

Marketing Basics

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Foreword

The purpose of the ebook is to provide an overview on Marketing Basics, the two key Marketing Strategies-Traditional and Internet. All the examples used in the ebook are based on personal perception and understanding, hence no names have been used or fictitious names have been created when citing examples. The advertisements in the print category are based on real examples. Any example that specifically states the names of company is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

The purpose of the ebook is only to provide high-level understanding of various topics covered and should not be used as the only basis for creating marketing plans and basing marketing decisions.

We hope you enjoy reading the book and walk away at the end of it feeling a little more enlightened on the topics addressed. The views expressed are solely of the author and reader discretion is advised in matters of implementation of some of the ideas discussed.

CHAPTER 1

1. MARKETING FUNDAMENTALS

1.1 Definition of Marketing

www.m-w.com defines Marketing as:

a: the act or process of selling or purchasing in a market

b: the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service

c: an aggregate of functions involved in moving goods from producer to consumer

Marketing is the most critical business function for any product or service, as it determines the tone of the product or service and how the consumer/customer will interpret and understand the product/service. It is essentially the process of communicating the value of a product or service, the link that connects the consumers to the products/services and enables them to make weighted decisions about the same.

A good marketing strategy is the first step towards building a lasting relationship between the social needs of a society and the economic response. Marketing strategy chooses the target market segments using various tools of marketing analysis and segmentation and then basis the

data formulates appropriate strategies to gain maximum output. The first usage of marketing can be traced back to 1561, while the age of the internet has enabled the expansion of user reach. Marketing is no longer a monologue, it has become a dialog with the end user participating in the conversation, but marketing as a function has been known to exist in one form or the other for a long time.

The consumer today holds the key to any marketing initiative they research the internet before making an educated decision, they pay attention to detail, it is no longer a generation that was influenced by broadcast by way of television or print media. This generation is willing to ask questions, contribute in dialogs by means of various forums they want to share their experiences with the larger community. It is imperative to set the right tone for marketing and the fundamental that determines this is the honesty with which a product/service presents itself to the customer. There is a big market and there are several options available to the end user today, if marketing is not honest the product/service will soon be eradicated from the market, a consumer is not willing to take a chance once they have been cheated.

A marketer's primary focus would be to get an in-depth understanding of the customer and their needs and then facilitate the positioning of the product/service in a way such that it addresses the particular need of the customer. Marketing is not the same as selling and the two have a fundamental difference, a sale is primarily just about providing a product/service in exchange for cash whereas marketing addresses the principles of business understanding with the key players being understanding the market, positioning the brand and building a mutually trustworthy relationship with the customer. Hence it goes beyond the realm of just making a sale, it aims to achieve the larger picture by building a relationship and creating a market for a product/service.

1.2 The Basics of Marketing

Marketing is a vast field and the trends, activities and organizations are constantly changing and evolving so it would not be wise to define preset guidelines to the basics of marketing.

It is essentially the positioning of a product, which a customer needs in a particular place at a price that the customer sees value for money for the product/service.

Any product/service that is able to address the above has successfully marketed itself. The list might seem relatively simple but there are several contributors that lead to a seemingly simple desirable outcome and it takes extensive research and accurate analysis of the data targeted and created in the demographic basis which the pricing is determined. It is worthwhile to note that marketing is the study of several factors and there are times when the most expensive marketing fails to return value for money, on close inspection it would not be hard to find that one or more of the primary contributors have been overlooked.

How marketing is approached can broadly be classified into one of the two categories mentioned below.

Most often companies create a product that they think the customer needs and then spend money and crucial budget on getting the customer to accept the product/service. It is not about what they think the customer needs, it is about knowing what the customer demand is and then working on it. There is no use creating a beautiful garden which might not flourish in the climatic conditions of the target market:

Inbound Marketing: This type of marketing works on the principle of understanding specific customer groups, with specific needs. This then forms the basis of research that leads to product design. The other players that form major contributors are packaging for the specific demographics and its pricing thereof. How does one describe a product such that the customer understands the product/service and its differentiators from the competitors, if any. The most important part is determining the personality of the product and what language should it communicate in to the customers.

Outbound Marketing: This is the traditional method of marketing where the company initiates a conversation with the intent of sending a message out to the customer. Outbound Marketing is the opposite of Inbound Marketing and follows the traditional approach to marketing using offline methods such as trade shows, direct mails and customer calling. It intends to interrupt what you are doing or following and instigates the customer to change their current course of action or thought process. For instance, If it is an email promotion for an upcoming webcast or a banner ad showing how much money your business can potentially save, a marketer is interrupting you and asking you to move on to

something else. This is what makes this form of marketing less effective as compared to Inbound Marketing since it attempts to bring out a change and resistance to change is always a tough phenomenon to overcome. While this may be the conventional method of marketing but it is also less effective as compared to Inbound Marketing.

Inbound Marketing is also in line with how the society today views its marketing needs, a company shouting its needs is not really something that we want anymore, we want a company to be able to pass a message in an organic way, non intrusive and un-obstructive where a customer still feels that they are in control of the decision process and they are not forced into making a decision by a brand that shouts its value.

The rise of the internet has given rise to the concepts of Inbound Marketing, the consumer is no longer reliant on billboards and TV ads to learn about products. The web has empowered a new generation of users and marketers, it has bridged the gap that separated the two and made it possible to reach a wider audience, speaking the language that they do. It has opened a whole new world of finding, buying, researching brands and products. The two way dialog now facilitated by social media has

revolutionised the way marketers approach customers and how customers understand a brand. The basis being that this type of marketing is trying to earn a customer's respect and not buy it, it is finding the right communication strategy that will bring the customer to the brand and incite them to engage in a conversation. Some of the most common tools to achieve this are done using social media, creating content that engages the user such as blogs, podcasts.

To tabulate the difference between the two:

Inbound Marketing	Outbound Marketing
Two-way Communication	One-way Broadcast
Customer will seek out the brand	Customer sought by the brand
Methods used: Social Media, Referrals &etc	Methods used: Print, TV, Banners, cold calls, etc
Marketers are the value ad	Marketers not much value
Brand building by education	Education is not the primary
Earns its way into customer's life	Forces itself on to customers

1.1 4 Ps of marketing

Unravelling the mystery of Marketing, it can actually be summed up by targeting the 4 P's that define the principles and basics of marketing. These are also referred to as the 'Marketing Mix', a term coined by Neil Borden in the 1950's, the knowledge of the 4 Ps is considered to be the very basis on which Marketing Strategy for a company should be defined, in order to ensure that it is successful and impactful

- Product: The right Product
- Place: Sold at the right place
- Price: At the right place
- Promotion: Using the most suitable promotion

Product: A Product is a collectively used to describe the goods or services that the business provides to a target market. Products are the tangible goods and a service is often the intangible commodity being targeted in the program. Tangible products can be consumer goods such as Soaps, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes etc, they can be consumer durables such as iPods, Phones, Watches etc. Intangible services can be IT based services such as Social Media Marketing, Consultancy services etc

The important thing to keep in mind is how the product/service relates to the needs of the end user. The product spectrum includes not only the product itself but also the supporting elements such as warranties, guarantees and after sales support for the product. When developing a product the key elements to keep in mind are quality, design, features, packaging, customer service and the after sales service. For a successful product to hit the market and gain significant share it is important that each one of these aspects is given focus and detailed analysis by experts in the respective fields. If a product is high quality, but is not packaged well it might still grow to create a market share, might not become a major market share holder but can sustain since word of mouth for a good quality product can be very effective. But if a product is sub standard and lacks quality, packaging cannot rescue it, a first time user might be tempted to pick it up but as word gets around the product will lose market share and face value. Hence it is important to understand how much weight-age should be provided each one of the product elements, an imbalance can lead to a disastrous product which no amount of marketing can salvage.

Marketing can only create awareness about a product in a target market, it needs to have a substantial product that actually leads to sales and good advertising.

When designing a product what are the essential things to keep in mind:

- What does the consumer want?
- What are the product features needed to provide the customer what they want?
- What is the usage pattern of the product, as in where and how is the consumer going to use the product?
- The physical attributes of the product
- What will the physical design of the product be, as in how does it look?
- How will the product be branded?
- What are the differentiators that set it apart from competitors, what is the uniqueness quotient?

Some companies that have redefined great products coupled with great marketing leading to a series of successful product launches:

- Apple: They almost always know what the consumer want even before they do! The focus group that creates the marketing strategy is internal and they deliver a game changer in the marketplace, each time!

- Samsung: From being a close second to Sony, it has crept up slowly and steadily and taken over a major segment of the electronics market by delivering the product with all its features, at a price that was unbeaten.

Then there were the good products with bad marketing that lead to their downfall

- Quiznos: For those of you who have tried it, I am sure you would agree that the product is great. At a time when Subway was making waves, they launched an ad campaign showing disfigured singing rodents!!! It's hara-kiri to see a brand using rodents!!! The ad elicited disgust and soon the product lost major market share.

- Blackberry: In trying to change their market presence as a cellphone brand for the corporate users to the preferred brand for the youth, they ended up making a mockery of their loyal customers and this did not help the corporate users or the targeted youth!

A bad product with good marketing cannot carry it far, and a good product with bad marketing will not capture the audience and the market share either. It is important to have a good product backed by good marketing to ensure its success.

Price: This is the amount a customer pays for a product. It is the key factor that will determine a company's profitability and consequently its survival. The methods of pricing a product fall in the spectrum of Pricing Art and it can determine the success or failure thereof. The art of pricing includes several factors:

- Fixed and Variable costs
- Proposed positioning strategies
- Retail Price
- Target audience and its willingness to pay
- Discounts and wholesale pricing
- Seasonal Pricing
- Offer Bundling
- Flexibility in price

Among other things such as location, pricing mark-ups by the distributors and discounts it is also important

to maintain a balance with competitor pricing. A product which does not conform to the basic market pricing of its competitors targeting the same product segment and market will not be able to sustain as the consumer will be unwilling to pay a higher price for the same product even if the brand promises better perks such as after sales support etc. Having said that the pricing should also be indicative of the product features that are being priced, consumers sometimes look at under priced products suspiciously as they might feel that the quality has been compromised to offer a price that would appeal to the consumers. A consumer attaches benchmarks to the product it wishes to buy and they use the competitor pricing to come up with the figure most often. If a product is priced above the competition in the market segment, the consumer should understand the value it pays for the added price, are they tangible or intangible, is there any method of validating the same and this is especially true for the intangible benefits promised by the company.

There are several types of pricing strategies a company uses to determine the price of a product:

- Penetration Pricing: The Company prices its product at a low affordable price, so as to increase sales

and market share and the returns come in the form of returns from selling larger numbers. Hence the mark-up on a product might not be very high but the profitability is anticipated to come from the number of products it sells. This price can be increased once the market share has been established. A classic example is Satellite Television, once a consumer purchases a particular Satellite, they rarely ever change the brand, the brand is then free to increase the prices of the services leaving little choice to the consumers who will be willing to pay the increasing costs.

- **Skimming Pricing:** The Company sets out by pricing the product higher and then gradually reduces the pricing to capture greater market share. Hence they skim the profits at each layer. A good example will be cell phones, they are launched at a higher price and then as time elapses they reduce the pricing, where the pricing reaches its lowest towards the end of the product lifecycle.

- **Competition Pricing:** This is the structure that is based on pricing based on the competitors and a company can chose to price it at the same level, price it higher or price it lower. There are brands that offer to match competitor pricing, and this can be quoted for a lot

of travel companies where they offer to match the pricing for holiday packages and travel being offered by the competition.

- **Product Line Pricing:** This is the type of strategy used to price different products within the same product line at different prices and the key differentiator is the kind of services being offered. An example would be Television companies that offer a 32" LCD screen with several options, the non HD compatible will be cheaper than the model that supports HD. Several differentiators are used to price the products based on variation in product sub specs and not really the broad product description.

- **Bundle Pricing:** The organization bundles more than one product and prices the collective bundle at a lower price than the collective price of each individual item. This is a good method as it results in increased sales and often a slower moving product is teamed with a fast moving product to boost the market sales of the slower moving product. The consumer might be willing to try new products at a cheaper price when the products come as part of a bundle. This method of selling is often used by supermarkets and is often effective, so the next time you

see a buy one and get another one type of offer, you know what pricing model is being used.

- Psychological Pricing: The seller here considers the psychological impact of the price, hence a product priced at \$99 instead of \$100 will generate more sales, although the difference is only \$1, the consumer views it differently the moment it moves from the two digit mark to the three digit more and hence is more likely to pick the product priced at \$99 instead of \$100. A lot of FMCG products are priced at \$49, \$128 based on this pricing model where the user tends to purchase these products more than the ones with absolute pricing.

- Premium Pricing: This is done to establish a product as exclusive, hence sending out a clear message to the customer that we want you purchase the product only if you can afford to be part of the elite group and they are not looking at making money by selling large numbers. For example a Louis Vitton bag will cost what it does, irrespective of the fact that they neither have a huge variety of designs but owing the product puts the consumer in the exclusive club of its owners and hence the customers are willing to pay a premium price.

- **Optional Pricing:** The product is priced at “x” amount, but it is left to the discretion of the distributor or retailer to provide additional cost benefits by offering freebies along with the product. The automobile industry is a good example, a car comes at its cost and then it is for the showroom to throw in freebies in the form of seat covers, or stereos and other add-ons. The retailer can also choose to offer cash discounts for the purchased car.

- **Cost Based Pricing:** This is the basic method of pricing, where the company takes into account the cost of production and distribution of the product, then attaches a mark-up value to it based on the profit it wants to make on each item and these add up to generate the final cost of the product. This is a good option to use when the target markets are volatile and a mark-up pricing basis the criteria discussed will keep the company and product afloat.

Promotion: Once you have the product and the price the next question a brand needs to ask is how the product will be promoted. It is essentially the efforts and methods used to persuade the target audience in favour of the product. A company needs to decide the methods of promotion to be used, will it be the traditional method of

television, print, banner ads and radio promotions or the new age social media that makes use of the internet, a brand can also chose a hybrid amalgamation of both these technologies to promote a product. The major factor that determines the marketing strategy is how you want your product to be positioned in the market, it needs to be in sync and appropriate to the product, price and target audience. A marketing effort that does not adhere to the basics is a waste of time and revenue for the company. The content, tone, timing, marketing channels and appeal of the promotional message will generate a brand image for the product.

An organization's promotion strategy can comprise one or more of the following:

Message and Media strategy: The message and media strategy will set the tone for the message being communicated to the target audience. What is the message you are communicating? How will the target audience interpret the message? How will you deliver the message? The message should reinforce the brand image of the product and often the intent is to make the branding synonymous with the product such that when a customer thinks of the product they are forced to think of the brand.

Some of the companies that have been able to create a viral brand for themselves by making their slogans and strategies such are Nike's- "Just do it", Subway- "Eat Fresh", Panasonic- "Ideas for life", L'Oreal- "Because you are worth it", HSBC- "The World's local bank".

So when a user thinks of eating fresh they will think of Subway, if they think of a cosmetic brand that makes them feel special they think of L'Oreal. A catchy slogan is one of the many aspects of promotion, but it is definitely a very important one. A customer will not repeat or remember whole advert they see on television or on print but they will resonate with the slogan that is used to establish a brand image and position.

The promotion of a product can be broadly classified in the following categories:

- Advertising: It is a form of communication that persuades the customer into buying or investing in your product by highlighting the value proposition of the product in question. It should tell the customer the benefits of choosing your product over the competitors' and creating a positive brand image for the product. This is a planned activity over a period of time and needs to be consistent so that the consumer is reminded of the product

benefits time and again. Advertising is not a onetime activity and should not be planned as such; it needs consistent persuasion to be effective so as to keep the product topmost in the minds of the customer. The primary objective of advertising is to increase profitability by increasing sales. There are various methods of advertising available to the marketer and their usage will depend on the product, target market, competition and more importantly the advertising budget such that the advertising budget does not create a big dent in the product profit margins. There are traditional and ne age methods of advertising available to choose from, they range from Press/Radio/Television Advertising Point of sale/direct and outdoor adverts. Whatever method the company chooses it is important to ensure that they are getting top value for their advertising budget by focussing on the method that works for the product and the company.

- Selling: It is the process of exchanging products for a sum of money or in barter for another product/service. When we talk about selling it is important to start with the understanding of who will use the product and why? Will they be willing to pay the price of the product? Once this is established the next step is to

establish contact with the customer to make a sale, this could range from the company approaching the customer of the customer making a direct sale from an outlet or a point of sale (relevant to the kind of sales that are made through retail outlets). When making a sale the presentation or demonstration of the product usage are critical, what a consumer understands via advertising needs to be reinforced in their minds by physically seeing and understanding the product, the people who present or demo a product need to have complete understanding of the product so as to engage the customer and build trust and credibility. They should be able to handle all questions and objections, once the sale is made it is equally important to follow up and understand customers' level of satisfaction with the product. A product is only as good as the person making the sale!

- Sales Promotion: This is the method used to entice customers to make a purchase by providing incentives. Sales promotions can be targeted at the end customer, retailers and wholesalers, trade promotions or a business community. Companies also provide sales promotions for the sales team to encourage them to make a sale to the customers. Some classic examples of sales promotion activities are: coupons, sweepstakes, multi pack

bonuses, loyalty rewards for the customer sales promotion. The business community is targeted with the use of conferences and seminars, trainings, event sponsorships and the Trade and Sales force promotions can be achieved by the use of sales incentives, corporate entertainment etc.

- Public Relations: The Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) defines Public Relations (PR) as: "The deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization (or individual) and its (or their) publics". It simply means the process of building a good relationship with the stakeholders, in this case the target market, by attracting favourable publicity, building a positive, reliable and sustainable company image. Word of mouth referrals often can hold more credibility than advertising gimmicks and it is important for a company to ensure that they generate the kind of feedback from the product users. Building good public relations is not something that can be achieved overnight and this takes meticulous planning, consistent delivery, making changes to keep abreast with the changing market, user demands and creating a market that will trust new products and enhancements that the company offers.

Placement (Distribution): Having covered the Product, Pricing and Promotion we are now down to the last of the last of the 4 P's of Marketing- Placement. This refers to how the product reaches the customer, whether it is a point of sale or other methods of retail. It is the channel through which the product is sold, the geography or region where the product is sold and the division (youth, families, business users) to whom the product is being sold.

The major distribution types are:

- **Intensive Distribution:** This is the method where extensive product quantities are stocked at a local location, most commonly used for the basic supplies such as colas, snacks, biscuits etc.

- **Selective Distribution:** This is the method of distribution where the producer of the product relies on intermediate sources to carry the product. It is used for the more specific product types such as electronics of high value with specific or niche usage, brands that cater to specific tools that are used by a select group.

- Exclusive Distribution: In this type of distribution the producer is selective about the distribution intermediaries being used. This is often used for the exclusive products such as high value luxury cars.

The objective of placement is to ensure, that the product is available via the right channel, at the right place and at a time that the consumer needs. The last point is especially true for products that would have higher sales during certain periods, such as holiday seasons. Making a product available when the consumer needs it is probably one of the most important aspects, assuming that the customer has already agreed on the fact that they want to buy the product after careful consideration of the product features, pricing and sales promotions. They then seek to make a purchase and if the product is not available, they might not be willing to wait for the product to arrive, this could lead in loss of sale and if the same pattern is repeated then it leads to loss of face value and the customers (rather potential customers) start indulging in negative publicity. Placement covers the entire gamut right from availability and distribution channels of the product to product placement in display shelves, this is essentially important for the consumer durables, the goods in FMCG segment need to be placed at a place in the retail section

where their visibility is higher than that of the competitors'. A consumer is more likely to pick a product that is easily accessible, for example selling a toy to a 4 year old should be placed at a shelf that is between 2.5-3.5 feet since that is the eye level of most kids in the age group, they are not going to be able to see a product that is not at eye level. While they might not be the customers, they are the consumers and will eventually use the product, in most cases they are the ones that coax the parents into making a purchase. Similarly, a person entering a supermarket in search of a cola, might not always look particularly for a Pepsi or a Coke, chances are they will pick the drink they see first. Hence Placement is a science that covers the entire process of determining which geographies the product being sold in, how will the product reach the target market, where will it be displayed or available for view to the customers. From the distribution channels to the Shelf location, all of it forms part of the Placement Marketing Strategy. It is also wise to plan an exit strategy when working on the placement strategy, so if the product does not do well, the company has the options available of alternate sales channels to choose from.

Although figures vary widely from product to product, roughly a fifth of the cost of a product goes on

getting it to the customer. Based on the type of product and its pricing the company makes a decision on whether it wants to sell directly to the customer or retailers or whether it wants to follow the distribution channel where the company delivers to a wholesaler, who then sells to the distributor and finally the product is sold by a retailer.

To pick an example that follows through the entire Marketing Mix and how it addresses each of the 4 P's:

Product: "ABC" is a brand that sells lifestyle products. It targets different age groups of users and different clothing styles, right from casual, sports to business and formal clothing.

Pricing: The pricing of the product depends on the level of profit needed, the competitor pricing and the cost of production. Since this is not a necessity, pricing is key to determining whether or not the products will sell. The company does bulk buying, production and supplying hence keeping the cost of production low, enabling them to market their products at a competitive price.

Promotion: "ABC" wants to position itself in the mass market segment where they are selling quality products at a competitive price and ensuring that they make "customers for life". They offer in store promotions

by offering various deals during holiday seasons, and they also offer loyalty bonus to the regular customers. They have spent on print advertising, TV and Radio Advertising and they have invested in a Social Media agency that runs promotions and campaigns on the internet for them. Currently they are not selling on the internet, they are merely generating brand awareness, and customer engagement by using social media.

Placement: They want to follow the wholesaler, distributor and retailer model so that they can target several geographies at one time. They are willing to spend on the placement of the products at visible, high traffic locations within a retail store. Since they do not own the stores, they have an agency that monitors store displays, layouts and visibility within the retail outlets.

We have been discussing the various techniques of traditional and new age techniques of marketing, let's take a deeper look into what each of these Marketing Strategies is all about and its pros and cons thereof.

CHAPTER 2

2. Traditional Marketing

2.1 Description of Traditional Marketing:

This type of marketing is used to refer to the age old marketing techniques that have been in use for years and have proven successful. They are commonly used to refer to the Print, Television, Radio, Billboards, Direct Mails, Cold Calls (Telephone) as methods of positioning a brand in the market. These are more inclined to methods that are monologues with little or no involvement of the customer or end user in the process. A brand talks about its product features, advantages, and other data that will entice the user to buy a product by using one or more of the techniques mentioned above. The questions a company needs to ask before deciding on the Marketing Approach for the product are:

- What is my target audience?
- Are they more likely to use the internet or traditional media for information?
- What is the price of the product and how much is my marketing spend?

- How quickly and effectively am I expecting returns from my strategy?
- What are my parameters for a successful marketing strategy?
- What is the market penetration I am expecting?

When deciding on the Marketing Strategy to be used ask yourself what is my ROI and how am I demystifying the horrors of calculating this. A simple calculation is to say that if I spend \$5000 on my marketing campaign, which includes design, production and implementation cost and my profit on each product sale is \$100, then I need to make a sale of 500 products to call the campaign a success. However, even if I am not able to make sales that statistically provide the ROI in terms of \$ returns it would be worth the effort to understand whether or not the campaign created a future market and if customer feedback lead to future profitability in which case the campaign would still be termed successful.

A long time ago...when companies decided that Marketing was an intrinsic part of the product lifecycle and critical to its success they started with the traditional marketing methods which would primarily broadcast a

message to the customer. Since, this was a one-way street, it was important for the brand to put careful consideration into the message that it was trying to get across to the customers. The media mix that would be used to convey the message and the timing at which the message would be broadcast thereby ensuring that the media mix was designed to provide optimum output and maximum impact for the product in the minds of the customers.

The first step towards implementing traditional marketing is understanding the customer, so that the messages can be tailored to the audience in the targeted geography using the media that is preferred by them.

The traditional marketing efforts are sometimes also referred to as “Push” advertising, as it pushes a message to the audience.

Once a company decides on the traditional marketing approach, they then need to detail out the marketing solutions based on:

- Target Audience
- Creating relevant content that will optimize customer experience
- Channels to be used in the media mix

- Develop marketing materials for the various marketing channels
- Most importantly, define benchmarks and parameters to measure results.

While there are the New Age Marketing Strategies in use now, most brands continue to use one or more of the Traditional Marketing methods as part of their complete Marketing Strategy. Mid Sized and Large Companies are more likely to use a spot on the Television to advertise their product by means of commercials, this is still one of the most expensive forms of advertising and probably reaches a very large user base, which is why it is still a favourite with the companies having the resources and budgets!

Some of the most memorable traditional marketing campaigns of the 20th century as compiled by Network Television Powerhouse NBC are:

- McDonalds: “You deserve a break today”
- Nike: “Just do it”
- Marlboro’s: “Marlboro Man”
- Coca-Cola: “The pause that refreshes”

- Volkswagen: "Think small"

There is something in this for everyone, from the Big and Medium sized companies to the Small Business they can all use some form of the media mix to create an identity that will resonate with the audience and create more repeat value in their minds as compared to the more recent Marketing Methods. Once a user is able to associate the product with a particular brand, each time they come across a print ad or a television ad associated with the product the recall factor is very high. Hence creating customers for a long duration of time (brand loyalty) by playing on their subconscious memory and creating a brand-product map that will make the product stay in the users' mind.

It's key to note that Traditional Marketing might not always be the best for B2B(Business to Business) Marketing where a company is targeting to sell or engage in business with another company, especially the large companies, but it is definitely a great option for the B2C (Business to Consumer) marketing.

2.2 Types of Traditional Marketing:

Traditional Marketing can fall into several categories/sub categories and a company can choose to follow one or more of the listed strategies, this is a suggestive list and by no means exhaustive.

Print Advertising: This typically refers to advertising through newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures etc. The advertisements are placed in the print medium for a fee that the company pays, the cost of the advertisement could range from the size of print, placement of the advertisement and the frequency with which the advertisement is repeated over a period of time. It is important for a brand to set aside a budget that will tide them through a period of time, a newspaper advertisement that appears on the 5th page, will probably not catch a reader's attention, but an advertisement with bold graphics and a clear message on the front page or the last page of the newspaper will definitely catch more eyes and chances of the company conveying its message to the customer are increased manifold. While the world is moving more to the internet as a valid mode of marketing and they consider it more cost effective, newspapers and

print media are not going out of fashion anytime soon, just as eBooks have not replaced their printed counterparts, a print magazine/newspaper/flyer are not going out of fashion anytime soon! If you are looking for a local carpenter to fix that broken desk, chances are you will look for the latest edition of the yellow pages and find a number. Similarly, if you are an automobile brand talking about promotions and freebies, newspapers are still the key, a full page spread enticing the user with value for money returns will definitely get more attention than the same promotion running on the company's website. After all not everyone will visit the automobile website daily but the chances of them reading the newspaper daily are rather high.

What are flyers? The leaflets that often come in the folds of the newspaper and magazines are called flyers. This type of marketing is especially effective when targeting a small geographical area, more like a region in a town. Local vendors make use of this type of advertising to create awareness about products and services, most large companies do not use flyers to advertise their products. Unilever trying to launch a new toothpaste will not promote the product using flyers but a local bakery will definitely use them to spread the word and increase

footfalls. An eye-catching succinct flyer will definitely catch the readers' eye and register in the subconscious so the next time someone wants to order a cake they will think of the new bakery advertisement they read in a flyer. It is very effective for targeting small user groups and cost effective too. Since the cost of printing and distributing to a region are far less as compared to getting a spot on the television or a print out in the newspaper. In fact an advertisement hidden away on the 10th page of the newspaper is not likely to catch a users attention, unless they are looking for something specific but a nice flyer will definitely entice them.

A Magazine advertisement works the same way as a newspaper advertisement, the difference is the target audience, in a 'Good Housekeeping' magazine the readers are mostly women and homemakers and it would not be very useful to advertise men's shaving cream but products for women and children would definitely get viewership. The placement of the advertisement is also critical, if the article is about how to manage the clutter in the children's room a company working on storage solutions might just get a sale conversion with the advertisement. Magazines however are more restrictive since the reader base is limited but they provide the ability of making the

advertisements more creative and eye catching unlike newspapers since the quality of paper and print used in both medium is different.

The key to keeping a print ad simple and effective is to convey the message within the first 10 seconds, because beyond that the reader is not going to give the advertisement a second glance. They should be able to see the following right away- Product being advertised, value proposition, product highlights. Some of the most effective print ads are the ones that 'keep it simple'.

Mastercard Canada Women's Golf: Look at this simple picture, it caught my attention instinctively.



Panasonic 3D Television: The moment I look at this ad, I know it is talking about television and 3D



Fedex: It is indeed the window to the world, making it smaller



Television: The infiltration of television in our lives does not need much introduction, even a person who cannot read and write watches television! Television advertising continues to be one of the most persuasive and powerful tools of advertising- It spans all age groups right from children to adults, an advertising spot on television

almost never goes unnoticed. This is a very popular form of advertising in the large and medium sized companies since the cost of producing a television advertisement and the airtime cost can be daunting for a small company. A small grocery store in the neighbourhood will still send a flyer in the local news paper or secure a spot in the yellow pages but the chances of seeing them appear on a television advertisement are non existent. Television marketing or Infomercials are seen as a form of direct marketing where the company reaches out to the customer directly. A television offers the greatest form of creative advertising, the possibility of taking the audience anywhere you want and show them anything you want gives the advertiser immense power. It is not surprising then that television is sometimes referred to as the “King of Advertising”.

Advantages of Television Advertising:

- The penetration is much higher, it reaches a very large audience in a short span of time. An average person in America watches 5-6 hours of television in a day! The sheer number of viewers a short 30 second advertisement will reach is unmatched.

- The audience that a television advertisement reaches simultaneously is diverse and not restricted to a geographical location. Whether you are a housewife, or a corporate honcho, everyone watches television and will use a shampoo, what easier way to reach the entire spectrum than a television advertisement.

- The ability to convey a message using not only sight and sound, but motion and colour makes the impact manifold. With Print or email or even radio the only senses that are used are either sight or sound but this is the only medium where colour and motion can make all the difference in the impact it has!

- By customizing the airtime and channels where the advertisement is broadcast it is easy to segment the target users, a children's' health drink bring shown during the cartoon show will definitely catch their attention. Similarly beauty products during a daily soap will reach the target audience, in this case women in all walks of life.

Disadvantages of Television Advertising:

- There are hundreds of channels and unless the same advertisement is being aired across a whole lot of them, there are a chances that even though the

advertisement may be aired 30 times a day the viewer will miss it. They either surf channels to watch something else during a commercial break or they may not watch television during the timeslot when the the commercial is aired.

- Then there is a problem of advertisement clutter, too many brands shouting about their product. In the same short expanse of time there will be a Cocal-Cola advertisement and a Pepsi advertisement and then it becomes a game of which is more appealing creatively.

- An advertisement needs to be repeatedly, at different times to catch the viewers' attention; otherwise they come and go without leaving an impact on the viewer.

- The cost of creative production and airtime are very high. Planning and budgets to create a television commercial take much longer and need to have consistency in the story being told.

Having said that, Television continues to be one of the most glamorous forms of advertising today. A whopping 51% viewer watches the super bowl for the advertisements! After carefully considering your

budget, and working out a creative that will be impactful it would still be a preferred form of direct marketing.

Radio Advertising:

There is always strategy involved in advertising and the same holds true for Radio Advertising, though not as persuasive as Television Advertising or as far reaching as Print this form of advertising still holds good in a lot of target markets. The strategy used to produce a radio advertisement are very different from the one used for Print or Television since the whole concept revolves around only one medium of communication- audio and it is up to the presenter to pass on the message effectively to the audience.

Radio stations are mostly localized and this enables the company to take advantage of advertising to a select target audience, in a specific geography. Creating a radio advertisement can be a somewhat challenging task and it requires expertise for a company to be able to pass a message to the listener by using the right voice, tone, music and ambient sounds.

Radio advertising can still penetrate the areas of our lives that other forms of advertising cannot- when driving no one can watch television or read but you do

listen to the radio and it is unlikely that a listener will surf radio stations when a commercial appears. The cost of a Radio advertisement could be more or less than the Print commercial, depending on the size of the advertisements in both cases. However, it is definitely less than the cost of production and airtime cost of a television commercial.

There are other forms of traditional marketing such as direct mails and cold calls as well. These are not the most prevalent anymore but continue to penetrate some target areas. Direct Mailing is when mails are sent to a select target group with the offering or product details, however the chances of a customer seeing a flyer in a newspaper are far greater than them opening a letter and giving much importance to the advertisement in it.

Cold calls are not the best form of advertisement and the success ratio is relatively low, most people find sales calls unsolicited and annoying and will disconnect the phone within the first 5 seconds of realising that it is a sales call. These are part of the Traditional Marketing gamut but slowly losing ground to the other more modern forms of advertising.

2.3 Appropriate Application of Traditional Marketing:

With the advent of the Internet Marketing, brands today have a lot of ways to engage the audience and capture their attention. Most companies opt for a hybrid method of advertising where they use a mix of the Traditional and New Age Marketing Technologies to position their Brand in the market. Traditional Marketing has a higher cost associated with it, and most small companies work with the Internet to promote their products and brand but the Larger companies are still heavily reliant on the Traditional Marketing methods. Coca-Cola might have a promotion running on their website, and a viral video on YouTube, but they will still air their advertisements on prime television channels at prime timeslots.

It becomes important for the company to understand when and how to apply the traditional marketing methods, so as to gain maximum output.

Whether a customer understands the internet or not they will read the newspaper and they will watch television, in the areas where people are not big on the

internet Traditional Marketing Methods continue to be the favourite.

Other than the Demographics the key aspect to keep in mind is the age group of the target audience, children under the age group of 7 and seniors in the 60-85 age group are not likely to use the internet. Hence creating a campaign for childrens' toys on the internet is not going to be very productive, while the customer in this case might not be the consumer but a consumer is in a position to seriously impact the decision making process. Watching the new Hot Wheels or Barbie on television will definitely have a lot of parents getting requests for the new toy the children might see during a commercial break.

In most cases children under 6 years do not surf channels when a commercial appears and they are more likely to get impacted by the message the product is trying to convey. Similarly advertising a new knee support on Television might not be the most cost effective approach for the product, but it will get visibility when printed in the newspaper or sent as a flyer, senior citizens are more likely to spend a good part of the day reading the newspaper in significant detail. They are also more

trusting of the more traditional methods of advertising since they find them easier to relate to.

The method of advertising needs to find the fine balance between:

- Target Audience
- Demographics
- Marketing Budget
- Type of Product

Traditional Marketing Methods are all monologues, they include the brand conveying a message to the customer, and the customer does not have a role to play in the Marketing Process.

Blackberry is known to be the pioneer of Smartphones in the market, they started out somewhere in 1998 and were then recognised as the “All-in-one portable wireless device”. However with the advent of new Smartphones in the market Blackberry no longer continued to be the market leader and when the “Curve” was launched in 2008 the response was tepid. With Samsung, Apple, Nokia all fighting for their space in the market Blackberry needed to do something radical to ensure they stayed at the top of their game. There are

currently 14 million Blackberry users in 135 countries. They currently own 20% of the Smartphone market share, it is a substantial number but they needed to ensure that they sustain the same and continue the growth.

The target market is composed of middle and upper class buyers typically in the age group of 28-55, and most of them are professionals or industrialists. Blackberry now wanted to target the “Tweens” or the younger high school and college crowd to increase sales and change the mould from being just a corporate phone to something that could be more fun.

To achieve this Blackberry will need to first create a paradigm shift in its current product base and then price and promote it to educate the audience of the changes in the product line while deriving from the strong user base that strand testimony to the its brand loyalty. It is important for the brand to be able to build on the customer base and not lose its current market in the process of changing its image. A campaign had to be developed that would showcase the following:

- Image revamping
- Features of the new product

- Price competitiveness with existing brands in the market
- Sales Support
- Offers and Promotions for the target group

To achieve this Blackberry created advertisements that would run on television across channels and at different timeslots.

Radio advertisements that would play on stations that the 'tweens' were more likely to listen to, during shows that were more popular with the target group.

Print advertisements showing the expansion of the target segment and communicating the same through a compelling message.

Internet Marketing to make the message go viral and provide Discounts to users as an incentive for spreading the word. (We will talk about this in subsequent topics)

CHAPTER 3

3. Internet Marketing

3.1 Definition of Internet Marketing

So far we have discussed the Basics of Marketing, Traditional Marketing Techniques , it is now time to throw some light on the one form of Marketing that is taking the Advertising world by storm. It had redefined how consumers and brands speak to each other, it had enabled small business to speak about their products and make their presence felt in a marketplace that was otherwise dominated by the big players who could afford big Marketing Budgets and showcase their products on the large platform. The advent on Internet Marketing has not only redefined the dialog between the customer and the brand it has also paved a path for every brand to engage with the audience on common grounds.

In a market where every brand was shouting about their products, the new age marketing now invites the customers to be part of the marketing process. The monologue gave way to a dialog, the consumer that thus

far was only at the receiving end of the message got invited to become an integral part of the communication process, right from feedback on product design, to inputs about new product designs, to actually buying the product and then more importantly being a part of the review or feedback process. The Marketing conversation was now focussed around the customer, the entire Marketing Process right from Concept to execution was created keeping the customer at the heart of it.

With the growing age of the Internet, and it is not going down anytime soon, this became a relatively cheaper Marketing Channel as compared to the Television and Radio counterparts and soon gained popularity. It became easier to reach out to a more diverse market segment and invite them to be a part of the Brand, both the customer and the Brand welcomed the change with open arms.

To sum up the definition of Internet Marketing- Internet Marketing is the promotion of products and services online or through the internet. It is also known as eMarketing or internet advertising. Internet marketing is the business of both advertising and selling goods and services over the internet. It creates an amalgamation of the creative and technical aspects of marketing- Design,

Development, Advertising and Sales.

There are several channels of Internet Marketing, whether it is paid advertisement such as Banner ads, pay-per-click ads.

Driving traffic to the websites using Search Engine Optimization techniques, blog marketing.

Internet Marketing channels are ever changing and growing, it is important to keep abreast with the changes so as to gain maximum output. The average number of searches per day has catapulted upwards from an average of 9,800 in 1998 to over four billion in 2012 (source: <http://www.statisticbrain.com/google-searches/>). Think about how important search engine optimization has become and how intrinsic search is in the business of the Internet, in fact it would not be inappropriate to say that Internet usage would not be where it is today had it not been for Search Engines.

Today if person 'A' decides to buy a new television here are the steps they will follow:

- Search on the Internet for the product.

- Click on the relevant results (most likely on the first or second page of the search result)
- Look for comparative analysis on products across websites.
- Check start ratings and user views on the products.
- Agree on the product most suited to the buyer in terms of features and pricing.
- Check for a website that offers the best deal on the television
- Compare offline prices of the selected product. (chances are the prices on the internet will be cheaper)
- Order the television online

This is the typical buying process for a user today. However the journey of a consumer doesn't end here, once the product arrives more often than not a customer goes through the following:

- Join a forum or group with people owning similar product(s)

- Start participating in discussions about the product, whether it is asking questions or providing answers.

- Give feedback about the product on various platforms to make the buying process for other buyers simpler.

- Become associated with the brand by becoming an active spokesperson for the brand across various forums.

- However, if a customer is dissatisfied with the product, they can become vociferous about the product and generate negative publicity.

An internet user today performs information queries, searches, and buys on the internet. The entire process of Market Research to buy a product, compare options, make a selection and finally purchasing is one click away on the internet. Think of how powerful the internet is today, it has infiltrated into every single aspect of a customer's buying cycle and hence the impetus that brands need to lay on making sure that they are seen and heard at the right places and the right time is significant. The brand needs to be where the users are and engage them in a conversation that the customer wants to have.

More and more business today is conducted online, it is getting to the point where any product, big or small, needs to be part of the cyber world if they need to hold their market share or even create a market for themselves. Today even the local vendor will feature on the yellow pages online, because chances are that a customer will search the web for the nearest grocery store and if they have a website that showcases the latest offering, even better! Then the customer just needs to go to the website, make a selection of the items they need and lo and behold it will be delivered to their doorstep! Talk about making life more convenient.

The various types of Internet Marketing Strategies do not operate in silos and typically merge into one another so as to create a whole virtual world where the customer resides when talking about a brand or product. We will discuss the marketing strategies in the subsequent sections, but it is an expanding list and there is more that gets added all the time. With the Internet Marketing techniques both the product and the customer have discovered each other in a whole new way, so as long as there are people using the internet this form of marketing will continue to grow, with competition from none other than itself.

At one time, Internet Marketing primarily consisted of making a website, placing banner ads on other websites, this is no longer relevant and in another 5 years what is relevant today will also become obsolete. So the one thing to keep in mind is that business needs to keep updated with the changes in the virtual world and make sure they are where the users are, when things change as quickly as they do on the internet the brands need to think and function ahead, so they are prepared for the game changers. Business can be conducted, completely online, partially online or completely offline, for business that is conducted completely online there are a lot of brands that rely solely on Internet Marketing to generate traffic and make sales.

What are the primary objectives of Internet Marketing?

- Brand Positioning: Communicate the brand value to the users.

- Research: Use tools available online to research data about demographics, user preferences, historical data and needs.

- Selling: Sell products (such as amazon.com), services (Hospitals) or just marketing space

on their websites and portals. There are companies such as Facebook, where the user is not charged for creating an account but the revenue is generated from advertisement banners.

Whether it is a small company or a large conglomerate, they all use one form or the other of Internet Marketing. While the small companies might just use Internet Marketing for promoting their product/service, the Large and Mid sized companies will typically use a hybrid approach with Marketing efforts spanning the Traditional Marketing Methods and the Internet approach to Marketing. Whatever the size of the company and whatever the product type, there is always something that the internet can offer to the product in terms of marketing.

Let us take a brief look now at the various types of Internet Marketing.

3.2 Types of Internet Marketing

This is one world that changes faster than you can possibly imagine, there is something new to explore and invent all the time. So covering the entire gamut will not be

possible but we are going to touch upon some of the key aspects of Internet Marketing and talk about them a little more in detail, to better understand the concepts and channels used for Internet Marketing. It is worthwhile to understand how Internet Marketing has made it easier for the brands to reach out to the users and for the users to speak to the brand directly.

At a high level we can broadly classify the Internet Marketing Channels under the following heads

- **Search Engine Optimization:** This is essentially the process of increasing the ranking (improving visibility) of a website in the organic search results (unpaid results), which means improving chances of the website appearing in the top few results when a user searches for a relevant item using one of the several search engines. There are several definition of what SEO means, but the one thing that remains consistent is its importance for a marketer, to see your website succeed it is vital to make sure that the ranking is high. The science of SEO is targeted at improving the quality and quantity of leads to your website. Let us walk through a typical search scenario.

- User wants to purchase a new DSLR Camera

- User will open one of search engines such as Google, Bing or Yahoo.

- User will enter the keywords “DSLR Camera” in the search box.

- Search results show up, user will browse the first page and typically click on the results that show up as the first few.

- It is very rare for a user to browse to the second page and even lesser to the third page of search results.

- If a website shows up on the 4th page or more there is no chance that the user would have found the website and navigated it.

This explains why SEO and how it is important for a website’s ranking to be topmost for traffic to be diverted to the site. By using SEO you can ensure that your website is listed in the topmost pages of these results, so that maximum traffic gets diverted to the website. The website needs to be optimized for it to be SEO friendly and you may hire an agency that specializes in SEO to ensure that

the content on the website gets web preference. The key attributes to keep in mind are page titles,metatags, keywords and links provided on the website pages in addition to the Original content on the website.

How does the SEO work? Search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo have electronic “Spiders” or “crawlers” that browse the web content for links. The Spider will crawl the web and dig out relevant information, as soon as your page is loaded on the web the content on the page gets loaded into a database, and the index of the page is stored in the indexing table. As part of SEO the spider visits the page and then makes a breakdown of all the words on the page, it also saves all the links on the page. The first file that the spider looks for on a website is the “robots.txt” file, if your website does not have the file, the spider will not browse the website and your website will not show up on any of the search results.

Now consider this, a user searches for “DSLR Camera” on “Google”. The spiders will look for the keywords in the website content and if it finds the keywords in the website titles, metatags, hyperlinks or data the website shows up in the search results. The order of ranking will depend on the relevance to the search

keywords. I ran a DSLR Camera Search on Google and the top 5 results that showed up are:

www.flipkart.com/DSLR+camera

[Nikon SLR Camera - At Best Price in Market, 12% Off](#)

[Digital SLR Cameras - Nikon India Private Limited](#)

[Digital SLR Camera Price - MySmartPrice](#)

[Best DSLR: top cameras by price and brand | News | TechRadar](#)

The search generates results that are specific to my geographic location hence making the search more relevant to the user.

SEO is a continuous process and as more brands enter the market it is important to keep the elements that generate SEO up-to-date.

To sum it up the most important aspects that contribute to SEO are:

Keywords, Site links, Back-Linking (this entails making sure your website links appear on other sites), Content.

Google also offers two services for advertising on the content pages- Adwords and Adsense. Adwords is primarily for business. It associates key Adwords that people commonly search for with advertisements.

Adsense is used by businesses that allow advertisements to be placed on their WebPages and they are paid a fee each time someone visits the website advertised by clicking on the advertisement on their webpage. For example Facebook makes money by allowing advertisements to be placed on their pages and if a user clicks on the advertisement, Facebook gets paid by the business that advertised its link on the Facebook page, If there is a link to eBay on Facebook and I as a user click on it then eBay will pay Facebook a small fee each time a user click on the link.

- **Affiliate Marketing:** As the name suggests a company will hire other businesses or affiliates and they are then responsible for marketing the company's products. The affiliates in this case are paid for the services they render. The core idea behind affiliate marketing is to build a saprophytic relationship that is mutually beneficial to both the parties involved, the company that hires the affiliate is looking to increase sales and the company that gets affiliated is looking to make money by diverting traffic to the company that has hired it. The payment to an affiliate can be in the form of pay-per-click: Where the affiliate is paid a percentage of the value of each sale caused by the click, or they could just be paid per click

irrespective of whether or not the same resulted in a sale. Pay-per-lead is the method where the affiliate is paid for every lead generated. The last one is Pay-per-sale where the compensation to the affiliate is paid when a sale is made.

With the right affiliates a company can benefit greatly since they are now targeting the right audience by associating themselves with the right affiliates and return on investment is much higher. If the affiliate doesn't work the company doesn't pay so it doesn't stand to lose anything by using this marketing strategy, Apart from SEO this is one of the most efficient methods of Internet marketing. As a marketer it is important to pay considerable attention to the affiliates you chose as their credibility is quintessential to the success of you marketing efforts.

Amazon.com launched its associate program where it allowed books and publishers to place advertisement banners or textual links on their website homepage. This was launched back in 1996. When a user clicked on the banner or the advertisement and made a purchase on Amazon.com the affiliate was paid a commission. This became hugely popular and the Affiliate network of

Amazon is still considered to be one of the most successful programs.

Google also had a strong affiliate network, however they decided to retire the program and it is no longer in use, they now use the Adwords and Adsense programs to achieve similar results.

A company often builds a diverse portfolio of associates so that traffic from varied sources is routed to the website hence ensuring they cover a larger target audience. Affiliate companies have also evolved over time and some of them offer interesting features, for example find.com is an affiliate company associated with several business selling products online. As a user if I search for “Red Shoes” on find.com, the search results will show me product picture, product price and a link to the website against each result. Hereby making the online shopping experience for the user much easier a lot more convenient. The user now does not need to browse several sites to search for the perfect pair of shoes, and as a company associated with find.com they just increases the chances of a sale manifold. There is another growing trend of affiliate companies giving out coupons or rewards, So the affiliate company gives out rewards and coupons for the

companies associated with it. An example of one such site is couponcabin.com. If you are on the affiliate network of this company offering coupons and promotions, the promotions are listed on the Couponcabin website and a user typically generates the coupon code, clicks on the relevant coupon to get redirected to the company's website, where it can redeem the coupon code at the time of purchase to avail the offer. Couponcabin sorts the results based on the most popular coupons, Today's coupons etc , it also maintains a history of the recent searches by the user. Similarly a reward affiliates gives out rewards on behalf of the associated companies, so fatwallet.com is one such company dealing in reward programs. Now if you are a company associated with fatwallet.com and you are offering a 15% commission on each product sold. Fatwallet.com takes passes a percentage of that to the user thereby increasing the sales for the company and in the process making money for itself with each sale made.

There are Social Media Affiliates, and Blogger Affiliates which work in the same fashion where the affiliates direct traffic to social media sites and blogs respectively.

There are numerous affiliates out there and the number grows each day, but one thing stays constant the benefits that a company and affiliate can both reap by identifying the right affiliate and for the affiliate to get the right audience.

There are companies that specialize in providing affiliate services such as fatwallet.com and Couponcabin.com and then there are the others that make money by becoming affiliates but that is not the primary business model for the company. In either case a good affiliate-company relationship can prove to be highly beneficial to both the parties involved and this is one Internet Marketing tool that will continue to grow and evolve with more and more companies benefitting out of it.

Website Marketing: We have been discussing SEO and Affiliate programs but the one thing that is intrinsic to all these channels of marketing is the website. The importance of having a web presence have already been established hence the common denominator for Internet Marketing to be applicable is to have a website. Today when you talk about a business or company with a user the first question they are likely to ask is- "What is the Url for your website?" People need to be able to find your

company on the World Wide Web, if they don't chances are they will find the product or service with someone who does have a webpresence. When budgeting the Marketing efforts of the company make sure you keep some aside that will go towards building a great website, after all that will be the window that creates the very first impression on a user. A substandard website even for the best products is not likely to get many hits, they need to be informative, creative, crisp and succinct in delivering the message and the homepage should fit on a 1024*768 resolution screen without a scroll. The users have too many options, too little time and even lesser patience, so make sure that your website creates an impression in the first 30 seconds!

E-Mail Marketing: In simple terms it is the use of emails to market your product or distribute your marketing message. Email marketing can comprise of newsletters, follow up emails, emails with messages and promotions that the users will be interested in. Email marketing entails having a good database of current and potential customers and then sending out the message to the select group with information that they are likely to be interested in. What makes email marketing profitable is:

- Low Cost: The cost of distribution is cheaper than direct email.

- Speed: The message can be sent to a large distribution list with a single click

- Ease of use: It is something that can be done by the individual or the company and does not require expertise. Just a succinct message conveyed to the audience will do the trick.

- Push Message: The message reaches the audience without them having to make the effort to “pull” it.

- Personalized: Messages can be tailored to the target audience thus enabling a more personalized approach.

- Tracking: Tracking mail messages, how many people it reached, how many read it, what links were clicked on the email are all easy to trace.

However, there are some things to keep in mind when using email marketing:

- Spamming: The users can start perceiving you as a spammer if they receive unsolicited emails without their consent.

- People opting out of mailing lists: Some people find emails bothersome and want to opt out of the mailing lists, but that is expected more people will join and there will be some that leave.

- Delivery issues: If a person starts receiving too many marketing emails chances are that your email is landing in their junk mail folder and will eventually get deleted without being read.

These are just some of the downsides of email marketing but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages and this can definitely be used as a powerful add-on tool for the Internet Marketing strategies. Add-on since this cannot be the only Internet Marketing Method to make the process effective it needs to be substantiated with other marketing efforts for the message to reach the users.

Social Media Marketing: Using the Social Media sites for the purpose of marketing is collectively termed as Social Media Marketing and is one of the fastest and most powerful growing tools on the Internet. By making use of the Social Aspect of the web companies are able to reach out to a wider audience and interact with them on a personalized level.

There are several Social Media sites that are commonly used by companies, there is Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Blogs. Today it has become increasingly important to have a presence on the social media, whether it is a page on facebook or a twitter account. The type of social media used will depend entirely on the product or service the company is selling, while Facebook and Twitter might be common across the spectrum forums such as last.fm and flixtar will be for the more specific audience. A musician looking to create a profile is most likely to use last.fm and a filmmaker looking to promote a new movie is probably going to use youtube and flixtar.

Social Media is not only a place where brands can spread the word but it is the one forum where the brands and customers directly interact with each other. Picking a cue from something my friend posted on facebook as a complaint and tagged the service provider, within no time the service provider had established contact with her and resolved the issue. Brands today are cognizant of the fact that there is a big forum out there that is audience to the posts on social media and no brand wants to look bad, they use social media as a leverage to engage with the customer and ensure any issues are resolved pronto!

If you are looking to promote a new ad campaign then YouTube is the place to be, nothing like having a company video go viral to gain footfalls and have people talk about your company.

An excellent example of social media marketing on YouTube done well was Microsoft's response to the "I'm a Mac" commercials.

Microsoft engaged in a viral "I'm a PC" marketing campaign that centered around customers uploading their own "I'm a PC" video on YouTube. This type of customer interaction is at the core of Social Media Marketing and what makes it one of the most popular and efficient tools out there. Direct customer interaction by a brand like Microsoft makes a big difference! There are many such examples of brands using YouTube to engage with the customers by edging them to upload videos or clips about the topic being discussed. YouTube has paved the way not only for brands but also filmmakers and Artists to have access to a platform that covers a large market segment and comes at no cost other than the cost of producing the video, which could range from a professionally shot one to something produced at home!

The “Best Job in the World” video where the users were asked to create a short clip and post it to YouTube to apply for job of the Island Keeper in Queensland Australia went viral in no time and there were close to 34,000 people who applied for the job. The videos were used as the first point of short listing the selected candidates. The website got 8 million hits and generated 610 hours of viewing content on YouTube making the campaign a roaring success!

3.3 Strategic Application of Online Marketing:

Now that we have identified the various channels that can be used for internet marketing the next question that the marketer needs to ask is what is the most appropriate use of these resources available so as to make optimal use of them? A company can choose to use one or all of the various types of internet marketing depending on the budgets, company strategy, product/services being sold, what is the online presence that the company is trying to achieve? Of course some of them will remain intrinsic no matter what the strategy may be, if you are trying to use SEO then it is imperative that you have a

website that either sells the product, generates awareness about the product or service.

Online Marketing is not as expensive as Television, Print or face to face marketing, but it is just as effective and if used correctly can give astounding results.

Let us take some examples to better understand what to use and when to use it.

If you are a gastronome or a chef, you would want to do the following:

- Start a blog where you write about your experiences, feedback and post some tried and tested recipes. Make sure you use images extensively since food can be made to look appetizing by using the right kind of picture. It might be worth your penny to get a professional to take some shots.

- Create backlinks for your blog by affiliating with other bloggers so as to increase traffic to your blog.

- Create a twitter handle that resonates with the community and invite other chefs, bakers, restaurant owners and other who can contribute to your business. Post regularly, make sure you make the most of the 140 characters that twitter offers so as to make your posts both

appealing and interesting to the target audience. Ask a lot of questions so people engage in a conversation with you.

- Create a Facebook page where you can talk about the work that you are doing, post events that you might be conducting and showcase your talent.

- You might want to create a website if you are looking to make a sale, otherwise if you are a small time gastronome then you do not need to invest in a website right away, that can happen in time. A facebook page might initially solve the purpose until such time that you are ready to invest in getting a great website up and running. Creating a website needs expert guidance and intervention and it would be helpful to hire a company that specializes in creating just the right flavor for your target market, they need to also keep in mind Search Engine Optimization else the website will vanish without a trace in the sea of million other such websites.

- You can then choose to start creating videos of things that you cook, with clear guidelines and so people can refer to them. Creating a video professionally again comes with a cost and you might choose to defer this until a later time since this a nice to have but is not

necessarily the most important marketing tool available to you.

- For you it is important that you- go out there and connect with fellow gastronomes, foodies and critics. Showcase what your USP is and what sets you apart from the crowd.

- In fact it is not important for you to have a radio or television advertisement which means you can solely rely on what the Internet Marketing offers for promoting yourself and your talent. Depending on what the nature of your business will be you can choose flyers from the Traditional Marketing Strategies but those can easily be replaced by email marketing.

Now if you are a product company looking to sell a product both online and in a physical brick and mortar store what would you want to do:

- Create a website showcasing your product range, since you are looking to do sales online it will be an ecommerce enabled website. The website should be clear and crisp, the user should be able to find what they are looking for right away, if they need to click 4 times before getting to the desired page then the website design is flawed and the user will not be enticed to purchase online.

The whole experience needs to be simple and as less time consuming as possible, no one wants to spend 15 minutes to make an online purchase!

- Create a website with the right content, titles, meta tags, links and make sure that there are back links to the website so as to make the website Search Engine Optimized. You may need to work on the website ranking for a while to make sure that the website appears in the first 10-15 ranks.

- You should have a twitter account where your customers and target users can have a direct association with you and the brand.

- Similarly you should have a facebook presence so that the customers can feel a part of the brand by being on your facebook presence.

- Now one key strategy that you need to keep in mind is the use of Affiliates, they will help you create presence, spread the word and reach out to a wider audience. As discussed earlier the use for couponcabin.com is a good idea to promote any promotions that you may be running. Since this is a reputed affiliate your product will be placed alongside reputed products, this in itself will build credibility in the

users minds. Advertise by using banner and pay per click or pay per sell type schemes to the affiliates so as to increase traffic to the website.

- Use email marketing to keep the users abreast with the latest trends, happenings, sales, new products etc on the website so they are engaged. Often as a user I don't always visit Amazon.com but if there is something in my mail talking about Mother's Day discounts I am more likely to click on the link to the website and make a purchase.

- YouTube is not necessarily something that you need to focus on right now. So you can give that a pass.

Internet Marketing is not a one time effort and a company needs to stay involved whether it is ensuring ranking using SEO, email marketing, updating website, staying active on twitter and facebook or publishing blogs making sure that you are where the customer is and keeping the conversation with the customer and alive and active. If you do not respond to a customer or are not able to keep yourself in the debate around either your products or those of the competitors then the online world is not the place for you to be! Make sure that you are there to facilitate a conversation, comment and engage in a dialog

with your users this is what the whole online space is about and what makes it unique.

The internet had provided companies with a platform to take their products and services to new heights if they use the right strategy and approach. Even if a marketer chooses to engage a third party for online marketing the cost associated is minimal, hence the ROI is huge!

Personalization is what makes the whole internet experience unique make sure that no matter what forum you use, whether it is websites or other social media the user feels that the messages they receive or the communication they have is done keeping them at the focal point. After all Internet Marketing is all about the “Dialog” it is not a “Monologue”. With a good marketing platform soon the users will become your best marketers either by giving positive feedback or by word of mouth and that is how the whole eco system works in the online world- it is all about the USERS.

3.4 Advantages of Internet Marketing

It is important at this point to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the Online Ecosystem to make the most out of it for your marketing needs.

Let us first talk about the advantages of Internet Marketing:

- **No Geographical Boundaries:** The world wide web does not have a geographical boundary and hence the message that you send out using the Internet does not restrict itself to a geographical location or region. Your face is the Internet and you can make optimal use of it by not physically being present with the user yet making them feel like they are having a one on one conversation with you. Multitasking becomes a cakewalk!

- **Greater Reach:** If you are a company looking for buyers or sellers, you do not need to physically meet them, business can be conducted with overseas companies with little or no financial loss resulting from unnecessary travel.

- **Cost Effective:** Unlike the traditional marketing methods this form of marketing is minimal in

terms of the cost, the amount of money a large company spends on just creating an advertisement let alone buying airtime could well be the amount it spends on Online Marketing in 5 years! Today a small company can easily advertise itself to the larger audience because of the low cost involved. The Internet is a forum used by people in all walks of life and hence it has provided a platform to the large, mid and small companies alike to showcase their products and services to a large audience without making a dent in the budget. By making use of the low cost marketing involved a lot of companies are able to pass the benefit to the user. Take the travel industry for example, it is cheaper to buy a ticket online since the company is not paying to an agent they can pass the benefit to the customer in the form of cheaper tickets and deals. The same goes for a lot of products where the cost of the product is cheaper online than purchasing it from a physical store. This boosts sales and results in happy customers.

- Availability: The world of the internet never sleeps or shuts down, if I need to make a purchase in the middle of the night, I can do it without having to wait for the store to open its doors at 9am the next morning. Your marketing efforts can be viewed by the users anytime

of the day across the globe, it is like running a marketing campaign that never sleeps or ends for as long as it is available on the internet.

- **Content Availability:** The amount of information that can be passed to a user is limitless, there is no restriction on how much information can be provided to those who seek it. The world of the internet is non intrusive in the sense that it has all the information available to those who need it without the data being in your face and overwhelming. A Print ad or a television ad is limited in the amount of information it can provide the users which is not the case with Internet Marketing.

- **Increase in Return on Investment:** The ROI is greater since the marketing spend is reduced and the target audience is increased manifold as compared to the traditional methods of marketing.

- **Limitless Possibilities:** A user may reside in a particular geography and hence for a small company the access to markets outside was limited earlier but today the world is a much smaller place where everyone can talk to everyone else without the restrictions imposed by geographical boundaries. Expanding target markets has become much easier for the smaller companies since they

do not have to invest in actually setting up a physical presence in a particular geography to sell in that region.

The internet is free of the restrictions of age, language, boundaries, ethnicity and company size, everyone is welcome to use the every growing community of the Internet Users. They can be users, customers, target customers, sellers and buyers, there is something for everyone out there. The Internet is a very powerful medium and each one of us using it has something to gain from it which is why Internet Marketing is one for the fastest growing trends today. The benefits are manifold and the results almost instantaneous.

CHAPTER 4

4. Developing a Marketing Plan

4.1 Market Research

We have discussed the basics of Marketing and two primary categories of Traditional and Internet Marketing. What are the key contributors to making the decision about the type of marketing strategy to be used? This is where the Marketing plan comes into play, it defines the outlines that guide the Marketing strategy of a company. The first part of drawing up a marketing plan is the Market Research, this is critical to the success of a plan since it defines and draws up the acceptance of a product or service in selected demographics.

Market Research will determine or identify the population that is more likely to use the product or service, what portion of their income are they willing to apportion to the product, what is the age group most likely to purchase the product, what is the mode of purchase and many such variables. Based on the data collected from the Market Research a company will identify what we have been referring to as the “Target Audience”. This is a group

of customers that is most likely to purchase the product or service, market research will also identify what is the frequency of the purchase by the target audience and what is the overall level of customer satisfaction. Identification of the target audience is sacrosanct to any marketing effort since it identifies the set of people that the advertising efforts need to target and engage with. If a brand is trying to sell a high end television there is a certain income group likely to buy the product and all marketing endeavours should be targeted towards those people, the marketing should not be targeted at the lower income group since the likelihood of them making a purchase is nonexistent.

A thorough market research will help the company focus time, energy and resources on a select group. It helps the companies develop new products and product lines that they understand will be received well by the audience hence enabling business to stay in tune with the wants and needs of the customers and being able to identify what will and what will resonate with the audience.

To sum up the definition of Market Research- "Marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information - information used to identify and define

marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the methods for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes, and communicates the findings and their implications."

American Marketing Association (AMA) - Official Definition of Marketing Research

How is Marketing Research or information gathered?

- Identify and define the problem: Clearly understand what is the research aimed at, so a problem definition is the first and most important part of the research process. A clear statement would be- What type of cellphone is most used by teenagers? This will help a cellphone provider target the right audience and build a product that will be accepted by the group.

- How is data collected? Are you conducting a survey to collect the data from a group of people? Raw data can be collected by telephonic surveys or email surveys, there are also websites that conduct surveys.

Once the survey collects raw data it needs to be categorized into intelligent information that is used by the company to make informed marketing decisions.

- Sampling Method: What is the sampling method that the company wants to use? Sampling data means identifying the true set of data that is representative of the target audience. Data Sampling methods can be classified into Random Sampling, Systematic Sampling or Stratified Sampling. In the random sampling method the data is assigned equal probability and selection is random. A typical example would be putting numbers in a bowl and selecting random slips to make the sample data. The systematic selection method is a derivative of the Random sampling method. Let me explain this by using an example, let us assume that there are 100 distributors of a product, and we need to pick a sample of 20 for the purpose of our research, how will we identify and select which 20 to use. We will divide 100 by 20 to get a sampling fraction of 5. What we will now do is make a selection of every 5th distributor from the list of 100 distributors to make our sample set of 20. This is not a purely random selection since there would be some logic applied to creating the listing of distributors but is fairly random to give us a taste of the sample subset from the

larger framework. In the Stratification method of sampling the entire population being used for the purpose of research is broken into smaller sub sections called the “strata”. Then there is a random selection made from each strata that contributes to the final set of sample data that will be used for the purpose of research. The criteria used for making the ‘stratum’ could be variable and ranges from age, income, demographic, sex, race, prior possession of a commodity etc. Let us assume a company wants to launch a new universal remote for televisions in the market, they would want to create the stratum based on how many current users own a television. The stratum size is defined based on the size of the data and then the total sample size required will determine how many samples are picked from each stratum.

- Data Analysis: Once the data is collected, and sampled the next question is how will the marketer analyse this data for the data to be intelligible to the company? What is the level of accuracy needed in the analysis and what particular tools can be used for data analysis? There are several tools available in the market that aid in market analysis and chances are that the marketer will choose one of these to come up with the most accurate and intelligible data analysis for the

company. There are firms known as tab houses specializing in market research, a company can also choose to avail of their services and not just rely on tools to analyse research data. Some of the most popular analysis tools are: STATISTICA, KNIME, Rapid Miner and Salford Systems.

- Define Timeframe and Budget: Before embarking on the Market Research journey two most important things to define are the timeframe in which the research activity needs to be completed and what is the budget apportioned to the Research Activity. Once you have the answers to these two questions you then start working backwards to define the fine prints. If a company is looking to launch a product in 12 months, the production time is 6 months; this leaves us with 6 months of which they will need at least 3 months for marketing and production of the completed product. So the first 3 months will have to be distributed among market research, market plan and pre production activities.

- Writing Final Report: Once the data is collected, analyzed and cleansed of any erroneous results the final step would be to draw out the Report that will ultimately give the synopsis of the market research

activities. The final report will comprise of Charts and Tabular data collated after analysis of the samples , diagrammatic and pictographic representation of the results and finally a synopsis that will lead to a decision making process. If my report on the cell phone usage by teens in a particular region lists the primary problem as short term battery life then the company looking to manufacture cell phones understands that the one thing that will definitely set them apart from the competition is a cell phone with longer battery life. The primary objective of the report other than providing statistical data and analysis is to steer the company towards making informed decisions based on the data presented.

The target market changes and evolves all the time, hence market research is not a one time activity it needs to be interspersed through the lifespan of the product. The purpose of market research is not only to launch new products, it can be used to identify problem areas, create and identify possible upgrades and changes to existing products, to name a few. Market Research, irrespective of what outcome it aims to achieve needs to be systematic, the steps to be followed will be critical to the validity and authenticity of data. Also market research that plans to span long durations might not be as effective, as data

collected 9 months ago might not be relevant especially if we are trying to understand the biggest problem area that teens face in their current cell phone; by the time your product hits the market with increased battery life, chances are that there would already be many such in the market after all the completion is also doing their market research! Systematic, clear, timely market research can prove to be the whetstone on which the success of a product can be based.

4.2 Drawing the Marketing Plan

Simply put the plan put together to achieve marketing objectives is what we call a marketing plan. Having gone through the research process, the next logical step is to put the outcome of the research into a plan for further action basis which the company will design their entire marketing process. The Marketing plan needs to be a detailed, thoroughly researched and well written report that can be used to make marketing decisions. It is one of the most important documents produced by the Marketers, it not only explains what the company has done in the past but it also explains the future plans of the company. Irrespective of the size of the company the

Marketing plan continues to be a very important document. If a company is looking for funding, the single document that will define whether or not the company will get the desired funding depends on the data in the Marketing document.

To summarize the marketing plan aims to achieve the following:

- Get the Marketing team to internalise and understand past marketing plans and the outcome of those.
- Get the Marketing team to look around and see how the market is currently basis which they will create the marketing plan for their company.
- It sets the goals for future endeavours and the provides the basis for subsequent marketing plans.
- Should be persuasive enough to get desired funding, if any.

A Marketing Plan can be primarily created to achieve one of the following:

- Understand how the company will address the competitive marketplace.

- How the day to day operations will be implemented and supported.

A Marketing Plan is typically an annual document needed to plan the activities for the coming year by the company. If the company is planning to introduce something new in the marketplace, introduce new strategies or upgrade existing products all these decisions will be derivatives of the data in the Marketing Plan.

There is no fixed format to developing a marketing plan and the content varies from one marketer to another, however the loose guidelines on which any market plan will be based remain consistent. A good marketing plan should cover the following:

- Purpose: This probably will be the most important topic to decide upon since without a defined purpose the marketer is like a headless chicken. If you think of a marketing plan as the roadmap then the purpose is the destination.

- Marketing Objectives: What are your marketing objectives? The objectives should be forward looking and have a concrete basis of what your current situation is, what are your strengths and weaknesses and what is the current marketplace in which you are

operating? The Marketing Strategy should marry into the overall Business Strategy of the company so the Purpose mentioned earlier will actually be one that is common with the Business Strategy.

- Situational Analysis: This essentially is the SWOT analysis, this is essentially needed to understand the objectives clearly keeping in view the factors both internal and external that will influence it. SWOT stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. So what are your key strengths, what are the possible weaknesses, what are the opportunities in the market and lastly what are the possible threats.

- Target Market: We have been repeatedly discussing Target Markets since they will form the key that defines that success of a product. There is no one message that fits all market segments, so based on the Target Market the message needs to be adapted to make it effective. Segmenting and identifying the target market enables the marketer to better utilize the resources by using the correct tone and promotional message basis the target market. If the company is selling a new hair colour which is more expensive than its completion, but promises better results, they need to target the urban middle aged

market so the message needs to be aimed at them and not the teens or youth. If the company will use television as a marketing channel then they need to make sure that the models used in the campaign come across as fashionable without being in your face.

- Budgets, Performance and other Strategies: This section will essentially talk about the 4 P's of Marketing, the product, its price, promotion and place. While the description might not fully encapsulate the effort that will go into detailing the section, this will be one of the most detailed part of the marketing plan since it aims to address the very backbone of the whole marketing effort. If the Marketing plan is for a Haircare product, it will talk about the product itself, what is the suggested price, what marketing strategies will be used for promotion and what is the target market where the marketing efforts will be streamlined. It will discuss the budgets for the product, what is the suggested amount to be apportioned to various activities, whether it is research, marketing, pre-production, production, distribution or post-sales support.

- Tracking and Closure: How will you track the various activities detailed out in the marketing plan? Each of the action items in the marketing plan need to have

measurable units against which they will be measured for success. Tracking a plan and its effectiveness helps the company keep on top of the overall evaluation process. If you are unable to track the marketing process then you are not marketing!

Let us take a simple exam for a marketing plan and give high level pointers on the various components of the marketing plan. Let us take for example company “XYZ” looking to create a website for their jewellery brand.

- Purpose: The purpose of the Marketing Plan is to help XYZ create a website for their jewellery brand. The website will have an ecommerce platform to enable online sales. The website needs to have beautiful imagery so as to entice the users to make an online purchase, if the user wishes to exchange the product there needs to be an exchange policy in place so as to gain user confidence.

- Marketing Objectives: The company needs to be able to position itself in a marketplace where purchasing jewellery is still a thing done in brick and mortar stores and people are sceptical of making jewellery purchases online. The company has been in existence for some time, so there is a steady clientele but they have not

explored or tapped the online market and they need to be able to expand the market to other areas instead of just localized clients by driving traffic to the website.

- Situational Analysis: The company has great products, the existing store is doing well but the current customers are from the local geography and with the increasing cost of real estate sales boost needs to come from the online store. There is a great product, but no online presence, there is a clientele but they are not all active users on the internet. The company does not currently have a great delivery network in place and this has been deferred to when overseas sales start picking up. The company can use a network of affiliates to promote the website and encourage online sales.

- Target Market: The current market is mostly adults in the age group of 30-65. However with the online presence the designs are being created for young adults who are more likely to use the internet to make a purchase, lighter designs have been created so that they appeal to the young executives and do not burn a hole in their pocket.

- Budgets, Performance and other Strategies: The current budget allocated to the entire marketing effort

is not very large and the website creation and promotion has been apportioned a budget of \$100,000. This includes putting together a team that will manage after sales, an online support cell for customer helpline and building the distribution network for overseas deliveries. However this does not include the cost of the products. The products will not always be available in stock the customer need to be prepared for a wait time of 2-3 weeks for delivery thereby reducing the cost associated with dead stock. The marketing strategy for the website needs to be aggressive, both traditional and internet marketing will be used. There will be television advertisements, email marketing to existing and potential customers offering them promotional schemes. In the internet marketing spectrum there will be Affiliate Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Website Design and SEO.

- Tracking and Closure: Marketing is being outsourced to the specialists in the fields and tracking the success of each marketing effort is their domain as well. A report will be provided to XYZ at the end of each week detailing out the sales made using each marketing effort. There will be a monthly report providing projections for the coming months and comparative analysis of the sales made with those projected in the previous month. The

website will be up and running in 6 months and the total cost of developing and marketing should be recovered within 1 year for the website to be a viable sales option.

4.3 Application of the Marketing Plan

A Marketing Plan is something you should be able to interact with on daily basis. It is the one source that should have the answers, if not, then at least a direction as to where the answers might lie. A Marketing plan can be as detailed or as simple depending on the business of the company and its marketing needs.

A Marketing Plan will comprise of clearly defined next steps, basis which the company will use the marketing plan as a guidelines for basing their business and marketing decisions. The next steps are the action items that when performed will lead to the accomplishment of the objective defined at the onset of the marketing plan document. Marketing efforts get restricted by several factors such as budgets, staff availability, time constraints so it is important to understand priorities of the action items. Which are the critical ones, the ones that are nice to haves and the ones that can be deferred to

another time, with this knowledge the marketer is equipped to make weighted decisions.

- Prioritize the marketing strategies clearly, rank them in order of importance. The prioritization should be based on what next steps are critical to the company's overall strategic goals. If the prioritization is not clear oftentimes time and effort gets spent on tasks that might not be critical and in the process you might run out of time, resources and finances by the time you get to the critical tasks.

- Be clear about the possible things that can hinder the marketing plan. If you are looking to create a website, the factors of time, research, vendor selection etc need to be considered before putting in the next steps for the marketing plan.

- Develop a Marketing Calendar for the year, this will set clear guidelines with defines roadmaps about when which tasks need to be completed. This also takes care of interdependencies, since dependent tasks need to be managed meticulously, the succeeding task cannot be completed prior to the completion of the predecessor and a delay in the preceding task can often lead to overall project delays caused by the ripple effect. If you are

planning a marketing campaign for the new soft drink to be launched, make sure that you have a budget mentioned against each task and as the task gets completed, subtract the actual amount spent so as to provide a clear view of the remaining budget at all times. So, if there are management decisions to be made in case the budget is overshooting they can be done well in time. Picking a cue from the soft drink marketing campaign, as the subject of the marketing plan. Here is how the calendar will look at a macro level:

- Research Marketing Strategies
- Finalize Marketing Strategies
- Hire Creative Agency
- Set the tone for the Marketing Campaign with the Agency
- Create the graphics that will be consistent across marketing channels
- Create the Television advertisement.
- Finalize television channels and spot where/when commercial will be aired
- Create Print advertisement

- Finalize magazines and newspapers it will appear in
- Finalize the frequency of the print advertisement.
- Select vendor for creating website
- Provide copywriting for the website
- Finalize hosting and domain for the website
- Create the website
- Advertise the website using social media and print media
- Launch the Website
- Drive traffic to the website

This is just the beginning of the list. The next step is to make a calendar and a dependency matrix. Once that is in place apportion the finances for each task that is measurable monetarily. Only when these things are in place should you start working on the tasks mentioned in the marketing plan as per the marketing/task calendar created.

- Once the tasks have been suitably broken down into micro level actions, it is important that each task can be measured for success or failure, if a task is not measurable then it is not a complete task. Make sure that you gather all the necessary material needed for the completion of each task. Sometimes during the course of execution there could be certain tasks and items that need to be postponed or cancelled owing to whatever reasons- maybe research proved that the target audience will not react positively, or the budget changed and the frills needed to be dropped from the marketing plan. Whatever the reasons there could be possible changes to the Actions Items that were detailed out in the Marketing Plan during the marketing process and there might be situations when the dependency matrix and the Marketing calendar need to be reworked. Always make sure that you have the time and resources buffered for such contingencies, which means there should always be a plan in place for when things don't always go as per plan!

- Once you have the Tasks planned and structured the next step is to make sure that the right people are assigned to the right job, you can choose to complete tasks in-house, if you do not have the expertise in house then you can choose to outsource certain tasks, or

hire a third party to complete them for you. You might need to hire people to complete certain tasks; all this needs to be done well in time so that before the due date for the task arrives the necessary items critical to success of the task are completed. If you are starting on the Website Creation part of the Marketing Plan, before you start deciding on the possible layout and content, the first step will be to decide whether you will develop the website inhouse, if yes then do you have the expertise to do it. If not, then you will need to hire the required talent. You also need to consider whether the cost involved in hiring a new team is viable, if it is just to make one website, chances are the answer will be no. Assuming you go ahead with a vendor to design the website, the plan for completion of the website was 6 months and the print advertisement was only supposed to be published once the website was ready since it has references to the website URL. Now, if the website is delayed by another 2 months, you may need to re-plan the marketing timelines for the Print advertisement.

- The one thing that can totally throw the entire marketing plan out of gear is the Budget, there can be no marketing activity that comes free of cost, even if there are no explicit costs involved there are hidden costs,

whether it is use of resources or material, even research there is a cost involved. Budgets can change, constraints can come in and decisions might have to be made to scrap the whole marketing exercise in extreme cases. Careful consideration should be given to the procurement of budget and ideally this should be completed even before the commencement of the next steps in the marketing plan. It is always advisable to work on what you have at hand rather than create a plan, spend time and energy on the possibility of when you will have it! In some cases the finances are based on payments expected at a future date and the marketing plan is created on that basis that, assuming the worst case scenario the tasks that do not require big budgets or can be completed with the budget at hand should be started first. So that by the time you get to the tasks that will need big budgets, you already have the finances in hand.

- Most well planned activities fall apart owing to lack of finances, always plan for the achievable, there are lots of fancy things that can be achieved with big budgets but its key to work with the constraints and devise a strategy that works keeping those in mind. Not everyone had the budget for a Television campaign, but the other less expensive advertising strategies can be used just as

efficiently to address the target audience with a compelling story.

- While creating the dependency matrix, in addition to the dependent tasks being placed in order of occurrence, there will also be parallel activities that can happen independent of each other. These are significant aspects of the plan since they will determine the overall impact on the timeline for completion of the marketing plan action items in the defined time period. All Marketing Plans are for a given period of time (typically annual) hence they do not come with endless time frames, if they did then they would not be accountable or effective. A task can be tracked for success only if there is a timeframe for completion. When planning parallel tasks they should not have any dependent activities, ideally even the team members working on the tasks should not be common, unless the expanse of time is planned keeping percentage allocation in mind. In which case the time taken to complete a task increases as factor and that does not really work in reducing the overall time taken. In the ideal situation the resources, materials, decisions should all be independent of one another. Once the marketing strategy is decided, the channels frozen, budgets apportioned, creative tone and concept finalized the team working on

the television advertisement and website creation can easily work in parallel since they have the creative guidelines to be used and that is the input they need to start working on their respective pieces without having to wait for the other one to complete.

Having said that, there are many implicit and explicit aspects to auctioning a marketing plan and they can vary from one company to the other. I have tried to touch upon the key aspects that determine success of the Marketing plan for a general audience.

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