

DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS

Digital Marketing is the marketing of products or services over the Internet. Digital marketing gets its success to the creative use of the merging of techniques from Information Technology (IT) and marketing. There has been a move from one ad fits all, to ads which are personalised and contextual.

Just consider the example of the newspaper: Everyone get the same ad on the paper version, whereas the ads we see on the online version are different from one person to another. Similarly, the ads we get together with our emails are related to the content of the emails.

A Digital Marketing Channel is a means of communicating Digital Marketing messages efficiently to the public. A number of channels can be used for this purpose: E-mails, websites, blogs, social networks, mobile devices among others. We are going to study some of these channels in this Unit.

Similar to traditional marketing channels which are divided in pull marketing and push marketing, digital marketing can also be divided the same way.

- **Push marketing** is getting a business name to as many potential customers as possible, and as often as possible. We can classify social media posts, tweets, feeds, email and newsletter in this category.

- **Pull marketing** on the other hand starts with the customer who has already made their decision of what they need, and hence start looking for it. This will involve mainly a search engine, followers on social media, blogs, websites or specialist online directory.

Given the amount of money involved in the different digital marketing channels as well as their successes, we cannot afford to ignore digital marketing.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is the promotion of products or services through the mass emailing of promotional materials to recipients. The emailers usually maintain a list of email addresses obtained by the organisations concerned or through third parties. Some ways to get emails is to ask visitors on a website to register to be able to access materials or to receive updates and

promotional offers. Email signup forms are used for this purpose. Simply asking people may not work. Detail of what they will get when signing must be provided e.g. a brief newsletter description, the email frequency. It is also useful to collect email, name and addresses.

Sometimes a paragraph is attached stating that your details may be transferred to other parties and this part may be in small characters. So, we must be careful before providing our details. In most if not all cases you have the opportunity to opt out of the service. One way to do this is to unsubscribe from the service.

Another way to get email addresses is to copy them from websites whether manually or by use of specialised software.

The advantages of email marketing are:

- A potentially large number of addresses,
- The possibility to write interesting emails with great messages,
- An effective communication strategy that can entice the recipient to view a product and eventually buy it,
- A moderate fee, and
- Targeted recipient.

There are specialised softwares that we use for this purpose. These tools can be free or non-free. Some examples are:

- MailChimp: <https://mailchimp.com/>
- Campaign Monitor: <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/>

The facilities provided by these tools are:

Popular e-mail models for a number of scenarios:

- Sales Promotions
- Transaction confirmations
- Account status e-mails
- Scheduled corporate newsletters
- Time-based reminders

Recognition by mail service providers

- Making use of our personal mail for mass mailing can lead it to be considered as spam by email filters. The mass mailing software on the other hand are registered by mail service providers and are not classified as spam.

Provision of metrics for assessing a campaign. Some metrics which are used in email marketing are:

- Open Rate = ($\#$ of people who open your email) / ($\#$ of people you sent it to)
- Click Through Rate = ($\#$ of people who click on a link) / ($\#$ of people you sent it to)
- Bounce Rate = ($\#$ of emails that cannot be delivered) / ($\#$ of people you sent it to)
- Unsubscribe Rate = ($\#$ of recipient who unsubscribe) / ($\#$ of people you sent it to)

We can consider some factors to ensure that our targets read our emails:

- Subject Line: Keep it short and precise
- Time & day: Weekday vs weekend? Early morning, lunch, after work, evening?
- Volume of email: How much email do you send? Too much will get people to unsubscribe.
- List cleanup: Get rid of old subscribers who are not engaged.
- Content: Keep it precise.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Everyone is aware of the power of social media networks nowadays. When talking of social media, we all think of Facebook. But Facebook is not the only social media. Others include Google+, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest. A more complete list together with the number of registered users is available from Wikipedia

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites).

Figure 5.1 below provides some indication about the number of active users for a number of social network platforms:

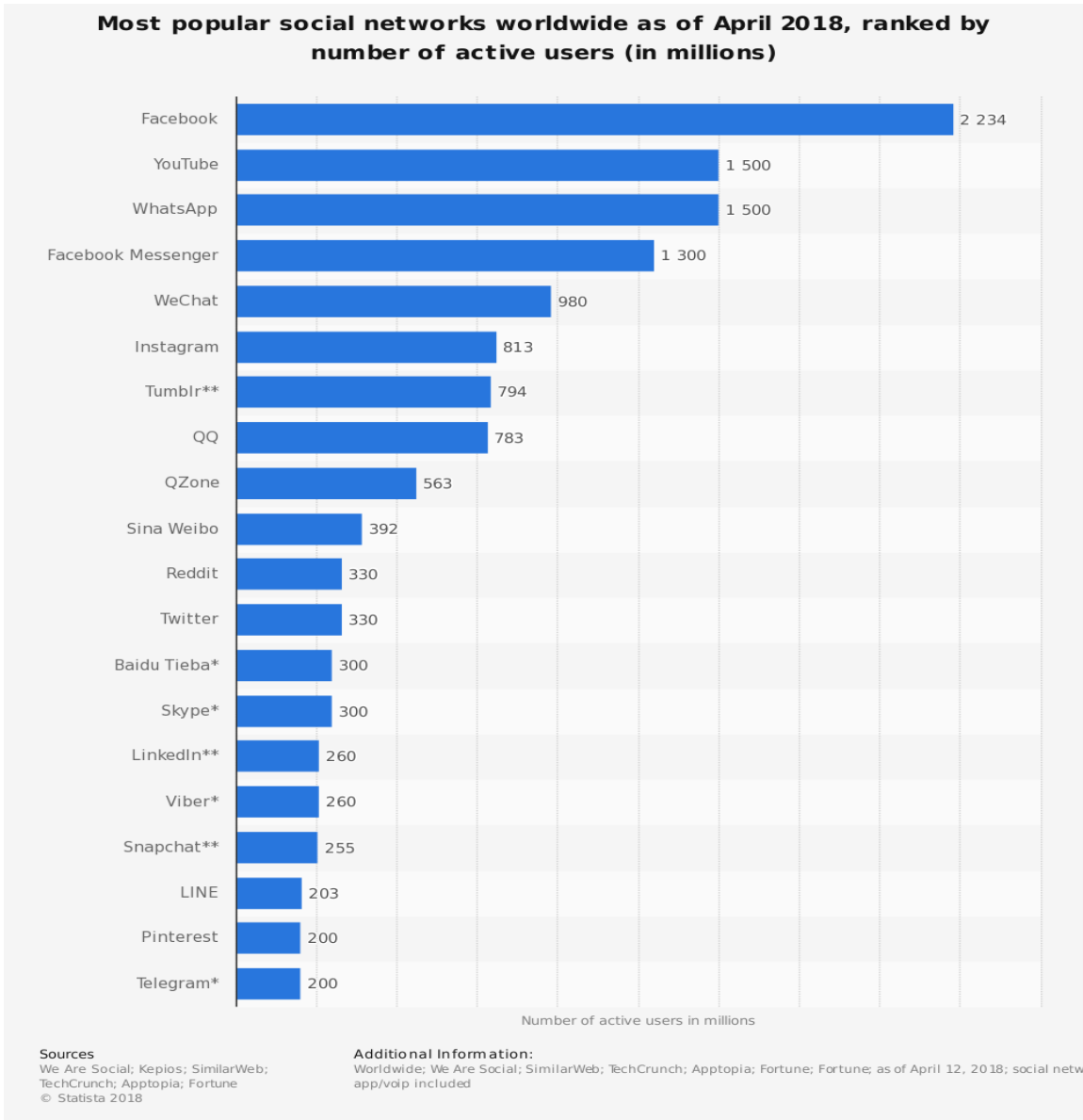


Figure 5.1

(Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>)

Social media are very popular channels. Businesses can build their brand on social media given the popularity of these communication channels. But brand building is a long term task but with paid options available nowadays this has become much easier. With the amount of personal information we provide to social media, an incredibly precise profiling can be done. The personal information is not restricted to our birthday and marital status but increasingly large amount of more precise details can be extracted from our likes, our posts and people we follow as well as pictures we post. This has enabled ad campaigns to be more targeted and hence having a higher success rate. For example, they can extract our travel plans and party

and provide us with on the spot ads and recommendations. Social media marketing can boost a business from its start itself as opposed to other forms of marketing.

Social media marketing come in a number of formats. This can include:

➤ **Facebook ads**

These are sponsored posts that allow us to reach out to our target audience. The posts can be text, images or videos. The ads can also be inserted inside posts we follow, e.g. an ad video inserted inside a scientific video.

Some examples of facebook ads are given in **Figures 5.2 - 5.5**.

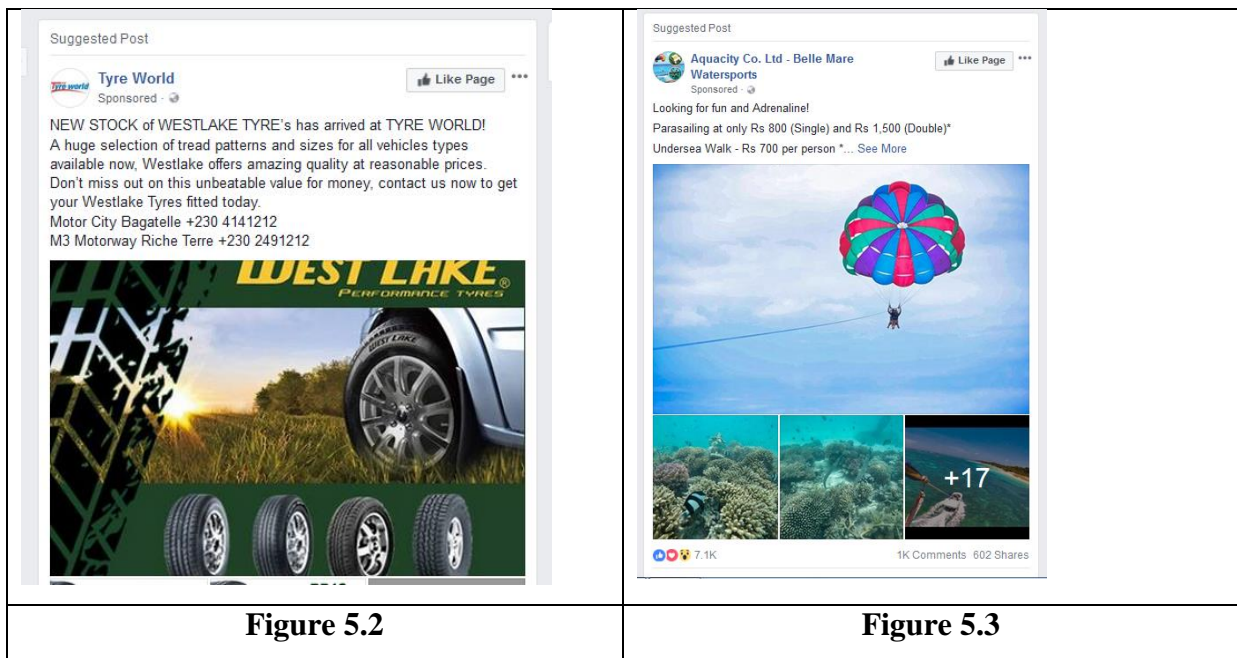


Figure 5.2 & 5.3: We can clearly see the terms “suggested Post” and “sponsored” stating that these are ads.

We will always find these terms preceding adverts on social media, specially Facebook.

We can also have videos as adverts:

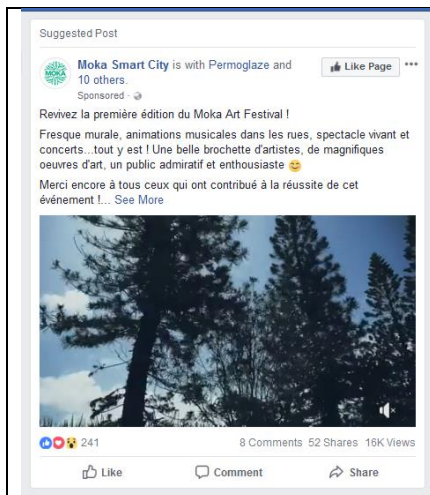


Figure 5.4



Figure 5.5

Figures 5.4 and 5.5 are examples of video adverts. A large amount of such materials can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/ScienceNaturePage/>

➤ **Twitter campaigns**

We can have promoted accounts, promoted tweets or promoted trends on Twitter. We can also run twitter contests and get influencers on board. A promoted account in twitter is a suggestion to follow that account. We may find that account interesting and choose to follow it hence increasing the number of followers for that account. A promoted tweet is an ordinary tweet which can reach a wider audience against payment by the advertiser. It is clearly labelled as promoted. Same as regular tweets, it can be retweeted, replied to, and liked. The aim is to increase the audience and spark engagement as well.

In marketing, the success of a campaign relies a lot on the creativity of the campaign managers. The same applies to digital marketing. It is useful to get some inspiration from what others have done in the field.

A number of twitter advertising success stories are available at:

<https://marketing.twitter.com/na/en/success-stories.html>

Some other interesting case studies are available at:

<https://oursocialtimes.com/5-intriguing-twitter-marketing-case-studies/>

<https://www.canva.com/learn/twitter-for-business/>

<https://audiense.com/tag/twitter-case-studies/>

<http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/casestudies/tag/twitter>

➤ **YouTube Ads**

There are several types of ads on YouTube. Similar to search engines ads, they may appear to the right of your video. Other ads may come just before the suggested video list. But depending on the size of our display, they may be in different positions. We can also have a semi-transparent overlay on the lower part of the screen.

Ads can be in the form of skippable ads. We can skip after 5 seconds. The videos appear before, after or during the min video. Some video ads can be non-skippable as well.

Another format is the sponsored cards which display content that may be relevant to the video. Viewers will see a teaser for the card for a few seconds and they can also click an icon in the top right corner of the video to browse the cards.

VIDEO 1:

An example demo is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20WOzM77ixA>

http://www.stateofinbound.com/?_hstc=20629287.c0aba9665a72caa9bad6007f983626bd.1516788284262.1526368665668.1526371325524.3&_hssc=20629287.1.1526371325524&_hsfp=2928702615

YouTube ads can that can be targeted at specific audiences and locations as well. These can redirect the audiences to other sites too.

Some interesting YouTube ads are available at:

<https://oursocialtimes.com/5-of-the-most-imaginative-youtube-campaigns/>

<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/brand-marketing-case-studies/>

<https://www.rivaliq.com/blog/7-youtube-marketing-case-studies/>

<http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/casestudies/tag/youtube>

<https://devumi.com/2017/03/case-studies-5-remarkable-marketing-channels-youtube/>

So, the majority of social media network, if not all, provide some mechanism for advertisement. Same as for searching on the internet, we do not pay to access a social network. There is no membership fee but only a set of rules to follow. But running these systems require large amount of computing and communication resources. The financial resources for these come from advertising will be discussed in the next Section.

5.5 AFFILIATE MARKETING

It is the promotion of a certain product against a commission.

VIDEO 2:

An interesting overview of affiliate marketing is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CQtB5qyQ0M>

There are four parties concerned in this type of digital marketing:

1. The merchant;
2. The advertiser;
3. The customer;
4. The network.

The merchant is also known as the seller, the vendor, the retailer, the brand, or the creator. The merchant can be a single person providing a service or a big company selling all types of goods. The merchant has to agree to participate in the programme. An example is Google Adwords programme (<https://adwords.google.com/home/>).

The advertiser is also known as the affiliate or the publisher. They display or promote one or several affiliate products to attract potential customers. It is where the marketing happens. The aim is to encourage a customer to click on a link and to ultimately buy a product. The affiliate advertising can be on a blog, a website or even on social media. Bloggers play an increasingly important role here with a large list of followers who can be influenced.

A list of successful blog examples for affiliate marketing is available at:

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/10-amazing-affiliate-marketing-blogs/135739/>

The customer or consumer clicks on an advertisement on a webpage and can make a purchase from the merchant. All income ultimately comes from the customer. The network is the manager of the whole system. It is the intermediate between the publisher and the merchant who have to register with it and agree to its terms. Payment details are specified in the agreement. It uses specialised software to keep track of clicks and purchases where it is concerned. In some cases the network is the merchant itself. Some programmes falling in this category are Google AdSense (<https://www.google.com/adsense/start/>) and Amazon Associates (<https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/>).

Affiliate marketing has its pros and cons.

Let us start with the pros:

- Quick and easy to set up: The affiliate programme or network we sign up with will do the necessary for us. We only need to paste a code on our blog or website.
- Small investment: We do not devote more time to our site. The affiliate programme is mostly free.
- Income: we get paid when we refer customers.

The cons:

- We are not in charge of what we display. But we still can choose the categories at the beginning and can opt out of the programme.
- There is a lot of competition.
- We get paid when there is a sale most of the time and not on click.
- There is a large number of scam affiliate programmes around.

There is a lot of hype about affiliate marketing income. We must be careful when reading about success stories. The effortless big money is not necessarily true as we may think: <https://www.quora.com/Are-there-any-affiliate-marketing-success-stories>

5.6 MOBILE MARKETING

Mobile marketing is digital marketing aimed at mobile devices. The mobile device can be a mobile phone, a smartphone, a tablet or any other mobile device. The digital marketing can be done using SMS, MMS, email, website, social media or apps. Mobile technologies have a very high penetration rate compared to other communication devices and given that most processing usually requiring a computer can now be done on a mobile device, these devices are becoming increasingly important for marketing purposes. Search engines keep track of the different devices used for search queries and presently the number of users of mobile devices exceeds those using non-mobile devices. So, content has to be targeted to these users and the potential of these devices has to be exploited to maximise income. This holds for digital marketing as well.

The simplest form of mobile marketing is SMS where we receive text messages concerning events or product. The sender may have got our phone number from third parties or may have obtained from ourselves when we provided them with our contact detail. Some messages are just simple ones sent to a whole list of recipients, and others are just flash messages which can grab immediate attention.

MMS work the same way. We have some communication apps, e.g. Whatsapp, which extend the MMS facilities. The advantage is that these services are free and can easily be managed by beginners. We increasingly have retailers who send details including pictures of new product using services such as Whatsapp.

Marketing with apps mostly comes in the form of animations or video display when we launch the apps. This applies mostly to free apps. We do have the option to remove the ads against payment. What is the differing aspect of mobile devices is that they provide our geographical location to our apps. This location may be obtained by tracking our mobile devices, or by recognising features from pictures we upload. There is quite a number of ways for us to provide our location and most of the time we do it voluntarily e.g. uploading a picture of a group on social network, listing all our friends as well as location. All these details can be made use of to provide localized marketing products. We can be directed to hotels, shops, restaurant etc. just based on our location and preferences.

For the mobile marketing to be efficient, the content must be designed for the mobile audience making use of details provided during registration as well as details obtained during tracking, the mobile platform, the location, time and context. The more personalised the system mean the higher chance of success.

5.7 PAYMENT

We do not pay to make use of our social media networks, emails or for reading on the web. But running these systems require large amount of computing and communication resources. The financial resources for these come from advertising. It is the merchants who pay for a certain service and this income is used to meet the cost of running the system. But there are alternative sources of income apart from advertising.

As opposed to traditional marketing, the user actions can be tracked on the web. Their actions determine level of engagement of users. A user who clicks on a link and makes a purchase is more engages that one who does not click on a banner ad. Similarly, there are different payment models for the advertisers.

Some payment models are explained briefly:

- ✓ **PPM: Pay Per Mille** (or pay per thousand impressions) where the advertiser is paid for a banner or whatever format of ads is displayed. Whenever someone visits the webpage, the counter is increased. From the merchant point of view it is known as Cost Per Mille (CPM). PPM and CPM can be different if intermediaries are present. This format is used mainly for display ads.
- ✓ **PPC: Pay Per Click** where payment is made only when a visitor clicks on an ads link. It is the first step for a purchase. Search engines have come up with elaborate schemes where the ads to be displayed is a complex function of the bid amount, the visitor profile and other factors so as to maximise on revenue. Similarly, we have Cost Per Click (CPC). Social networks and search engines mainly use this model.
- ✓ **PPA: Pay Per Action/Acquisition** where a payment is made when an ad leads to a purchase. Similarly, we have CPA. This format is mainly used in affiliate marketing.