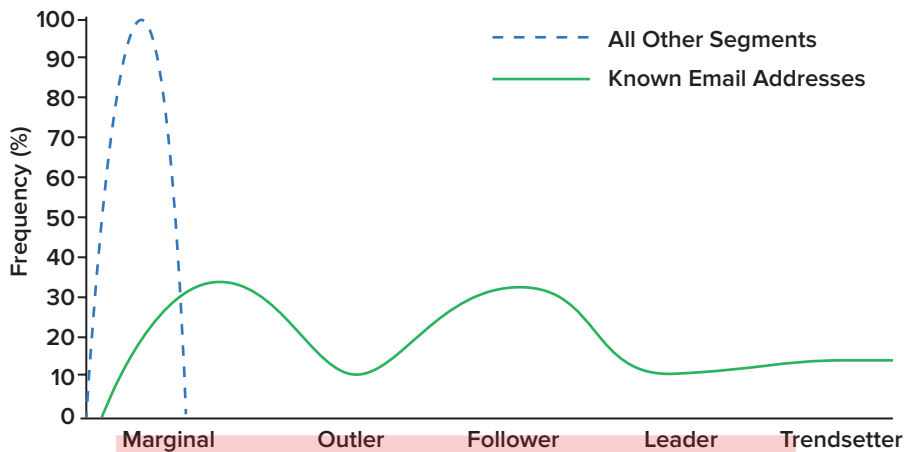


Figure 14.24 SAS Customer Intelligence 360 Customer Insights

Source: SAS, "360 Customer Insights," https://www.sas.com/en_in/insights/analytics/big-data-analytics.html

Marketing campaigns are very important to grab the attention of target audience and for conversion as well. It is important to target the audience after analysing their behaviour, liking and disliking, and for knowing the same, Big Data is the only reliable source. It is important to use good analytical tools to ensure that the information extracted is useful and valuable. The simplest example to understand the effect of Big Data is the use of cookies by the companies. These cookies collect information about the online activities of the customer. This tracking of the customer behaviour helps to better understand customer behaviour and enables the digital marketer to strategize and personalize the shopping journey. This personalization increases the conversion rate as the customers feel happy and important with the personalization of the journey.

- **Optimized Pricing Decisions**

Generally, the prices of products are set according to the product cost, the perceived value of a product from the customer, and demand perspective and competitor pricing. But do you think in the present time where more personalized customer experience is expected, these factors are enough? The answer to this is definitely NO. Leveraging Big Data into the marketing strategy enables marketers to make pricing decisions as granular as possible. Big Data provides insights such as the products purchased by the customers over a certain period of time, their disposable income, macroeconomic indicators such as interest rate, inflation rate, exchange rate, etc. These insights allow the marketers to accurately price the products with the least chances of human error.

- **Better Allocation of Budget**

While running a marketing campaign, the marketing budget is allocated to all the social media channels separately. The allocation of the budget is very challenging for the decision-makers as it is difficult to identify which particular channel will be contributing maximum in the growth. Big Data offers a solution to this problem by providing insights into the current marketing landscape and the potential future impact of marketing campaigns on sales, ROI and profits. These insights, like the ones shown in, help the digital marketers to smartly allocate their budget.

SOME OF THE TOOLS USED IN BIG DATA SOLUTIONS⁴¹

Hadoop

Apache Hadoop is one of the available techniques to handle Big Data in a commercially affordable manner. It is a reliable open-source software made specifically for distributed computing. It does the job of computing and analysing millions of gigabytes of data by distributing the work on many computers. The computers involved need not be state-of-the-art supercomputers; they can be average standard computers.⁴²

A wide variety of businesses and organizations use Hadoop.

SAS

SAS is a leading business analytics software provider since 1976. SAS helps businesses to transform their data into insights, which are helpful in smart decision-making and provide a new perspective to a business irrespective of your business being small, medium or large sized. SAS enables businesses to accomplish more with less with the help of simple-to-use analytics and forecasting features. SAS's note to businesses is a very simple one: 'Identify what's working. Fix what isn't. And discover new opportunities'.

Big Data does provide a large number of insights, but that must translate into better interaction. A technologically advanced and non-traditional approach to interaction is proposed: Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.

VIRTUAL REALITY

INTRODUCTION

Virtual reality (VR) generates a simulated environment by simulating vision, smell hearing and even touch for the users. The user feels like he is present inside the VR experience. If there is something too dangerous or impractical to be done in real life, VR is the answer. VR has a wide variety of applications in various industries and fields such as sports, entertainment, medicine, architecture, marketing and many more. It can cast a huge impact on our day-to-day lives.⁴³

VR FOR MARKETING

More and more businesses have started using this technology to demonstrate their products to prospective customers. VR is being adopted very quickly across the world and the number of VR headsets sold is estimated to reach 82 million by the year 2020.⁴⁴ It is high time for marketers to incorporate VR technology as part of their marketing strategy. Following are some benefits of using VR technology for your marketing campaign.

Enhanced User Experience – A VR video can create a highly enhanced experiences for the users; it transports the user to a different place. A good example would be an on-site experience of a hotel by using 360° virtual walkthrough. VR captures 100% attention of the user since once a user wears the headset, the user cannot be distracted by his phone and social media.⁴⁵

Showcase Your Products in Advance – Marketers can demonstrate the products before they are manufactured using VR. Travel companies can showcase to the users the resort tour and not just hand over a brochure to them (Figure 14.25).



Figure 14.25 Reveal of a Car Concept Using VR

Be One Step Ahead – 62% of the users claim that they engage more with a brand that provides a VR experience. Customers have a higher recall rate for brands that used VR in their campaign.⁴⁶

BEST PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT VR IN YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY⁴⁷

1. **Use Immersive Storytelling** – VR is a very strong tool for brand storytelling. Your VR marketing strategy can be enhanced by increasing interactivity and using visual and audio cues.
2. **VR is Only the Platform, Not the Message** – VR is only a platform through which your brand can give out a message; VR itself is not a message. It is a platform that enables marketers to create more interacting and engaging content.
3. **Analyse Your Existing Audience** – It is important to analyse how your existing audience uses your content, the channels they use to consume the content your brand makes. Get insights using Google Analytics and other analytic tools. Once the analysis is done, then you can incorporate VR content accordingly.

EXAMPLES OF VR IN MARKETING

Adidas

Adidas partnered with a tech marketing agency, named Somewhere else, in 2017 to create the experience of the mountain climbing journey in VR. The mountain climbing journey was interactive and it had a 360° view; users had to wear a headset and have remote controls in each hand. Viewers were able to follow the two

athletes who had climbed the mountain. They followed the athletes rock by rock while climbing the mountain Delicatessen along with Rueck and Miller, virtually (Figure 14.26).



Figure 14.26 Adidas VR Mountain Climbing

Source: BodySwaps

This VR campaign promoted Adidas's outdoor apparel and accessories line while also introducing the users to an activity they might have never done before, which ultimately made the product line more appealing to its users.

TopShop: Fashion Show VR Experience

TopShop live-streamed its fashion show during London's Fashion Week for the people who could not attend the show. They partnered with an emerging tech agency named Inition, which enabled the customers to have a virtual seat on the front row. They had to wear a VR headset, which was linked to the event for getting a live view virtually. It made the viewers feel like they are sitting next to the celebrities who were attending the fashion show.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Augmented reality is the technology that extends our physical reality by overlaying information and virtual objects in real time on real-world scenes. It can be said in simple words that it adds information, sounds, graphics, etc. to the existing environment to create an artificial environment for its users.

Augmented reality carries the potential to be a highly used, world-changing, technology. It can be accessed without buying any special accessories such as special eyeglasses or headwear, which are required for VR.

WHY AUGMENTED REALITY IN MARKETING?

Marketers are always on the look for better ways to engage the target audience and boost awareness about the brand. Augmented reality can help brands achieve the same in the following ways.

1. Augmented reality (AR) can provide a highly realistic impression of their service or product to a potential customer. With the help of 'try-on' apps, customers can see what they'd look like in an outfit without actually having to try it.⁴⁷
2. As AR is relatively new to the market, customers are more likely to remember the marketing campaigns making use of AR technology. Only a limited number of brands are making use of AR technology for their campaigns.
3. The campaigns that are AR-focused are highly engaging and engrossing for the users. It gathers the complete mental attention of the user, which is much different from normal marketing campaigns.

Many brands have started using AR marketing to influence customers' purchasing decisions. Most of the AR interactions are done via apps on tablets and smartphones.

PITFALLS OF AR IN MARKETING⁴⁸

1. **Hardware limitation** – Many AR interactions require the user to have upgraded hardware to support the lifelike experience on their device. A large number of users are left out of the audience just because they do not have sufficiently upgraded hardware.
2. **AR Apps Required** – It is not easy for marketers to get users download an app just for experiencing their AR-enabled marketing campaign. Marketing the app itself and increasing downloads is a difficult task.
3. **Fatigue** – It is tiring for users to hold their phones or tablets in a particular position while going through the catalogue. Keeping the camera open for a long period also drains the battery.
4. **Budget** – Having a dedicated app made, and getting a 3D catalogue designed, requires a lot of work and a big marketing budget.
5. **Singular Experience** – To make the app worth downloading, marketers should avoid singular experiences from the app. Repeated viewing will bore the users. Marketers should think of an evolving experience for users from the app.

FUTURE OF AR IN MARKETING

In the coming years, the degree of interaction with consumers could reach the next level. Consumers will most likely abandon their desktops and laptops for getting involved with the AR technology. Physical advertisements will become interactive and come to life right in front of the audience's eyes.

Think about using AR glasses at a social gathering and getting to see public information such as name, profession of the guests nearby. Brands that understand AR's potential are busy creating their own social media platforms to direct the marketing course without any external influences.⁴⁹

AR has the potential to dominate the e-commerce landscape since it makes perceiving the products a lot easier. The audience desires entertainment as well as practical functionality.

EXAMPLES⁵⁰

Home Depot

Home Depot, an American home supplies company, launched their app called 'Project Color app' in 2015, which uses AR technology to display how the paint would look like in users' houses. Lighting, shadows and even the objects in the room were taken into account to create a lifelike experience of a colour on your wall. It enabled you to share the images on social media to get your friend's opinion (Figure 14.27).

They updated the app in 2017 to take it a step further and show how furniture, faucets and other items would look in a prospective customer's home.

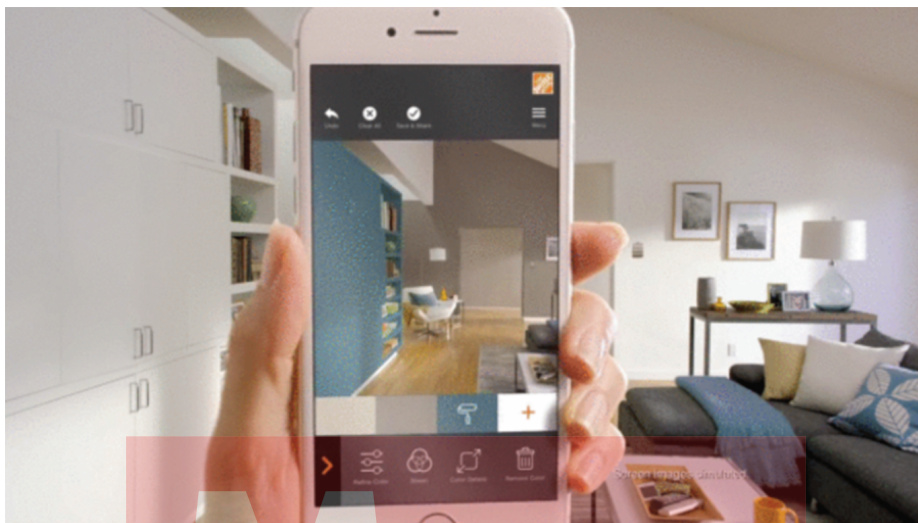


Figure 14.27 Home Depot's AR App in Use

Source: Home Depot

Sephora

The reason behind less online sales of make-up products is that it is almost impossible to infer if the lip colour will suit you by only seeing the colour in an online catalogue.

Sephora understood the challenge and partnered with ModiFace to create an AR experience app called Virtual Artist App. Using their device's camera, users could see how the make-up products would look on their faces. Also, their AR technology enabled users to see how their faces would look after weeks of applying a skincare product, a feature which users couldn't get in retail stores.

Sephora's use of AR technology proved to be of value to the users and increased the sales of the company. Users also started sharing their AR experiences on Sephora's app online.

AMC Theatres

AMC Theatres figured that audience is highly curious about the trailers of upcoming movies when they are at the theatres. AMC Theatres used AR technology to make their AMC application, which lets the user scan a poster and receive information like cast list and release date. It lets you watch the trailer of the movie on YouTube or a Google review of the movie. The audience can immediately pre-book the tickets of the movie as well from the AMC mobile application.

AMC Theatres' AR-focused mobile application provided a lot of convenience to the users and enriched the customers' experience.

AR will make it possible for physical products to be interacted with, online. By simply pointing their phone at a product, users will scan it and retrieve related data such as manufacturer, origin, price comparison and shipping information, and the entire story behind that particular product. This will make use of a technology known as blockchain technology. Let's find out more about it.

BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Blockchain can be understood as a public ledger that is shared among all the users, and everyone can access it. It's stored in a configuration similar to a chain, and the transactions are stored in a block-wise manner, which cannot be changed, it can only be built upon.

The digital ledger becomes decentralized as it is saved on millions of computers around the world. This is exactly the opposite of a bank where transaction history is stored privately. It has no central authority regulating it.

When people think of blockchain, they can only think about crypto currencies. But blockchain has many more applications than just the financial world. Blockchain is much more about than just Bitcoin. This technology will affect the digital marketing landscape as well. Key features of blockchain:

- Blockchain has no central point; everything is the same for all the users.
- The ledger is unchangeable, which offers very high cybersecurity.
- No entity owns or regulates the blockchain as a whole.

CHALLENGES FACED IN DIGITAL MARKETING

In today's digital marketing landscape, users, advertisers and publishers face a lot of challenges because of middlemen, trackers and fraudsters. Ads tend to decrease the battery life of users by 21%, and almost 50% of a user's mobile data is used by the advertisements. Many of the times, the advertisers are unaware of where their money is going, and they get easily fooled by fraud websites. Facebook and Google together combine up for 73% of all the money spent on ads. This is the major problem being faced by the publishers. All these factors have made more than 600 million users use Ad-blockers.⁵¹ The environment in digital marketing is not ideal for its users, advertisers and publishers, and it needs a solution.

SOLUTION: BLOCKCHAIN DIGITAL ADVERTISING⁵²

The digital marketing landscape is one of the major areas that are going to get disrupted by the blockchain technology. Blockchain technology will take digital marketing ahead with even more accuracy in personalization and enable the marketers to achieve one-to-one interactions.

BRAVE BROWSER

Brave is a fast, open-source browser made by Brave Software Inc. based on the Google Chrome Browser (Figure 14.28). The browser is privacy-focused, and it blocks malware advertisements and website trackers. It contains a ledger system, which can record and time-stamp all transactions and online interactions between two parties.

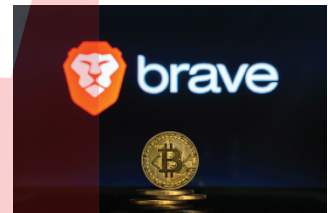


Figure 14.28 Brave Browser

BASIC ATTENTION TOKEN



Figure 14.29 Basic Attention Token

The basic attention token (BAT) is exchanged among the publishers, advertisers and users. The token's value and use are derived from user attention (Figure 14.29). Attention here stands for the mental attention focused on the advertisements.

There is a finite number of BAT tokens, and the number is one and a half billion.

Advertisers will have to pay in BAT terms to get the users' attention. The users who are willing to see ads will receive BAT in exchange for the attention they give. They have the freedom to use their tokens in a variety of methods, including accessing premium services in the Brave browser or just selling them off. The publishers who display ads can earn BAT in exchange for their high quality and relevant ads.

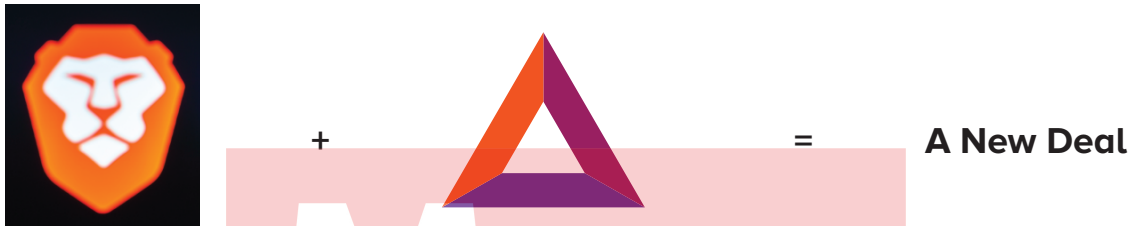


Figure 14.30 Brave Browser and Basic Attention Token

BAT, together with the Brave blockchain browser, is attempting to solve all of the challenges by completely transforming users' interaction with ads (Figure 14.30).

This is how it functions:⁵³

1. **Advertisers use BAT as a currency to buy Ads** – They are generally placed in private tabs inside the browser, or even in the notifications and landing pages. The browser's team is aiming for less in number, but high in quality ads to be displayed in their ecosystem.
2. **Users are rewarded with BAT in exchange for their attention** – You get the freedom to decide what kinds of ads you want to see. This provides a very accurate customer information to advertisers and that too anonymously. It enables the users to engage with the brands they want to engage with. A portion of the advertiser's spend reaches every person who opts to see the ads.
3. **Publishers receive BAT from consumers and advertisers** – In this revenue model, consumers receive a smaller portion of ad spend than the publishers. For giving access to premium content and subscriptions, publishers can charge BAT.

This is a win-win situation for everyone

- Marketers achieve focused targeting and higher ad performance.
- Publishers gain control over the ads they display and get higher revenue.
- Users receive fewer, high-quality ads revolving around their interests - without even having to compromise on their personal data, owing to blockchain's encryption.

The most important part is that the attention's value is given back to its owner. This would somewhat be like getting a subscription to *Forbes* or *Digit* magazines simply by choosing to get ads related to your interests. Companies will have to make valuable, or at least entertaining, ad content to gain attention from prospects since users would have the freedom to choose the kind of ads they want to see (Figure 14.31).

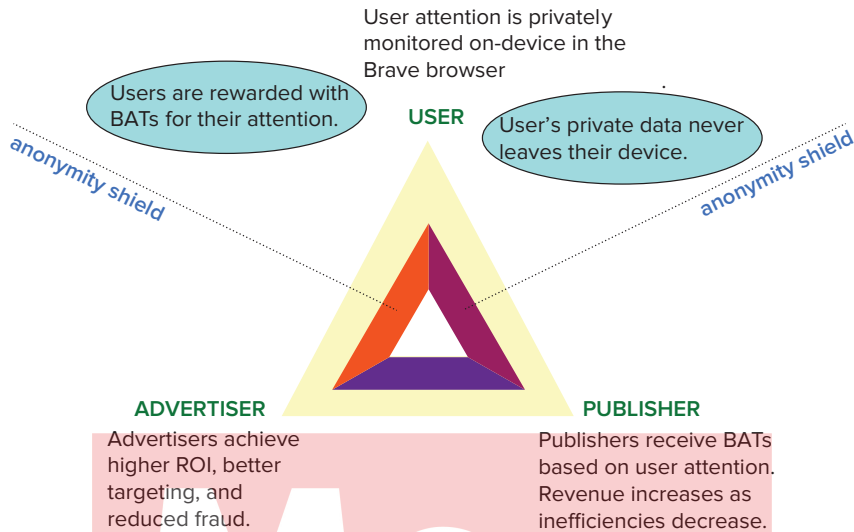


Figure 14.31 How the BAT Platform Functions

Source: CoinGecko, "How the BAT Platform Functions," <https://basicattentiontoken.org/>

FACEBOOK LIBRA



Figure 14.32 Facebook Libra

Facebook is going to launch a cryptocurrency with the hope that it will 'transform the global economy' (Figure 14.32). The new currency gives Facebook an opportunity to bolt a payment service on top of Instagram and WhatsApp. It will enable anyone to save, spend and send money on Facebook's network. It will let customers make instant purchases in response to ads they see on those platforms. It will enable Facebook to know who's buying what. This will be a big boon for Facebook and its advertisers.⁵⁴

Anyone can buy the currency through any wallet app that holds Libra. There will be no intermediaries or acquirer as they exist in the current payment system. The functioning of Facebook's currency Libra.

BENEFITS OF BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY IN DIGITAL MARKETING⁵⁵

The Disappearance of Middlemen in Digital Marketing

In the past, marketers used to depend on middlemen for any kind of transactions made and even for the launch of ad campaigns. But with blockchain technology, we do not have to be dependent on them as blockchain makes use of the peer-to-peer model and not the old server-client model.

Earlier this job was done by middlemen such as Facebook or Google to make the communication between site owners and digital marketers; these sites act as the middlemen. There is no need for any intermediaries when users sign a contract related to advertising with the help of blockchain using a direct peer-to-peer connection (Figure 14.33).

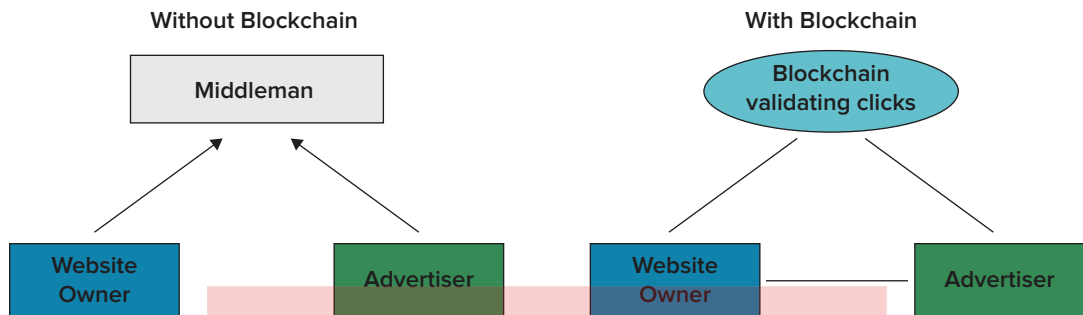


Figure 14.33 Relationship between Website Owners and Advertisers with Blockchain and Without Blockchain

As the reliance on middlemen decreases, the power will shift from the hands of the wealthy to the masses. This also increases the ROI of companies as it cuts the cost that earlier went to the intermediaries.

Transparency

Blockchain technology conceals the identity of a user using high-end cryptography, it means that linking the public addresses to any specific user is practically impossible. The question that now comes up is that how can blockchain be considered truly transparent.

Blockchain's transparency lies in the fact that all the transactions of each and every public address are open. With the help of some explorer, and knowing the user's public address, the holdings and the transactions can be viewed. This degree of transparency has never been experienced with the financial systems earlier and blockchain now adds a level of accountability.⁵⁶

Earlier advertisers did not have a lot of details about how the publishers are using the ads. This caused high expenses for publishing ads. With the help of blockchain, transparency can be brought in the process, they can know who saw their ads and if it is being promoted to the right audience or not (Figure 14.34).

Blockchain: One Truth Across Networks for the Supply Chain

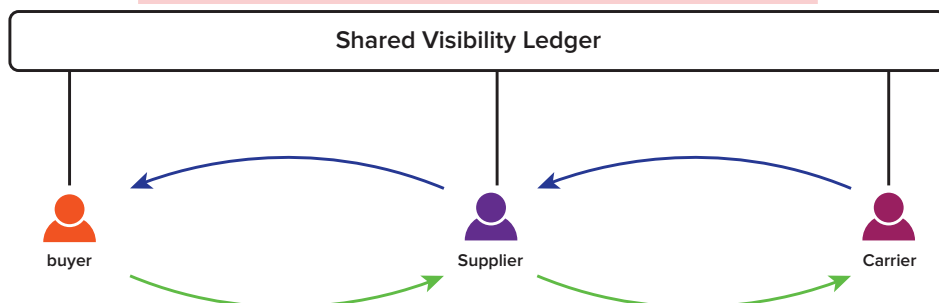


Figure 14.34 Transparency Achieved by Using Blockchain

Source: HackerNoon, "Blockchain: One Truth Across Networks for the Supply Chain," <https://hackernoon.com/how-is-blockchain-disrupting-the-supply-chain-industry-f3a1c599daef>

Many large companies find it a problem to gain the customer's trust. People want to know everything about the product before using it. The conditions of the factory where their clothes were made and even where their bread comes from. Customers want transparency and companies can provide it to the customers using blockchain.

Consumers Get Control of Their Information

Blockchain technology provides an alternate way, which moves the ownership of data back to the user's hand. It is a decentralized database where data is replicated across numerous unrelated nodes. Any single node cannot act as a gatekeeper and take control of your data. Users who put information on blockchain gain access to it through encryption keys, not depending on the service or application that was used to generate the data. This enables artists and musicians to promote themselves directly to the audience without giving any authority to some middleman platform such as SoundCloud or Facebook. They will be recognized solely based on their work and not because they bid the highest money and got their songs listed on the top (Figure 14.35).

Consumers can even start charging for their personal contact information and their attention using blockchain technology. This could eventually lead to marketers paying the users to watch their ads in the future.

This way, marketers will continuously be challenged to improve their interactions' value and content quality. Blockchain has the potential to eliminate the gatekeepers of online media and advertising. It can revolutionize everything from currency exchanges to governance itself.

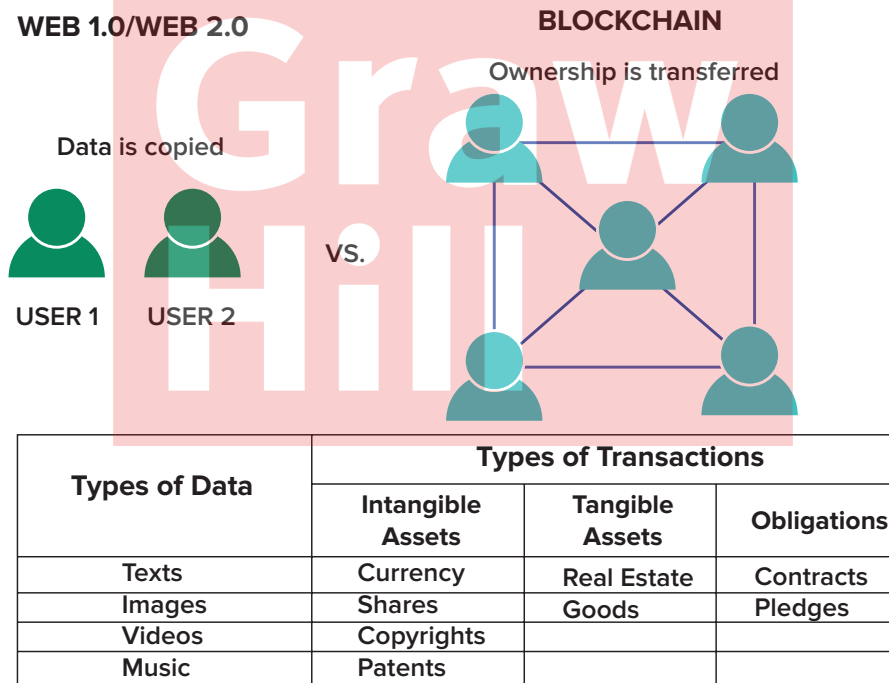


Figure 14.35 How Ownership is Transferred in Blockchain Technology

Source: DevTo, "Blockchain Technology," <https://dev.to/pragativerma18/evolution-of-web-42eh>

EXAMPLE

Babyghost and VeChain⁵⁷

Babyghost is a fashion brand and VeChain is a service provider that uses blockchain technology to verify if an item is authentic or not.

Babyghost and VeChain partnered up so that customers could scan the tag of a product from Babyghost and know if it is genuine or not using the VeChain service. They could even see the story behind the particular product of where it came from, and see all the checkpoints involved in the manufacturing of the product.

This created a one-of-a-kind feeling attached to each product and increased the trust in customers while creating a personal connection with the product and brand. This way blockchain can be used for authentic advertising that doesn't even look like marketing.

Blockchain is bound to change the way brands interact with their customers. Nurturing the relations with the customers will be the focus of the future. Now let's learn more about CRM.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

A custom relationship management software can help one manage business by providing insightful analytics, organizing customer data and analysing the sales pipeline. Nowadays there are many more CRM options and features available than ever before. One can choose the best fit for their business and even customize it fully to cater to their specific needs.

ESSENTIAL FEATURES⁵⁸

Contact Management

The primary purpose of a CRM is to help the business connect better with customers. From the first point of contact to purchasing and beyond, CRM should have the ability to save and extract all relevant customer data. It also helps in creating follow-up reminders. Customer retention rates have been observed to increase by up to 27% if the CRM is properly implemented (Figure 14.36).

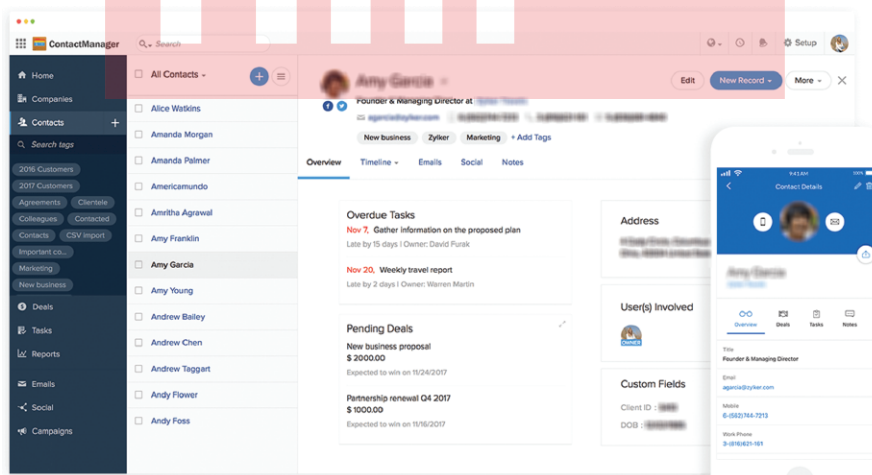


Figure 14.36 Contact Management

Lead Management

Gather data on potential leads to use them at a later point of time.

It enables one to identify leads that will most probably convert, which further helps the sales team to prioritize and customize their sales pitch.

This involves obtaining quality leads and monitoring them until the transaction is successfully closed. For example, the Cratio CRM enables its customers to capture the leads from a number of online portals, phone calls, missed calls, chat, mail history, etc. These leads are then shared with the sales team to take further action (Figure 14.37).

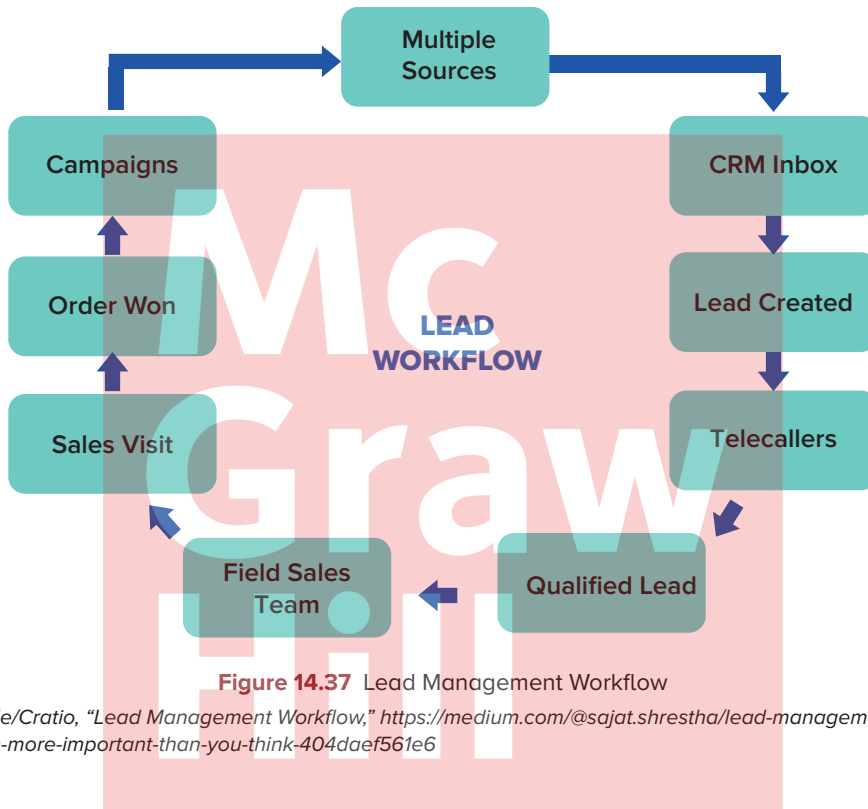


Figure 14.37 Lead Management Workflow

Source: Google/Cratio, "Lead Management Workflow," <https://medium.com/@sajat.shrestha/lead-management-system-and-why-it-is-much-more-important-than-you-think-404daef561e6>

Interaction Tracking

Details about interaction through various channels such as via phone, in person, live chat or email are recorded. It helps in analysing the purchasing patterns and customizing the offers to the preferences of the customer.

Workflow Automation

A lot of recurring tasks can be automated, which will save a lot of time of the sales and marketing team. If-then rules can be defined for important yet repetitive tasks. For example, sending a mail, update a record, sending an SMS or generating an invoice⁵⁹ (Figure 14.38).

Analysis and Forecasting

This is very useful for big businesses that have large amounts of well-organized data on customer behaviour and sales. Forecasting and analysing allows companies to make accurate revenue predictions and predict

future trends based on past performance. This helps in planning the growth of the company and spot where the company has scope to improve.

	Workflow Name	Module	Conditions	Actions
	UpdateInventoryProducts On Every Save	Invoice	All: Subject does not contain 'I'	Custom Function (1)
	Send Email to user when Notifyowner is True	Organizations	All: Notify Owner is Enabled	Email (1)
	Send Email to user when Notifyowner is True	Contacts	All: Notify Owner is Enabled	Email (1)
	Send Email to customer when Portal User is True	Contacts	All: Portal User is Enabled	Custom Function (1)

Figure 14.38 Workflow Automation

BEST PRACTICES TO GET THE MOST OF YOUR CRM⁶⁰

1. **Choose a CRM That Fits Your Need** – Not all CRMs are created equally. We should not choose a CRM without researching its capabilities, or we might end up have one unsuitable for our business.
2. **Train Your Workforce Well** – The employees who are going to use the software should be educated well about using the CRM or it just becomes an expensive filing system. At the end of the day, the best CRM for the company is the one that the employees are most comfortable using.
3. **Lay Down Some Rules** – To use a CRM to its full functionality, some rules need to be set; for example, make it a rule that every new lead without exception has to be processed through the CRM.
4. **Rely on Automation** – To free up your employees from all the menial and repetitive tasks, which cause wastage of the valuable time, we can automate many of the data entry tasks and let CRM do the heavy lifting.
5. **Keep It Simple** – To make sure your team uses CRM effectively and take full advantage of it, choose the features that are uncomplicated and effective. The myriad of options and features offered can be intimidating at first.

EXAMPLES

Zoho CRM

It was developed by an Indian software company in 2005. It is said to be the best CRM system for small businesses, it is affordable and contains an all-in-one sales and productivity suite. It has an excellent user-friendly easy-to-use interface. Zoho offers customization options to its users and allows integration of many social media platforms and third-party applications.

Salesforce CRM

Salesforce is an American software company founded in 1999. Salesforce was the first to launch CRM on cloud and have been the leaders in Cloud CRM since then. It is a more complex CRM, which is good for larger businesses that need more authority over their sales tools. It is not as affordable as Zoho CRM, which is justified as it provides more complex features and an exhaustive list of third-party integrations.

CASE STUDY

URBAN LADDER⁶¹

Objective

Increasing Customer retention and loyalty

Solution

As the customer base and number of channels of engagement like online and social media grew, Urban Ladder required a one stop solution to view the combined data of a customer coming from all the channels of communication. They chose Salesforce for solving this issue. Their objective was to enable their representatives to use a more personalized touch with the customer base with lesser time and effort.

It took just 2 months for complete deployment of Salesforce features. The lightning connect made integration with the backend effortless.

They also used service cloud to collect information on what probably the customer would want next as it creates new categories of products.

Result

Customer retention and loyalty increased as, with the help of Salesforce, Urban Ladder had become capable of providing personalized service by having access to all the details of past interactions and preferences of a customer.

CRM eases the job of companies to engage with customers, but there are a lot of repetitive tasks, which can be automated using marketing automation software.

MARKETING AUTOMATION

INTRODUCTION

There are many repetitive tasks such as sending emails, social media posts, messages and other website actions that are performed to engage online customers. Automating these tasks is the perfect solution to stand among the competitors in the present tech-savvy time. Marketing automation helps in automating all the modern marketing tasks with the specially developed software and tools to save the time of the marketing department.

Automating marketing has proved to be a huge success for many businesses; it has been found that marketing automation had the following effects:

- A 20% increase in sales opportunities
- 12.2% reduction in marketing overheads
- An overall increase of 14.5% in sales productivity⁶²

FEATURES OF MARKETING AUTOMATION

With the shift in the marketing landscape and businesses automating their tasks, marketing automation has turned out to be an effective solution that adds serious revenues and results. Companies employing market automation software have always benefitted from it in numerous ways. Accelerating the sales funnel, streamlining the marketing process and outdated sales, providing insights into the customer behaviour are some of the advantages that the companies using marketing automation software have as compared to the competitors not using it. Three major areas in which the return on the marketing automation investment is noteworthy:

- 1. Aligning Sales and Marketing** – Marketing automation tools are designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of all the market campaigns created. Often it is seen that the marketing and sales department work individually without sharing any data, and this difference leads to a loss in leads and revenue. But, with marketing automation software, the data collection process is streamlined, mutual goals are set, and proper tracking and reporting of the campaigns are done considering marketing and sales team as one. The combined team then works towards the shared goals and success, generating high values of ROI for the company.
- 2. Providing Performance Insight** – With the Big Data and other tools available in the market, the marketing department industry no longer faces the issue of lack of data. Marketers have now become reliant on the data for making decisions; it is a challenge for marketers to identify and select the data that actually matters. Marketing automation software provides the marketing department with the useful data related to the performance of marketing efforts and customer behaviour, generating high ROI on the investment.
- 3. Accelerating Your Sales Funnel** – With the advancements in technology, the companies get millions of potential leads. But the actual success does not lie in having millions of leads; it lies in quality leads that actually make a purchase. Using marketing automation software, this distinction can be made easily, and qualified leads can be generated without wasting the budget.

MARKETING AUTOMATION BENEFITS

Marketing automation software not only saves the time of the marketing department but also offers many other benefits. Let's take a look at a few major benefits which marketing automation software has for businesses.

- **Improved Lead Generation**

Lead generation is of foremost priority of every business to grow in their respective fields. Automating maximum marketing tasks gives time to the marketing departments to focus on generating more leads for the company. The deep insights into customer behaviour provided by the marketing software also helps marketers to understand their customers' behaviour and plan marketing strategy accordingly to generate leads.

- **Smarter Decisions**

Marketing automation provides a single platform for collecting and storing data, dashboarding and analytics and reporting, which makes it possible for marketers to understand consumer behaviour and accordingly organize campaigns on a small budget. It also enables marketers to collect valuable information and embrace Big Data effortlessly for use in running successful marketing campaigns. All the useful and in-depth information collected using the marketing automation software help marketers to make data-driven smarter decisions as compared to the analysis done on manual basis.

- **Personalization of Customer Experience**

Personalization of the customer journey is the key to increasing leads. It has been proven by various studies that buyers want unique and targeted content at each stage of the research. The availability of the targeted content increases the conversion rate. Market Automation software captures data like the number of posts performing well on social media channels, emails customers are opening, and other

actions, etc. This data captured using the automation software enables the marketers to understand customer behaviour deeply and plan the marketing strategy accordingly to personalize the shopping journey.

The importance of marketing automation software can be better understood from the benefits Dell, the computer-making company, experienced after implementing it. The company witnessed a heavy volume of traffic landing on their website but a low conversion rate. Dell then leveraged behaviour analysis and then created new ads on the basis of customers' web history, products viewed and stored in the cart. Their move to personalize the marketing strategy resulted in a 70% click-through rate, which resulted in an improved and increased conversion rate. This clearly demonstrates the benefit of using marketing automation software.

- **Reduction in Staffing Cost**

A marketing automation software automatically triggers the marketing and lead nurturing campaigns, thus saving time and manual efforts. It completes the work of a number of marketing employees, reducing the staffing cost for the company.

- **Automatic Follow-up of the Leads**

It has been found that if a potential lead is followed up within a few hours of their research, then there are high chances of lead generation. By implementing the marketing automation software in the business, the worry to follow-up potential customers remains no more. Whether it is 6 am in the morning or 6 pm in the evening, marketing automation software immediately follows up the potential lead and increases the chance of conversion.

Marketing automation software benefits the business in numerous ways and if you are still not using it for expanding your business, then it is high time to rethink and select the right software for your business.

SOME MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOLS⁶³

Majority of businesses have now invested in automating the repetitive marketing tasks and have even benefitted from the same. The number of companies using automation software is expected to grow in the future because of the increasing competition. Even when it is known that automation software is necessary, selecting the right software is still a daunting task. Let's take a look at the list below containing best tools that provide maximum benefit to organizations.

HubSpot Market Automation

One of the most powerful and popular tools is HubSpot's Market Automation functionality. It has a full suite, which includes marketing software, sales software and supports software. The software integrates automatically with HubSpot's CRM. This combination allows all the data and growth activities to take place at a single place, unleashing many new creative automation possibilities, which would be difficult to create using separate tools. This marketing automation functionality includes an easy-to-use visual board, which allows users to craft simple or highly sophisticated conditional workflows. The workflow tool automates emails and much more. It even allows scaling the growth and spending the least time on repetitive tasks.

Ontraport

If you are an entrepreneur or a small business owner, then Ontraport is the best marketing automation software for you. Along with having a CRM and marketing automation facility, Ontraport offers a variety of features like reporting, email marketing, landing pages and e-commerce to grow the business. The main feature of this business automation software is the focus on reporting and insights and gives a clear look at the performance of campaigns.

Pardot

It is a part of the Salesforce empire and primarily serves enterprise clients. It is a powerful cloud automation solution with tonnes of features like CRM integration, email marketing, lead nurturing and scoring, and valuable ROI reporting functionality, etc. to ensure success of marketing campaigns. It also allows tracking of interactions on the website and building of predictive lead scoring based upon the parameters set.

These tools have helped many big enterprises and small businesses in expanding their businesses by automating repetitive tasks.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MARKETING AUTOMATION⁶³

Things to keep in mind while crafting your marketing automation strategy:

1. Decide and present your goals.
2. Get into a collaboration with other departments, as the automation strategy will involve their involvement at separate stages.
3. Visualize the automation process and describe it using detailed diagrams to present the strategy to other teams as well.
4. Segment your customer data while keeping in mind who you'd like to target and why.
5. Prepare a content strategy and create your content library. Craft relevant and interesting messages made for all stages of a customer journey.
6. Take time in implementing the automation strategy; even the world's most successful marketing automation firms stagger their launches.
7. Analyse and optimize as you proceed with the strategy. Observe what is working and what is not.

CASE STUDY

Obama's Presidential Campaign⁶⁴

Let's understand the importance of marketing automation with a very interesting case study of a renowned personality of the world, former US president Barack Obama.

In the year 2012, when Barack Obama was fighting for the presidency the second time, his marketing team ran an online campaign, which proved to be super successful for him.

The key to the success of the campaign was an easy-to-use dashboard, which was smartly developed to target the volunteers. The dashboard had a simple online registration platform to be filled by the volunteers willing to support the campaign. It only required adding the ZIP code, a valid email address and a street address. After registering, the volunteers would land on the page that had the latest news, coverage of political and election events, and much more. But, the

reality was that Obama's team was using marketing automation software, which was collecting all the information of these volunteers both online and offline. It included their social media activities and offline activities and much more (Figure 14.39).

This provided them with a section of volunteers who would help with particular campaigns. This saved their time from being wasted upon unqualified leads.

Thus, the marketing automation software resulted in the success of Obama's campaign and of his strategy, giving him the chance to be the president of the United States for a second term.

No matter how good your website looks or how effective your marketing campaign is, the end of sales funnel is achieved through a payment option. Let's learn more about payment options and their role in digital marketing.



Figure 14.39 Obama's Campaign for Elections

Source: Obama Biden Campaign

PAYMENT OPTIONS

E-commerce is one of India's fastest growing industries and it is projected to increase to \$84 billion by 2021 from the \$24 billion in 2017.⁶⁵ A lot of factors help in increasing the sales, such as the ever-increasing smartphone usage, penetration of Internet services across tier 2 and tier 3 cities. It is important to select the best-suited payment options for your online business. There are a lot of options to make our payment, such as Net Banking, UPI, Debit or Credit card, Gift Cards and Vouchers, Crypto currencies or using a payment gateway.

It is important for the website to have all these options available on its platform to take into account the entire audience's preferred payment option.

DEBIT CARD/CREDIT CARD

Cards remain the most popular e-payment method for paying on e-commerce websites across the world. It is quite simple to use, the user just enters the card details, consisting of CVV number, Expiry date and the 16 digit card number and then the payment is made. A big segment of the customer base still relies on making payment with cards, while some of them are shifting towards UPI. E-commerce partners with banks to provide brand- and product-specific offers when paid through a particular bank's card.

NET BANKING

Net banking is a payment method that does not involve any physical card. If you remember your net banking credentials, you can pay via net banking from any device. After choosing the net banking option, the user is

taken to the net banking portal of the user's bank. After logging in and verifying the credentials, the payment is made. Net banking is a lot safer than using credit or debit cards. Having the option for customers to pay with net banking reduces cart abandonment rates.

E-WALLETS

Digital payments got a huge boost post demonetization, and mobile wallets or e-wallets captured a lot of attention and the market. PayTM, Mobikwik and Amazon Pay are some examples of e-wallets. The purpose of wallets was to ease the friction in making online payments. The wallets first need to be loaded from a bank account before they can be used for making payments for things like a phone bill, movie tickets, etc. In India, there are more mobile phones than bank accounts. Many people from tier 2 and tier 3 cities do not have access to Internet banking, so many telecom operators have initiated mobile wallets, which permit recharging by physically visiting the recharge points and depositing cash in exchange for mobile wallet currency. M-pesa and Airtel money are some examples.

Small transactions will continue to be dominated by e-wallets but UPI can overtake e-wallets when it comes to bigger transactions.

UPI

Unified Payments Interface or UPI is the simplest and most efficient peer-to-peer transaction method and there has been a huge pick up in the number of UPI transactions. It is based on the IMPS (Immediate Payment Service) platform, enabling a user to transfer money between bank accounts instantly. One can make or accept UPI payments using many apps such as Google Pay, BHIM, PhonePe and WhatsApp.

It is an easy process to collect UPI payments. Whenever a merchant wants to accept money, he can send out a payment request to the customer's UPI ID. The customer then receives a mobile notification from the respective UPI app saying that the merchant has requested money. The user simply accepts the request and payment is complete. UPI is the future, and it can take FinTech to masses.

PAYMENT GATEWAYS

A payment gateway is the front-end technology that processes payment cards and shares the customers' information with the merchant while making the online payment. Explains the process. Payment gateways play an important role in the e-commerce transaction process; payment is made online in most cases using payment gateways. PayPal, Braintree, etc. are some of the common and most popular payment gateways.

Payment gateways have evolved a lot in the recent years and, in the present time where online businesses have become a common man's cup of tea, payment gateways help businesses to stand out from the rest of online retailers. Payment gateways don't usually charge you on a personal transaction but if you are a merchant, then most of the payment gateways charge a fee on every payment they process; the fee is usually around 2% to 3%. They charge fees in exchange for the following benefits.

BENEFITS OF PAYMENT GATEWAYS

Incorporating payment gateways with your online website is the way to becoming favourite with the target audience. With increasing penetration across various segments, it is important for online businesses to have various payment gateways available to improve the customer experience.

- 1. Improves the Customer Convenience** – Payment gateways are essential for online retailers. These gateways guarantee seamless and easy transactions and they secure sensitive data from online frauds. At the stage of checking out, you would like to provide your customers with the most convenient process, and good payment gateways ensure that. Chances are if your customer doesn't find

his preferred payment gateway, he'll abandon the shopping cart, so having all the popular payment gateways always helps.

2. **Customers Feel Safe** – In a payment gateway, safety is a priority. Payment gateways encrypt the customer data during the process of payments and allow the merchants to process credit cards, debit cards or any other alternative options. This added security increases the trust the customers have with your online business. The more the number of payment gateways you have, the higher is the level of perceived professionalism, trust and legitimacy. This decreases the percentage of people who abandon the check out because of lack of trust while paying. Lack of trust is one of the major reasons why carts are abandoned, as shown in Figure 14.40.

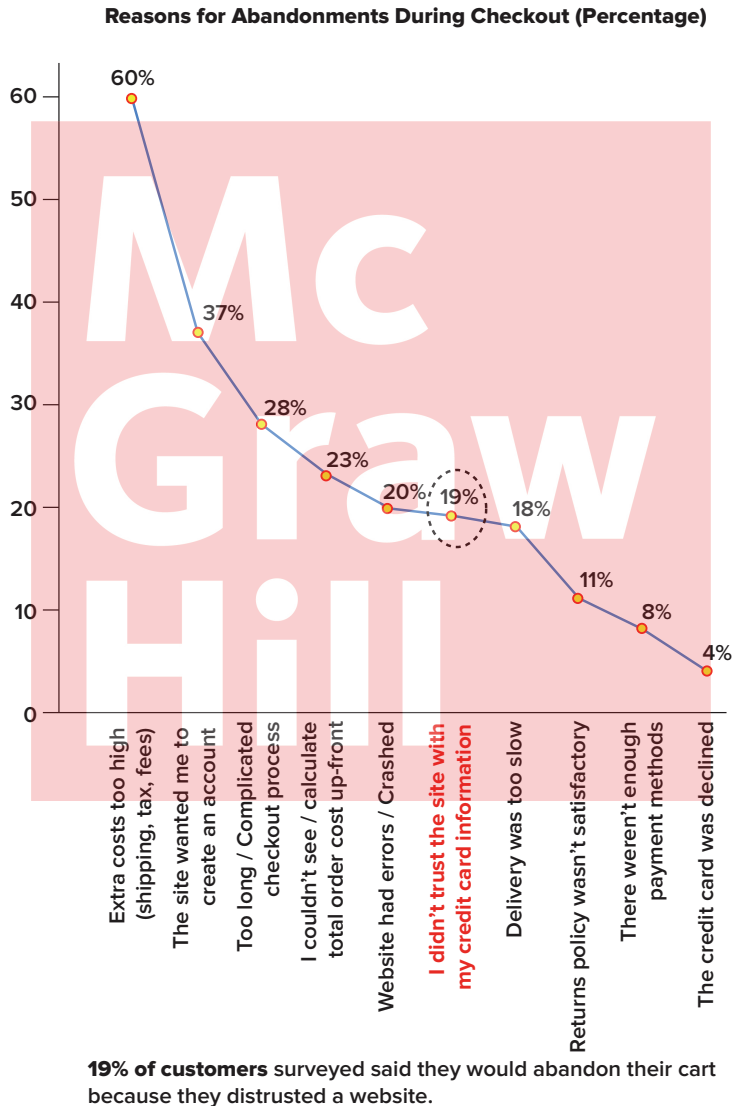


Figure 14.40 Chart Showing Reasons Why People Abandon Their Carts

Source: Baynard Institute, "Reasons for Abandonments During Checkout (Percentage)" <https://baynard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate>

3. **Higher International Sales** – To expand in the international markets, multiple payment gateways can enable you to handle different currencies. If the customers can complete a transaction in their own local currency, convenience and trust increases. That results in lower abandoned cart rates and higher sales. Hence, a gateway that converts your website's currency into the local one is beneficial.
4. **Sale Reports** – Payment gateways can generate sales reports for your business. One can also integrate it with their bookkeeping software. To increase sales, you need to analyse the data and look for the best-selling products, high-spending customers, and seasonal sales trends. These insights allow you to market the right product to the right people at the right time and help in the overall marketing campaign.

SOME POPULAR PAYMENT GATEWAYS

PayPal

It was founded in 1999 and it supports both MasterCard and credit card payments. It is free for buyers, while merchants need to pay transaction fees while using PayPal for Visa payments. PayPal's name is familiar to a large number of people and they feel safe using it and buying your products. Its average costing for merchant accounts is 2.9% + \$0.30 transaction fee.⁶⁶

MOBILE PROXIMITY PAYMENTS

These are the mobile payments when the payer and the payee are in the same location and transaction takes place between their devices using Bluetooth, NFC or QR codes. Mobile proximity payments can be made for both Customer-to-Business and peer-to-peer transfers. The payment is being made from a credit card or a bank account.

CRYPTO CURRENCY

Crypto currencies are not much widely used for e-commerce payments but they offer a lot of advantages to the e-commerce businesses. Their popularity arises from the fact that they enable secure, faster and cheaper payment modes for the users. Having an option to pay via crypto currencies can attract a very tech-savvy audience from across the world. These factors make it a great payment choice for e-commerce businesses to have. Bitcoin, Litecoin, Bitcoin cash are some of the most popular crypto currencies.

Coinbase is the most popular and easiest way to sell, hold and buy crypto currencies. It currently supports Bitcoin, Litecoin, Bitcoin cash and Ethereum. It serves as a wallet where digital currencies can be stored.

Paying via Bitcoin is very similar to sending out an email except that you are sending money to a Bitcoin address. Many e-commerce merchants accept payments from your coinbase wallet. You can simply pay on an e-commerce website by choosing to pay via coinbase and then logging in your coinbase account and then choosing the crypto currency that you want to spend.⁶⁷

DISRUPTIONS IN FINTECH⁶⁸

1. **Biometric for more security** – Biometrics enable faster recognition of the user than remembering passwords. Many banks are starting to use biometrics such as eye scanner, thumb print, voice recognition to increase a layer of security. These biometrics can be provided by the user from the latest mobiles, tablets and laptops.
2. **Transactions through blockchain** – Cryptocurrencies have disrupted the banking system across the world by enabling the users to transact in a cheaper and faster way. Transforming the payment system will be the biggest achievement of blockchain technology.
3. **Chatbots** – Chatbots are becoming a popular tool among banks for facing queries and redirecting the customers to the right department according to the query. Some advanced chatbots can even provide investment advice.

4. **Multi-channel Banking** – The landscape of banking has shifted from one specific home branch to all the digital channels like mobile, online and even social media. This has led to a huge decrease in the number of bricks and mortar offices of the bank. Around 9100 branches were shut down in the European Union alone by the end of 2016 because of the increasing reliance on online transactions.

PAYMENT OPTIONS DON'T JUST PROCESS PAYMENTS

Payment options are now a big part of your branding. They say a lot about your website, your brand and how much you value your customers' experience. It is as important as choosing the right colour scheme, logo design or other design elements for your online store's personality. If a user doesn't recognize the payment option, they're very less likely to trust it, and eventually the brand.⁶⁹

BEST PRACTICES FOR CHOOSING THE PAYMENT METHOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS⁷⁰

The feature comparison between different payment options.

1. **Choose between Set-up Cost or Transaction Fee** – Some payment methods have higher initial set-up cost (\$100+) and some have higher transaction fees (4–5%). If you are a new brand or a start-up, you'll want to go with the method having a lower initial set-up cost.
2. **Do You Serve Overseas?** – If you have international customers, you need to be sure that your payment gateway supports international payments, so that you do not lose customers.
3. **Study Your Customer Base** – Study your customers' data and previous purchase history to know their preferred choice of payment option. Conduct surveys regarding the choice of payment method if the data is not available.
4. **Integration with Your Website** – It will take your time and money to integrate the payment gateway into your website. So you need to make sure beforehand that your website is compatible with the particular payment gateway.

CASE STUDY

NETFLIX

Giving People What They Want Using Big Data and Machine Learning

Netflix has been trying to anticipate what the customers might take the most delight in watching and build a business around this prediction. This purpose is served by designing a recommendation engine that works on the basis of Big Data analytics.

All the content decisions and algorithms are fed by data such as the ratings given, what title is most watched by customers, etc.

Netflix has started creating its own content rather than just having a content distribution model. Even this strategy was completely driven by data. They inferred that there is a huge demand among subscribers for content casting Kevin Spacey and its direction

be done by David Fincher. They made the highest bid for streaming the show House of Cards. They released the first two seasons in one go as they were very assured that this show fitted their model for an 'ideal TV show'. Since then Netflix has released many shows such as Orange is the New Black, etc.

Netflix's Big Data infrastructure includes Hive, Pig and Hadoop. All of this runs on AWS (Amazon web services) cloud, including Netflix's core infrastructure.

Netflix has clearly shown us how these days anything and everything can be predicted with amazing accuracy. Businesses should learn from this that it is getting easier and simpler to understand what their customers desire. Whether it is what kind of shoes they want, what kind of chocolate they want to eat, or whatever. So, it is time that businesses should start taking their decisions based on hard raw data instead of assumptions.⁷¹

SUMMARY

Technology continues to change the digital marketing landscape at a breakneck speed. The companies who can keep up with the advancements will attract the newer generation, and the ones that cannot keep up will be left far behind. The rate of advancements has also increased manifold, people are easily adopting new technologies without much resistance. Wearable technologies is one of the most exciting new developments to watch out for in digital

marketing; more and more people are adopting wearable technology, which the marketers can exploit. With the help of AI and machine learning, marketing has become a lot smarter than it ever was. More than 80% data of the world was created in the last 2 years; this clearly shows the potential of Big Data. With the help of CRM and marketing automation software, it has become easy to plan and execute an effective marketing campaign.

KEY TERMS

Artificial Intelligence – It revolves around the concept of making machines capable of acting, thinking and learning, just like humans.

Beacons – Beacons are very small wireless devices transmitting signals.

Chatbots – A software that can have conversations with a human, which are designed with the aim of providing personalized service 24/7 to the users.

CRM – A customer relationship management computerized system designed for identifying, acquiring and retaining customers.

Identity Resolution – Combining information from different sources to identify the single user behind the different screens.

Micro-moments – These are the moments when users turn to the device with an urge to discover, watch or learn about something, most commonly to their smartphones.

Virtual Reality – It is a technology that simulates the environment for users using different human senses.

Augmented Reality – AR is the technology that extends our physical reality by overlaying information and virtual objects in real time on real-world scenes.

CONCEPT REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the functioning of Beacon technology.
2. Why do companies need micro-moments in their marketing strategy?
3. What are the benefits of AR in marketing? Explain with two examples.
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a chatbot? How do you create one?
5. How are payment gateways related to digital marketing?
6. Explain three benefits of blockchain technology. How does it solve the issue of eliminating middlemen in digital marketing?
7. What are some of the disruptions happening in the Financial Technology landscape?
8. What are the differences between CRM, DMP, CDM and marketing automation?

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Imagine you are a songwriter, how would you use blockchain technology to have control and ownership of your data using BAT?
2. For a chain of supermarkets having more than 50 stores, how would you use the Beacon technology to market the products? Is there any other concept from the chapter that you can apply in this case?
3. Why do you think that companies are now gathering more and more data from all the sources possible? What importance does raw data carry in business decisions?
4. How can you use VR and AR if you run an event management company? What would you think would do better in the long run for digital marketing, AR or VR, and why?

PROJECTS

1. **Combine and Conquer**
Suppose you are the CMO of a B2C company and insights show you that the people using multiple devices are receiving your ads more frequently than you initially targeted, and your campaign is not reaching people who watch television. Figure out why it is happening and to deal with it frame a strategy using the appropriate software and tools.
2. **Cultural Fest – A Bundle of Micro-Moments**
Imagine that you work for the marketing team of your college's cultural fest, for example UNMAAD at IIM Bangalore. There will be a lot of expected and unexpected events happening throughout the days of the event. Formulate a strategy to be ready and post appropriate content; also name the different social media channels that you can use for this purpose.

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