

ROLE OF ICTS IN GROWTH OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

ICT stands for Information and communication technologies comprising mainly the Internet and computers. ICT is the fastest among the various growing technologies and as a result of playing a major role in our daily life. This has not only changed our daily life but it has also changed our life perceptions and way of living as well. If we talk about from a business perspective, all in all, it has touched each and every aspect of business let it be Marketing, Human Resource Management, Finance or any other branch. Marketing via the Internet is one of the biggest branches of business which has been largely impacted by the Internet and has been acquiring strength day by day since the inception of the same. In the third world countries like India also, ICTs are playing a crucial role in the growth of Indian marketing landscape. On the other hand, Sustainable Marketing refers to the marketing which achieves all the objectives of marketing without compromising the future generation's ability to meet their own needs, hence the sustainable marketing is the need of the hour. So, this paper has tried to describe how the Internet progressed at a rapid pace from a computer network to the world's first international market? What are the roles that ICT play for modern marketing tactics? how are companies using this in such a way that it can aid in the growth of sustainable marketing? how is India trying to use and implement the internet in terms of development and growth of sustainable marketing? Apart from that, this paper has also tried to explore what are the future prospects of Sustainable Marketing in Indian marketing scenario. Overall this study is of review cum descriptive nature and all the required and relevant data has been collected from various journals, magazines, published papers, and numerous govt. and non-govt. portals along with some textbooks for theoretical information on the same.

Keywords-*Information & Communication Technology(ICT), Sustainable Marketing, E-Commerce, etc.*

INTRODUCTION

The cutting edge for business today is e-Commerce. The effects of e-commerce are already appearing in all areas of business, from customer service to new product design. It facilitates new types of information-based business processes for reaching and interacting with customers like online advertising and marketing, online order taking and online customer service etc. It also reduces cost in managing orders and interacting with a wide range of suppliers and trading partners, areas that typically add significant overheads to the cost of products and services. Marketing, being a part of the entire e-commerce brigade, plays a significant role in today's online atmosphere of buying and selling. Before moving ahead let's understand what sustainable marketing is all about?

Sustainable Marketing-Sustainable marketing is the process of creating, communicating and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital is preserved or enhanced throughout. Marketing, along with virtually every other business function, is undergoing a major shift toward environmental and social sustainability. The role of marketing is particularly important in that it is the primary interface between any business and its customers. It is the marketing function that identifies customer needs and values and communicates them to the rest of the organization. On the other side, The Information & Communication Technology today offers India the best opportunity to expand its market on an even more global scale. This network of computers and information represents a perpetually open market without geographical barriers to prevent any business from reaching customers all over the world via a virtual market where trade, transactions, cash and commodities flow in the form of electronic consumption. The boom in computer, telephone and television technologies has had a major impact on the way businesses produce and market their products and services. As technology has delivered new and better foods, clothes, housing, vehicles and entertainment possibilities, our lives have been changed dramatically. In fact, Information & Communication Technology has been the driving force that has simultaneously created the huge global economy and now making its parts smaller and more powerful. At the heart of this phenomenon is the Information Superhighway and its backbone, the ICT.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Khan and Mahapatra, (2009) suggested in their study that technology plays a vital role in improving the quality of services provided by the business units. One of the technologies which really brought information revolution in the society is Internet Technology and is rightly regarded as the third wave of revolution after the agricultural and industrial revolution. Businesses are increasingly using the Internet for commercial activities. **Rowley, (2001)** described that the ubiquitous nature of the Internet and its wide global access has made it an extremely effective mode of communication between businesses and customers. **Thompson (2005)** introduced that the growth of Internet technology has enormous potential as it reduces the costs of product and service delivery and extends geographical boundaries in bringing buyers and sellers together. **Devendra et. al., (2012)** defined that electronic commerce, commonly known as e-commerce or eCommerce, consists of the buying and selling of products or services over the electronic system such as internet and another computer network. The intent is the technology for e-commerce as it offers easier ways to access companies and individuals at very low cost and order to carry out day-to-day business transactions. **Boughton, (2005)** remarked that most online advertising campaigns have two main objectives: brand development and direct response. Selecting an appropriate marketing channel ultimately depends on which strategies will provide the greatest ROI. Firms that offer products and services through the Web clearly stand to gain from Internet advertising because their prospective customers are already online. Non-web-based companies may choose online marketing in order to increase exposure and promote the brand. SEM allows companies to closely track their ROI from an audience acquisition standpoint. Unlike traditional banner ads, advertisers are charged based on the number of clicks they receive, not on the number of impressions (number of times an ad appears). Additionally, many marketing campaigns place a great deal of importance on branding. PPC ads can be very effective in terms of driving home a brand name because they appear alongside search results for thousands of different search terms.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the role of ICTs as a tool in modern marketing scenario.
2. To study the role of ICTs in sustainable marketing development in India.
3. To explore the future prospects of sustainable marketing in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The entire study is based only on literature reviews and documentary analysis. Furthermore, for analysis purpose, the required & relevant data have been collected from Research Papers of various Journals and other publications. Apart from that, few relevant Books, Online Blogs & Websites of the stakeholders regarding the content of the paper have also been referred. For the purpose of quantitative data, govt. and non-govt. portals have been used.

FINDINGS

The findings are being divided into 3 parts as per the objectives of the study. Let's discuss it one by one.

1. To study the role of ICTs as a tool in modern marketing scenario.

Marketing can be tough. Competition is fierce, and it's harder to draw in new customers than ever. But as we probably know, we can't grow our business without marketing. Even the best products and services need to be advertised before they will sell. Traditional forms of marketing and advertising, like magazine or newspaper ads or billboards on the side of a highway, can be expensive and to evaluate their effectiveness can be close to impossible. Instead of relying on these methods, it's time to turn on the Internet. Internet marketing can drive traffic to the business and convince new visitors to become paying customers, and often at a fraction of the cost of a billboard. Internet marketing is also much more quantitative than traditional marketing ever could be. So how exactly can Internet marketing help our business, and how it has grown up being a tool for marketing? On this section, we'll explore ways through which ICT aids contemporary marketing with the help of proven Internet marketing tactics like SEO, PPC advertising, social media, emails, and many more.

I. SEO, or Search Engine Optimization- It refers to the way a website is optimized to perform better search results. Without SEO, businesses may find it difficult to rank on search engines like Google for the keywords that they associate with their products or services. Studies have found that

being at the top of the first page of search results can earn you more than 50% of traffic. However, that percentage drops all the way to a mere 4% for the fifth spot. Furthermore, an SEO company can help you perform the following tasks:

- ✓ Analyze your competitors
- ✓ Identify the key phrases and words you want to rank for
- ✓ Optimize your website titles and meta tags
- ✓ Optimize your copy and on-page content
- ✓ Submit your site to search engines

II. PPC, or Pay-Per-Click advertising- It is another way to bring new visitors to your website. PPC ads are displayed along with search results and entice users to click on them to find what they are looking for. As the name indicates, these ads require you to pay each time someone clicks on your ad. However, they aren't as expensive as you might think. In fact, the exact opposite is often true. PPC can be a fantastic investment for businesses of all size because you have extreme control over your ad spend.

III. Increasing the Fanbase with Social Media- Social media channels, like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, are great methods for growing your business with Internet marketing. Companies can set up official brand pages or accounts on social media sites, and post updates to fans however often they choose. Although managing your presence on social media can potentially eat up a lot of time – especially if you are a very large brand – it's worth the investment. Right out of the gate, business owners should understand that the purpose of social media is to be social, not to simply post promotional messages. These platforms give fans of your company or product new ways to interact with, and learn about, what you have to offer.

IV. Keeping the Customers Interested with Content Marketing- Content marketing refers to the strategy of marketing to potential customers with different types of content. The content used in this method can vary from blogs to videos to whitepapers or even e-books, but they all share the same end goal: to convince visitors to your website that they should buy from or partner with you. A solid content marketing strategy can help you grow your business online by leaps and bounds. Believe it or not, customers love original content, and some studies have shown that brands that offer original content are more trustworthy than brands that don't. One of the oldest methods of content marketing is the company blog. A blog can be a great way to not only offer content that is interesting to those visiting your website but also to create conversation and encourage repeat visits.

2- To study the role of ICTs in sustainable marketing development in India.

As we have earlier discussed the sustainable marketing that it is a process of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service in a sustainable market in such a way as to educate customers of the multiple benefits of valuing human, economic, and natural capital. Now the question is what a Sustainable Market is? so ideally a sustainable market would be one that meets today's (global) economic, environmental, and social needs without compromising the opportunity for future generations to meet theirs. In practice, a sustainable market is a market that is moving toward that ideal. Broadly, the internet helps people as well as to the environment in the long run. The Internet can also provide durable solutions to daily life problems of a society and make their lives more sustainable. Here the focus is on sustainable marketing, so internet plays its part somehow in each depth of marketing to make it more sustainable. We can understand it clearly by describing the prominent features of the internet which can eventually push the growth of sustainable marketing.

I- Paperless Business Environment-Papers have been an integral part of each and every business and trade and left a drastic effect on nature and the environment. Marketing part of the business has also not been untouched by this blame as it has consumed a huge amount of papers until the inception and use of the internet in marketing. ICTs came as a saviour of nature as of now majority of the marketing works are now paperless unlike it used to be in the fields of marketing research, product planning, advertising, product communications etc.

II- Energy Efficiency- ICT-empowered atmosphere relief procedures could diminish worldwide environmental change drastically by 2020 contrasted with current endeavours. No other atmosphere alleviation system is relied upon to be as powerful. These upgrades incorporate Smart office and Smart Building vitality administration, effective utilization of commercial machines, keen

matrix gadgets, resource following connected to co-ordinations and savvy modern engines that adjust speed dynamically to outline with just a few cases where ICT can play a key role in energy efficiency.

III- Pollution Alert & Management- An urban ICT can provide means to monitor the quality of the air in crowded business areas, parks, or commercial hubs. The realization of such a service requires that air quality and pollution sensors be deployed across the city and the sensor data be made publicly available to citizens. Due to the vast technological developments in the field of wireless communication technology, it has led to the emergence of many pollution monitoring sensors and wireless networks for monitoring and reporting pollution.

IV- Reducing the Energy Toll- In the modern marketing perspective, adding connected device by the million every year is enormous and it cannot be overseen. It is in the interest of everyone moving forward to create an ICT that minimizes energy requirements and environmental impact. In the near future, low-power sensors will be able to work under conditions that surpass current ICT capabilities. Besides working underground or being able to be deployed at a long distance from the nearest antenna, battery life will be extended to last for years, thus reducing the energy impact.

V- Effective Waste Management-Last but definitely not the least, marketing also needs an operative waste management technique as it is required for an effective sustainable marketing practice. In the current scenario, waste management process is in shambles and the government is struggling to find ways for eco-friendly disposal. ICT solutions and devices for waste management revolve around two main benefits: determining the best time to collect waste and figuring out what route trucks should follow. These two advantages can reduce the time it takes to address potential waste build-up problems. In waste disposal, technologies like ICT can help the business administration in controlling the amount of waste that is disposed at regular intervals thereby avoiding build up and using the end residue for other developmental activities like reuse and recycle for other industrial use or supplying residue waste to power stations etc.

3- To explore the future prospects of sustainable marketing in India.

There are many lessons to be learned to avoid sustainable marketing myopia, the short version of all this is that effective sustainable marketing requires applying good marketing principles to make especially green products desirable for consumers. The question that remains, however, is, what is its future? Business scholars have viewed it as a “fringe” topic, given that environmentalism’s acceptance of limits and conservation does not mesh well with marketing’s traditional axioms of “give the customer what they want” and “sell as much as you can”. Evidence indicates that successful sustainable marketing can be best utilized by Following three important principles:

I- Consumer Value Positioning-

- Design environmental products to perform as well as (or better than) alternatives.
- Promote and deliver the consumer desired value of environmental products and target relevant consumer market segments.
- Broaden mainstream appeal by bundling consumer desired value into environmental products.

II- Calibration of Consumer Knowledge-

- Educate consumers with marketing messages that connect sustainable attributes with desired consumer value.
- Frame environmental product attributes as “solutions” for consumer needs.
- Create engaging and educational internet sites about environmental products desired consumer value.

III- Credibility of Product Claim.

- Employ environmental product and consumer benefit claims that are specific and meaningful.
- Procure product endorsements or eco-certifications from trustworthy third parties and educate consumers about the meaning behind those endorsements and eco-certifications.
- Encourage consumer evangelism via consumers social and internet communication network with compelling, interesting and entertaining information about environmental products.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been evident from this paper about how internet progressed first as a tool for marketing than as a driver of sustainable marketing & development. If we talk about the Indian perspective, so here again the internet has played a significant role since its inception in 1995. After few years, it came into fashion for Indian businesses and trade as most of the MNC and even Indian domestic firms turned on the internet for their commercial use and benefitted from its salient advantages. Sustainable development is a need of the hour, has also been adequately aided by the internet in India. The Internet has drastically transformed each and every segment of the business and economy where it has been applied in the need of innovation and development. If we talk about the future prospects of sustainable marketing in Indian scenario then there is an urgent need as well as the plethora of opportunities available for the same. Although most of the Indian trade and businesses have already applied sustainable marketing strategies and techniques there are still untapped areas and segments of business where internet, if applied, can produce greener results. Last, but not the least, two things which required are awareness and positive & continuous efforts from both the public and private sector to help build societies more aware and effortful towards a Greener Business Environment.

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