

SPECIFICS OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY IN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract

In the agricultural sector, the strategy of digital marketing encompasses a range of methods and tools aimed at promoting agricultural products and services. This strategy includes the use of online platforms such as websites, social media, and email to effectively reach the desired target audience. The automation of digital marketing processes plays a key role in optimizing marketing efforts, resulting in benefits such as time efficiency, adaptability to seasonal variations, and resource optimization. It is important to note that there can be drawbacks to automation, including reduced personal interaction with customers, limited space for creativity, and potential technical complications. Establishing a balance between automation and human engagement is crucial for achieving optimal results in the digital marketing of the agricultural industry.

Key words: digital marketing strategy, digital marketing process automation, agricultural entities

Introduction

This paper elaborates on the role of digital marketing strategy in contemporary business and the process of its development. The general objective of the paper is to demonstrate the steps in creating a digital marketing strategy, while the specific objective is to show the advantages and disadvantages of automation in digital marketing communication in the agricultural sector.

In developing the subject of research, it begins with a general analysis of the features and processes of creating a digital marketing strategy, with an emphasis on planning, implementation, and analysis of success. Then, the automation of processes as an important feature of business processes is described. The advantages and disadvantages of automation in digital marketing communication in the business of

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agricultural entities are highlighted, and the importance of balanced and target audience-adapted digital marketing communication is emphasized.

1. Digital Marketing Strategy

A digital marketing strategy is a systematic and planned approach to plan the execution and measure the success of a company in using digital platforms and digital channels in achieving specific marketing goals. A digital marketing strategy as a comprehensive plan encompasses a series of processes and tools used for conquering, engaging, and retaining the target audience in an online environment (Mandal and Joshi, 2017). Formulating a digital marketing strategy helps in making well-informed decisions in business and ensures that efforts are concentrated on aspects of digital marketing that are of utmost importance for the specific business. The strategy represents a key initial step in understanding the role of the dynamic digital market and its impact on the mutual relationships between a company or brand and its customers and potential customers, as well as other stakeholders in the environment.

1.1. Formulating SMART Goals in Digital Marketing Strategy

The formulation of a digital marketing strategy begins with setting SMART goals, which can include increasing brand recognition, increasing the volume and value of sales, obtaining qualified potential clients, increasing the number of subscribers to a newsletter, or other comparable results. When formulating goals, it is particularly important to adhere to SMART criteria, meaning the goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). SMART goals serve as a navigational tool for the marketing strategy and establish a structured framework for assessing its effectiveness. To ensure clear communication and effective goal setting, it is important to precisely define the goals. Specific goals should answer the questions "What needs to be achieved?", "Who will achieve it?", "Where?", "Why?", and "How?". Furthermore, goals should be measurable, allowing the measurement of progress through quantitative data. It is crucial to set achievable goals that take into account available resources, time frames, and the capacities of the organization or team. Unrealistic goals can result in frustration and failure. Furthermore, goals should be relevant to the overall business objectives and mission of the organization, contributing to its success and aligning with its strategy. Finally, goals must be time-bound, with clearly set deadlines by which they should be achieved (Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán, 2016). By using SMART goals in digital marketing strategies, it is possible to clearly specify what is to be achieved, measure progress, and establish a clear timeframe for achieving important marketing objectives. An approach

based on SMART goals simplifies planning, execution, and monitoring of marketing activities, ensuring progress in the right direction by applying digital marketing.

1.2. Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

Segmentation in the field of digital marketing refers to the process of categorizing the wider market population into smaller, more homogeneous groups or segments (Gajanova et al., 2019). Individual market segments have comparable attributes, requirements, and preferences, which facilitates the adaptation of marketing approaches tailored to each specific segment. Numerous criteria can be used for segmentation. Demographic segmentation includes segmenting consumers based on factors such as age, gender, education, occupation, and other demographic characteristics. Geographical segmentation, on the other hand, focuses on dividing consumers based on their location and regional differences. Behavioral segmentation takes into account consumer behavior patterns, including purchasing habits and preferences in the digital environment. Psychographic segmentation considers psychological factors such as values, attitudes, interests, and lifestyle (Cleveland et al., 2011). Using segmentation, a comprehensive understanding of different groups that comprise the audience is gained. After identifying the segments, the next step involves the targeting process. Targeting, in the context of digital marketing, refers to selecting specific segments to focus on within marketing campaigns. Mass marketing refers to a business strategy aimed at reaching a wide audience without specific segmentation. In contrast, niche targeting involves directing marketing efforts towards a very specific market segment characterized by unique needs and interests. The purpose of the targeting process is to concentrate marketing efforts on an audience that is most likely to show genuine interest in the products or services of a particular business entity (Nadube and Didia, 2018).

Positioning is a strategic process of shaping the perception of products or services in the minds of the target audience in relation to the overall competitive offer. Positioning cannot be successfully implemented without a competition analysis. Competitive analysis includes analyzing competitors' positioning in the market and distinguishing the ways they present themselves to the target audience in terms of the values they offer. Then, the company needs to define its unique selling points by determining the unique characteristics and benefits offered by a specific product or service. Developing a marketing message involves creating an authentic, credible, and memorable message that effectively communicates unique selling points and shapes the desired perception. The implementation of segmentation, targeting, and positioning is key to a successful digital marketing strategy as it allows focusing on appropriate market segments,

which serves to increase the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and increases the likelihood of achieving marketing goals (Nadube and Didia, 2018).

1.3. Selection of Digital Marketing Channels and Content Creation

To successfully implement a digital marketing strategy, it is necessary to carefully consider the choice of digital channels and the development of content that will attract and engage the target audience. The characteristics of the chosen digital marketing channels should be compatible with the overall marketing strategy and set goals. The website is of great importance as it serves as the center of the online identity of the business entity and allows target groups of customers and other interested stakeholders to gather information about the individual or company and their offerings (Kindberg et al., 2002). To improve the visibility of the website on search engines, it is necessary to ensure appropriate SEO optimization of the website (Brekalo and Vrtarić, 2011). Social media is an influential platform for effectively connecting with the target audience and disseminating content in an interactive and multimedia way. It is crucial to choose the appropriate social networks that are in line with the characteristics of the target audience and the goals of the organization, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or other platforms (Hoffman and Novak, 2018). Email is a very effective medium for engaging in direct communication with subscribers and customers (Merisavo and Raulas, 2004). Blogs serve as a valuable medium for disseminating valuable information, establishing authority and credibility of the business entity within a particular industry, and improving search engine optimization (Liu, Liu, and Zhang, 2019). Online advertising includes the use of pay-per-click ads to strategically attract the audience's attention with the intention of directing traffic to the business entity's website. Mobile applications also enable direct contact with users through their mobile devices (Stocchi et al., 2021).

The production of compelling and relevant content plays a key role in attracting and conquering the digital audience. It is important that the content is tailored to the requirements and preferences of the target audience. Video content is becoming increasingly widespread as a means of attracting the target audience. Infographics are also a visually stimulating method of conveying data and information. It is necessary to ensure that the content meets the specific needs and interests of the target audience, that it is timely delivered, and that it has value for potential and actual target customers (Sihare, 2018). Consistent updating and promoting content used in digital marketing communication helps in attracting new users, as well as creating a base of loyal regular customers.

1.4. Creation of a Financial and Timetable Plan for the Implementation of a Digital Marketing Strategy

Creating a financial and timetable plan is a key component in formulating a digital marketing strategy, as they directly impact the allocation of financial resources and effective time management necessary for the successful implementation of the strategy. The budget planning process includes creating a financial plan where decisions are made regarding the allocation of resources to be allocated to individual activities within the digital marketing strategy. It is necessary to carefully consider the availability of funds and distribute them in a way that aligns with the desired goals. The financial plan or budget should also include an estimation of the expected return on investment (ROI) for each selected digital marketing channel (Chaffey and Smith, 2022). It is crucial to choose channels that have the highest potential for achieving goals, in accordance with available resources. The rate of return on investment facilitates decision-making regarding how to most effectively allocate resources and where adjustments in the financial plan might be needed. It is also important to periodically revise the budget to ensure reasonable use of funds.

Creating a timetable plan involves determining the timeframe for the implementation of various marketing activities. Within the timetable plan, the time required to launch a campaign, publish content, send emails, and other digital marketing activities is displayed (Piñeiro-Otero et al., 2016). It is essential to plan ahead and make necessary adjustments to the timetable plan to achieve optimal results. While some activities within digital marketing are ad hoc activities, others need to be carried out continuously, such as writing blogs and managing content on social networks. The timetable plan also ensures more efficient coordination of teams and external partners engaged in the implementation of the strategy. A well-defined timetable plan is important in synchronizing all aspects of the strategy and assists in efficient and timely completion of planned activities and tasks.

By creating a financial and timetable plan, effective allocation of time and resources is enabled, the likelihood of delays is reduced, and consistency in the implementation of the digital marketing strategy is ensured. Thus, it promotes an organized and focused approach in achieving the pre-set digital marketing goals within realistic timeframes.

1.5. Analysis of Results and Evaluation of the Success of the Digital Marketing Strategy

Analysis of results involves monitoring various metrics such as website traffic, tracking interactions on social media, engagement through email, conversions, and

other relevant indicators. Monitoring conversions is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of promotional endeavors, as it involves analyzing the occurrence and location of desired user actions, from purchases to filling out forms or subscribing to newsletters. Return on Investment (ROI) is a metric that allows individuals to assess the profitability of their digital marketing efforts by comparing the amount of generated revenue with the amount of invested funds. Tracking ROI helps in determining marketing campaigns and activities that bring the highest financial return (Visser et al., 2019). Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used by each organization to evaluate and assess their performance. These indicators may include metrics such as bounce rate, the number of new subscribers, or the average value of orders (Saura et al., 2017).

Based on the analysis of results, it is possible to improve the digital marketing strategy by distinguishing effective and ineffective strategic elements and implementing improvements to increase efficiency. One might decide to modify existing content or generate new content that is more effectively aligned with the specific requirements of the target audience. In light of the analysis, it is possible to more precisely adjust one's goals and more specifically target the needs and interests of different market segments. When making decisions about modifying digital channels, it is advisable to re-evaluate and potentially modify the existing allocation of resources. This process may involve reallocating resources to channels that have shown effectiveness, while eliminating those that do not yield desired results (Kumar et al., 2012).

The continuous process of monitoring, analyzing, adjusting, and optimizing is an integral part of achieving success in digital marketing. By making adjustments based on real-time data analysis, it ensures that marketing strategies effectively respond to market changes and meet the growing needs of the target audience, ultimately leading to the achievement of marketing goals.

2. Advantages and disadvantages of automation in digital marketing in the agricultural sector

Automation of business processes in digital marketing includes the use of various software tools and technologies for the automatic execution of repetitive tasks and processes within marketing activities. The primary goal of automating business processes in digital marketing is to increase efficiency, minimize the need for human repetitive, routine actions, and enable marketing experts to concentrate on strategic tasks and creative elements in the implementation of digital marketing strategies

(Todor, 2016). The application of business process automation is widespread in digital marketing.

Automated email marketing involves using email automation tools to deliver automatic responses triggered by certain events or user actions, such as welcome messages or cart abandonment notifications, subscriber segmentation based on various criteria, and tracking open rates and clicks on emails. Automated advertising in digital marketing includes using campaign management tools to efficiently place and improve paid ads through pay-per-click systems. These advanced tools use information about the target audience, budget, and keywords for autonomous monitoring of campaign success and their optimization for achieving more successful results. Automation in social media marketing refers to using specific tools and technologies that allow for automated content publishing on various platforms (Todor, 2016). These tools also enable automated tracking of audience engagement, analysis of results, and facilitate communication with the target audience. Using data analysis tools makes it easier to collect and analyze data related to web traffic, conversions, social media engagement, and other significant marketing metrics. The integration of automation speeds up the analysis process, resulting in more accurate results and helps in formulating decisions based on timely and accurate information. Automation of lead generation processes involves using various tools to collect and analyze data related to individuals who visit the website, as well as the development of customized forms for collecting information and distributing personalized promotional materials.

2.1. Advantages of Automation in Digital Marketing Processes in the Agricultural Sector

The implementation of automated processes in digital marketing can bring numerous benefits to the agricultural industry. Automation can facilitate the planning of digital marketing campaigns, management of social media marketing, and correspondence via email (Piñeiro-Otero et al., 2016). These processes need to be aligned with the seasonal cycles characteristic of agricultural production. Automation of business processes ensures the rationalization of time and allows agricultural entities to direct their efforts towards other key activities in their operations.

Automation also ensures a more optimal allocation of resources that agricultural entities invest in digital marketing activities. Using social media management tools allows for automated planning and dissemination of relevant content, thereby encouraging increased audience engagement and strengthening the overall effectiveness of marketing efforts related to education and raising awareness of agricultural products and attracting their attention by promoting unique selling

points. Automation allows communication to be tailored to the specific requirements and preferences of each particular target group, thereby improving the ability to effectively address customer needs and meet their expectations. Digital marketing in the agricultural sector encompasses various channels such as websites, social media, and email. Automation enables systematic monitoring and analysis of the results of marketing activities. This ensures the implementation of the most effective strategies and optimization of the distribution of the marketing budget (Piñeiro-Otero et al., 2016).

Farmers need to engage in market competition to attract potential customers and partners. Automation allows agricultural entities to ensure improved coordination of marketing efforts, timely response to market dynamics, and improved adaptability to the market environment in an environment of intense competition. The use of automated customer relationship management (CRM) systems facilitates tracking interactions with clients, ensuring feedback, and improving products, services, and business processes. Consequently, automation leads to improved customer relationships and a higher level of loyalty from target customers (Todor, 2016). The implementation of automation in the field of digital marketing brings benefits to agricultural companies in terms of resource utilization, improved marketing efficiency, and enhanced adaptability to market fluctuations. Using personalized approaches and data analysis can provide a deeper understanding of the target audience, allowing for the refinement of marketing strategies to achieve top results.

2.2. Disadvantages of automation in digital marketing processes in the agricultural sector

Although automation in digital marketing has numerous advantages, it can also have certain drawbacks. Automation has the potential to eliminate the feel of personal interaction when contacting the target audience. When all forms of communication and responses are generated automatically, the target recipients of digital marketing messages can feel undervalued and neglected. Excessive levels of automation can result in decreased user engagement and unsatisfactory user experience. Although automation nominally encourages content personalization, without human contact, problems related to inadequately tailored and non-personalized content can arise (Rust, 2020). If not applied properly, automation can result in the dissemination of identical messages to all recipients, without considering their specific needs and requirements. Automated systems entirely depend on the functionalities of the system. If there are errors in the functionalities of automatic systems, automation can have a detrimental impact on the delivery of messages and other aspects of digital marketing

communication, and cause misunderstandings, especially due to the possibility of incorrect interpretation of consumer needs. These problems can potentially undermine the reputation of the brand and result in financial losses (Van Giffen et al., 2022).

A lack of creativity can be a significant consequence of automation, particularly in digital marketing campaigns. Certain elements of marketing, such as creating unique and imaginative content or adapting strategies in response to unforeseen circumstances, are difficult to fully mechanize (Lies, 2021). Organizations that overly rely on tools and technology for automation may face vulnerability due to technical problems. Overreliance on automation can result in decreased control over marketing processes. If automation is used inappropriately or too intrusively, it can create a negative perception among the audience. Excessive and intrusive automated communication can genuinely discourage and disappoint users. To optimize digital marketing efforts, it is crucial to understand the advantages and limitations of using automation (Rust, 2020). It is necessary to establish a harmonious balance between automated procedures and human engagement to achieve optimal results. Although automation can facilitate marketing tasks, it should not be considered a substitute for ingenuity, strategic thinking, and human understanding, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises that prevail in the agricultural sector.

Conclusion

A digital marketing strategy encompasses a thoughtful and systematic approach that is implemented to achieve marketing goals using digital platforms and channels. The initial phase includes setting SMART goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Then, the target audience is segmented, digital channels are chosen, and appropriate content is devised. A financial and time plan is made to distribute resources and ensure coherence. Continuous monitoring and analysis of results facilitate the modification of the strategy for optimizing outcomes.

The implementation of software tools in the field of digital marketing allows for the automatic execution of routine tasks and optimization of marketing activities. The primary goal is to increase efficiency, free marketing professionals from repetitive duties, and ease their focus on strategic and creative aspects. Email automation, advertising, social media management, and data analysis tools are commonly used in digital marketing. In the agricultural industry, automation has the potential to simplify marketing activities, improve efficiency, adapt to seasonal variations, and optimize resources. However, over-reliance on automation can reduce personal touch and hinder creativity, while technical issues can result in negative consequences.

Establishing a balance between automation and human engagement is key to achieving optimal results within the agricultural sector.

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