# Internet Marketing: A New Approach in Integrated Marketing   Communications

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*Abstract*
*The internet has invaded our lives and changed it beyond our wildest dreams. Today we are connected to people globally and information is exchanged with the help of lots of mediums supported by internet. With the advancement of technology, internet connectivity and accessibility, marketers too found new ways of connecting with existing or potential customers. This paved way for a new trend in marketing and a new approach in Integrated Marketing Communications i.e.; Internet Marketing.*

*As internet is evolving, a lot of new trends are adding up in Internet Marketing as well. In this article we will try to understand the dynamics of internet marketing and new trends that are being set by marketers in order to win their customers. This will help us to understand the basics of internet marketing and will help marketers to synchronise their marketing efforts to achieve optimum use of internet and its mediums to reach their desired demographics.*
*Keywords: Internet Marketing, Online Marketing, E-marketing*

**Introduction**

"We can apply marketing principles within the internet area. This can be done mainly by creating a web pages, internet advertising, and also marketing research on the internet, electronic commerce etc. However internet marketing demands a little different approach in certain aspects than traditional marketing." (Blažková, 2005).

In other words "Marketing on the internet represents the utilization of internet services for executing or supporting of marketing activities of the company." (Stuchlík, Dvoøáèek, 2000).

**Evolution of Internet Marketing**

With the outbreak of accessibility of public internet in the late 1980s, many companies realised its potential to provide information to their customers which gave way to simple text websites that only gave written information. No graphics or pictures were added. With advancement in internet technologies in 1990s companies started to recognise the potential of internet in tapping global audiences as well. Websites evolved too, they now began to have pictures and graphics to make the experience more interesting for the customers. This created the interest of general public in internet and people started to use internet as a medium to access information about companies and their products. But internet technologies were advancing rapidly and now companies started using their websites for more than just providing information. A big break came in the age of internet marketing when new methods developed which ensured safe ways of online transactions. This started a whole new chapter in the history of mankind as now products were just a click away. Customers could now buy a product off internet.

As the reach and usage of internet increased, companies saw the potential for advertising. Companies began to place ads on other web sites to promote their products. Aûliate programs also started to be very popular. They allow webmasters to advertise products on their website, and if a customer purchases the item, then the webmaster gets certain percentage of the sale. (Aranda, 2007).

"Companies like Google, Yahoo and MSN emerged and then evolved into providing advertising that any size of website could take advantage of and make money from." (Internet Marketing Guide, 2009).

**Tools of Internet Marketing:**

**Website:** Website is a specific space in the online universe which contains all the information and links necessary to convert a prospect into customer or catering the

needs of existing customer. These websites are connected with the global internet or at least Local Area Network (LAN) in order to exchange information with its users. It is the most basic tool of Internet marketing and the most important one as well as it is the space which a user uses in order to get directed to useful information.

**Domain Name:** Domain name is the address of the website. It must be catchy, easy to remember and in sync with the products or services provided on the website. Examples are www.google.com, www.gmail.com, www.facebook.com etc.

**Keywords:** These are the words that help search engines to decide what web pages to be shown for a specific search. For example if somebody is looking for information regarding dentists in a specific area, keywords can be Dentists, Dental Clinics in NCR.

**Copywriting**: Copywriting includes strategising and writing content on the website in such a way that when search engine searches for desired information related to the website, it must come in top searches. It includes using primary and secondary keywords in such a way that it appears normal to a person reading it online but still be able to direct search engine towards the website easily.

**Microsites:** "Technically, they're called microsites—small, self-contained Web destinations that are separate from a company's primary site, have their own distinct URLs, and consist entirely of content focused on a particular product or service." (Quinton, 2007).

**Search Engine Marketing:** "Search engine marketing is ensuring that your brand shows up when people turn to Google, Yahoo, and other search engines for solutions, services, or products that you pro-vide." (Fielding, 2011). The aim of SEM is basically to place a link that promotes a product, service or a specific oûer to the best possible visible place within the page of returned search results from the search engine.

**Channels of Online Marketing:**

**Email Marketing:** Email marketing includes sending emails regarding promotions, information and advertisements through emails to the prospects or existing customers. It is one of the oldest channels of online marketing. It is not a very effective medium until the business uses the email address data specifically developed and scrutinised by them. Lots of companies' uses data bought from other companies which mostly end up as a spam from the company wasting its efforts and money.

**Newsletter:** Newsletter can be described as requisitioned e-mail that contains information about new products, special promotions, or news on websites. The diûerence between direct marketing via e-mail and newsletter lies in the fact, that newsletter is formerly requested by the recipient and that the recipient can anytime

unsubscribe from receiving the newsletter any longer.

**Banner Ads:** Banner advertising was the first type of advertising ever on the Internet. A banner can promote a product, service or special oûer similar way as a regular billboard. The advantage of a banner is that after clicking on it, the customer is redirected directly to the landing page of that product, service or oûer where more detail information is provided, or where the customer can directly make a purchase.

**Google Adwords:** These are similar to keywords but are used in advertisements by search engine Google. Basically these are the triggers that get activated when some search matches these adwords, the search engine along with desired webpages will also show these ads on the right side of search results. The revenue model used in adwords is PPC (Pay per click) which means the search engine will earn money based on number of clicks on the ads.

Creating a campaign in AdWords system is pretty easy task, but creating a successful campaign requires a lot of experimentation, no matter if you are an experienced marketer or a marketing novice (Google, 2009).

**Search Engine Optimisation:** Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a method for building or modifying of web-sites to be suitable for automated processing by search engines and their "spiders" which take care of indexing pages. (Wikipedia, 2011). The aim of search engine optimization is getting higher ranking and thus better position for particular key words in the search engine organic search results.

**Affiliate Marketing:** This is a simple commission based online marketing tactic that allows businesses to reach customers unavailable to them otherwise. In affiliate marketing two or more businesses come together and promote each other's products through their own marketing channels. Although profit per sale is less as a part of profit goes to the affiliates as commission but it definitely helps the businesses to reach out to new customer base. Such partners are called affiliates to the business. Generally, these affiliates target the same audience demographics and are in related businesses. For example a website selling car insurance can be an affiliate for a business providing car services like cleaning, maintenance or other mechanical support.

**New Trends in Online Marketing:**

**Social Media Marketing:** Use of various social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, instagram, snap chat etc. to promote a product or service is called social media marketing. In recent years there has been a tremendous rise in users of various social media platforms which attracted the marketers towards these platforms in the first place. These platforms have specific data regarding the demographical details and preferences of their users which make it a favourable ground for marketers to

sell their products or services. Apart from selling, these platforms are also used to develop a brand image of a particular product and service. Some brands also use it as a channel of two way communication between their customers and themselves and help the company to develop a bond with their customers by either helping them in matters regarding the product or service or taking feedback.

**Contextual Advertising:** Contextual advertising is subtype of online advertising which is widely used for content based websites. At first a contextual advertising system, such as Google Adsense, scans the whole content of a webpage for keywords. Then the system returns specific targeted ads based on the content, which is currently viewed on the webpage. These targeted ads are ten viewed on specified places within the webpage.

**Viral Marketing:** Viral marketing is today's online equivalent of word of mouth marketing. Companies develop content that is so much entertaining or interesting that people share it across their own social media accounts helping the company to reach more and more people. This type of content generally have a subtle hint of the promoting brand.

"Marketers have caught the bug and are increasingly weaving viral components into their marketing plans. Not only is the approach relatively inexpensive, but also it can sometimes be more believable than standard ads." (Howard, 2005).

**Online PR:** The traditional PR practices also adapted themselves to the new environment created by internet and gave birth to online PR which includes maintaining relations with media which can be also called publicity, maintaining corporate image online and corporate communication.

**Game Advertising:** With the increasing popularity of online video games, marketers have started placing their ads within the games or placing their brands within the games. For example using the image and branding of real cars in a car racing video game.

**Video Advertising:** Video advertising means placement of the ads that play on online videos such as Youtube videos as a part of their online advertisements. Online video advertising can be of three types:

1.   **Pre-Roll Ads:** Ads that play before the video starts.
2.   **Mid-Roll Ads:** Ads that play during the video.
3.   **Post-Roll Ads:** Ads that play after the video is completed.

Main advantage of video advertising is that it cannot be avoided as the video only plays after the advertisement. Although due to the interruption of the video that

the user wants to see, it may have a negative impact too. These videos also have the feature of sharing, thus the ad also gets shared every time one shares a video.

**App Capitalisation:** Today there is an app for almost everything. This latest trend helps user to use the application on their mobile phones. All the major websites have launched their own mobile apps which once downloaded on the mobile creates a more easily accessible experience for the user. Today we have apps for bill payments, movie bookings, travel related bookings, yellow pages, ordering food, online shopping etc.

**Content Marketing:** Content marketing means providing free content to the users in related fields of business through various channels like blogs, discussion groups, facebook pages etc. Here we can consider the example of squats.in which started as a facebook page for people who want to shed or gain weight and achieve a healthy lifestyle. All the information regarding exercises, diets, metabolisms, supplements etc was uploaded as a pinned post on their facebook page. Users will have to read the material and make a diet and exercise chart for themselves and post in on their page. The mentors will then review the diet and exercise chart and post their views along with other users. Videos related to exercises and content related to diets is posted regularly. They also provide paid services of the mentors where one can connect with them over phone and get one-on-one guidance. Soon users started joining the group. Today they have two different facebook pages by the name Squats and Squats for her. An online and offline magazine Fitmag, a course for nutrition expert, several offline centres and the community is still growing.

**Smart Content:** According to Gartner's 2016 Hype Cycle for Digital Marketing and Advertising, Content Marketing is somehow loosing its grip in today's scenario. The reason is availability of clutter available online. BrightEdge research also reported that less than 50% of all of B2B brands produced content has been able to engage their target audiences. The situation is far worse for B2C where only 20% of the content has been able to engage its target audiences. If we go by the numbers, $145 billion is spent on content each year which means that $75 billion is wasted every year because of the non engagement issues.

**Graph 1: Content Engagement in different sectors**
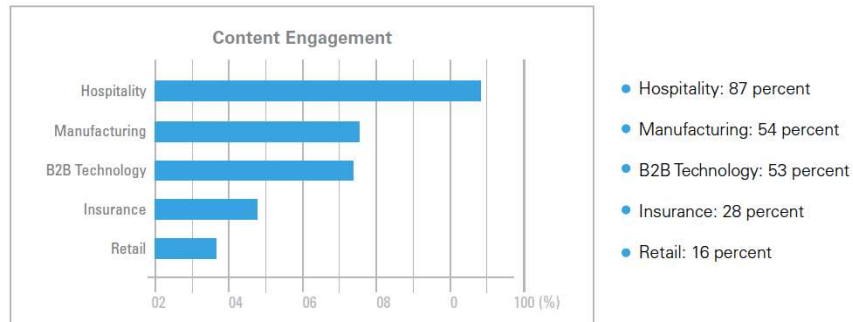


So where are we lacking? One must understand that with the evolution and acceptability of internet and its increased usage, almost all the businesses started running towards online platforms mindlessly which created a lot of clutter online. This clutter makes it impossible for the marketers to reach to their target audiences and make an impact. Just having an online presence is not enough, today the marketers need to find creative ways to engage their customers and that is only possible through smart content. Content which strikes a cord with the target audience, is personalised, preferably in native language and with which audience can connect. The answer is not to give up but to adapt to the consumer. Marketers need to cut the online clutter and develop content that engages the reader and drives conversions.

**Micro Moments:** Have you ever reached out to your mobile phone to understand which configuration is better to buy a new laptop, latest trends in fashion before shopping, or choosing a destination for your next weekend trip? The moment we go online with a question in mind that may influence our decision making regarding a product or service, that moment is called micro-moments. These moments shape a customer's preference and help them to reach to a final decision and thus are the game changers. Mostly users use mobile phones due to their ease of accessibility and these moments are mostly reflexive in nature. Marketers today want to cash such moments into their favour as these searches are mostly intent rich and the chances of such searches ending up in conversion are pretty high.

**Chat-bots:** One of the 7Ps of online marketing is personalization. Every customer wants a personal experience and the businesses and brands are trying to provide more and more personalised offerings for their customers. The use of chat-bots in providing prompt reply and information to the customers is increasing with every passing minute. Since it is impossible to cater to every query manually keeping in

mind the increasing number of internet users, chat-bots are the future of personalised services online. With the evolution of AI technology these chat-bots are becoming more and more intelligent in processing requests from users that may include finding information regarding a particular query or responding to complaints and helping the users at any time of the day.

**Influencers:**The biggest question in the mind of marketers today is how to reach the target audience by avoiding the clutter of advertisements and make an impact strong enough to achieve conversions. Merely advertising and branding of a product is not enough, smart content helps but to a certain extent, competition is fierce and in such cut-throat environment, a customer looks for some kind of personal recommendation. Influencers are such people who use different products and review & recommend products to their followers. In recent years, influencers have started playing an important role in shaping the decision of customers. Influencers are basically people with expertise in a certain area like fashion, food, travel, lifestyle etc. People follow them for their experience and knowledge of latest trends in their areas of expertise. These influencers build a trusting relationship with their followers and thus, when they recommend a product, service or trend, it instantly gets to picked up by followers. These influencers can connect to their followers through blogs, instagram, pinterest etc.

It is important to understand that since the relationship of influencers and their followers depend on trust, giving wrong reviews of a product or service can lead to loss of their fan base and thus most of the influencers tend to refrain from unethical practices while reviewing a brand.

**Conclusion**

As the internet is evolving, new platforms of social media coming into play and the competition among brands increasing due to increasing number of players in the market leading to increase in advertising clutter, it becomes obligatory for the marketers to stay updated with the latest trends and devise marketing strategies flexible enough to incorporate these trends to reach maximum number of target audience and achieve conversions.

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