THE DIGITAL MARKETING LANDSCAPE

CREATING A SYNERGISTIC CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

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The Digital Marketing Landscape: Creating a Synergistic Consumer Experience

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Description

The field of marketing has seen an evolution in how brands communicate with consumers, how consumers communicate with brands, and how consumers communicate with one another. Digital technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, social media, and email contribute to what is known as the digital marketing landscape. Digital marketing offers unique ways to meet consumers where they are, engage with potential and existing consumers, capture the voice of the consumer; allow consumers to be part of a brand narrative.

This book is geared towards both students and professionals looking to explore the interconnectedness of digital technologies for marketing and branding purposes. This book offers an overview of the digital marketing landscape and how the various elements of digital can work synergistically. When the power of an integrated digital strategy is optimized, both consumers and brands benefit.

The Digital Marketing Landscape serves as a practical guide for both students and professionals in a variety of settings. Readers will become familiar with terminology, understand how the different areas of digital marketing connect and work together, and gain the knowledge needed to generate valuable and actionable managerial insights for more informed decision-making.

Keywords

digital marketing; social media marketing; SEO; SEM; PPC; e-mail marketing; content marketing; branding; blogging; online experience

Contents

Reviewers

"A brand is nothing but a promise delivered. Marketing has evolved dramatically, becoming even more present in the digital age. Dr. Jessica Rogers's book serves as the perfect guide for anyone looking to understand the intricacies of branding, marketing, and how each brand delivers on their promises to their customers." **—Jeffrey Hayzlett, Primetime TV & Podcast Host, Speaker, Author and Part-Time Cowboy**

"It's never been more essential, and more difficult, to create a delightful, integrated, end-to-end experience for your customer and consumers of your brand. Dr. Rogers's book, 'The Digital Marketing Landscape', is a welcome and lucid manual to accomplishing that critical goal. This book is an important and critical reading for those who realize that how you sell/market is just as important as what you sell/market." **—Isaac Moche, Senior Manager of Academy Programs, HubSpot**

"Rogers has provided a compelling 31,000-foot view of marketing in the digital age. As an educator in this area, she is constantly exposed to new ideas and has a responsibility of sharing these ideas with her students, as is clearly demonstrated in this book. She has several key takeaways that resonated with me, to include:

- *The idea of "digital marketing" has evolved over time and has now become an umbrella term to describe the process of using digital technologies to acquire customers and build customer preferences, promote brands, retain customers, and increase sales.*
- *A good marketer knows who their target customers are inside and out.*
- *The combination of being a marketing expert who also encompass some technical skills associated with digital will become a prerequisite for employment within the field.*

These are just a few of the many "nuggets" in this book. It is a quick read that is definitely worth your time." **—Jeff Sheehan, Thought Leader, Sheehan Marketing Strategies**

"This is a perfect book for anyone who wants to improve their understanding of digital media, email and SEO to apply to a business. Learn how to harness the power of technology and social media to solve problems and reach your goals." **—Dr. Nancy Richmond, Professor & Consultant**

"Too many businesses take a scattered approach to digital marketing and don't leverage the available opportunities. "The Digital Marketing Landscape: Creating a Synergistic Consumer Experience" takes the reader through a comprehensive and synergistic plan to cut through the noise and get results. In a world of shiny object syndrome, this book puts all the puzzle pieces into place and ensures you are focusing on the right things. A worthwhile read!" **—Melonie Dodaro, Author of LinkedIn Unlocked**

"The Digital Marketing Landscape is an accessible while advancing text. You'll get the macro landscape of marketing, but also get tangible ways to apply to specific platforms and tools. I loved how Dr. Rogers approached creating a synergistic consumer experience through the grounding of human connection, authentic content, and truly knowing your community." **—Dr. Josie Ahlquist, Digital Leadership Author, Consultant, and Speaker**

"In this ground-breaking book, Dr. Jessica Rogers deftly presents various frameworks that help the reader better understand how digital technologies will continue to underpin successful marketing and branding strategies over the next decade. The Digital Marketing Landscape should be on every marketer's desk, from the Fortune 500 CMO to the aspiring intern." **—Kent Huffman, CEO & Fractional CMO, DigiMark Partners**

"Your brand's digital footprint may be more important than your logo, and it changes daily. All of the digital pieces of a marketing effort must work together to advance a brand and customer awareness. Whether you call it the "digital marketing landscape," "D-Marketingscape," or "D-IMC," Dr. Rogers has provided a practical guide to orchestrating the digital efforts of a company and

brand. This book is an actionable resource for brand managers, marketers, growth hackers, and students of marketing…" **—Gary R. Schirr, Associate Professor, Radford University**

"A must read for anyone in marketing." **—Steve Olenski, The CMO Whisperer**

"Rogers has created a practical roadmap for today's marketing challenges. Driven by a focus on marketing's role as architect of an experience, this book plots the intersections between digital communication assets and the creation of awareness and brand equity in the marketplace. But unlike discussions preoccupied with one-off viral moments, this is a volume for everyone aspiring to create an aligned strategy that delivers lasting value, thereby inspiring action and loyalty." **—Eric R. Fletcher, Founder/CEO, Eric Fletcher Consulting**

"Dr. Jessica Rogers distills the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities for the modern marketer to create robust relationships with their audience, through digital avenues. This book is a useful tool for learners as well as marketing practitioners and business owners of all sizes looking to build their brand." **—Dr. Cali Morrison, Certified Professional Coach, Founder, Creative Synapse, LLC and Interim Dean, Center for Professional & Continuing Education, American Public University System**

"In The Digital Marketing Landscape, Rogers integrates digital modes and technologies to demonstrate to readers how these modes can operate synergistically. As a practical guide, the book offers much needed advice and prescriptions for students and marketing professionals alike." **—Dr. Tracy Tuten, Author of Social Media Marketing**

Introduction

As we go through our day-to-day lives, both professional and personal, it is imperative to always be learning, and to always be improving so we can be our best selves. In my role as an educator, I am able to see first-hand how learning is not only essential for continued growth and fulfillment, but it also provides learners with a sense of ownership over their own journey. Learning can also, in many cases, change the trajectory of one's life and impact future generations.

It is my hope that this book will provide some direction to the reader, likely business professionals seeking to digest the main components of the digital landscape to better understand the intersection of the various platforms, and to be better able to communicate with those who work within the digital landscape. Or, a future business leader exploring the facets of digital marketing, with hopes of discovering a passion and potential career path. Regardless of what prompted you to pick up this book, this brief read will provide you with a crash course on the various platforms and tools digital marketers should be familiar with. As you read, pay particular attention to how the elements can work together. Think about yourself as a consumer, and how an integrated and strategic approach may influence your purchase decisions and overall consumer behaviors. Each chapter offers a few learning objectives to guide your thoughts as you reflect on the readings. At the end of the text, you will find additional information surrounding associated certifications that will further support your learning and add to your employability.

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (American Marketing Association 2020). So therefore, it stands to reason the idea of focusing on the value creation in our digital efforts is a key component of marketing efforts. Through the strategic process of creating content and sharing content as marketers via digital platforms, we are creating relevance and value. Although

this may come in a variety of forms, the focus on the creation of value is paramount. As you read about the various digital platforms, players, and tools, how can you create value for your customers? What do your customers deem as valuable?

I hope to inspire you to embark on your own digital exploration and begin to utilize digital more fully to tell your brand's story, while also allowing the consumer to contribute to the narrative. It is my hope that this text will spark new and innovative ideas on how you can utilize digital tools more effectively if you are already involved in some form of digital marketing, or to use digital in new and innovative ways within your industry.

CHAPTER 1

The Digital Brand Experience

Learning Objectives

- Understand how organizations promote brand awareness and differentiation through current digital technologies.
- Understand strategic marketing approaches for optimizing exposure of brand narratives across digital platforms.
- Explore the idea of Inbound Marketing and how digital supports this method.

The field of marketing has seen an evolution in how brands communicate with consumers, how consumers communicate with brands, and how consumers communicate with one another. Digital technologies such as mobile phones, the Internet, social media, and e-mail contribute to what is known as the digital marketing landscape. The digital landscape goes above and beyond what the traditional forms of communication such as print, radio, and TV are able to contribute to building brands and impacting interest (Kannan and Li 2017). Digital offers the ability to reach customers to promote products and services, while also providing significant value to customers, and contribute to branding efforts. Digital marketing has evolved, and the associated digital technologies are creating value in new ways through new customer experiences, through new types of interactions, and through a series of new adaptive touch points (Kannan and Li 2017). Given its unique ability to engage consumers and communities, digital can be a very powerful tool for not only building brands, but strengthening relationships as well (Aaker 2015). Digital is no longer future state; it is here and now. A well-crafted digital marketing strategy will help an organization build a strong online reputation, increase brand awareness, encourage traffic, and lead to conversions that

will result in increased customers, sales, growth, and success (Ahuja and Loura 2018).

When you think about the components of the digital marketing landscape, consider your daily interactions with the many marketing messages from the perspective of a consumer. For example, you are in the market for a pair of new running shoes. Your first inclination may be to Google "running shoes for high arches." This search will result in several suggested articles, advertisements, or other content ranging from branded material to unbranded material from this search. You may then read several articles associated with the search, be pulled toward retailer sites, or even be exposed to information that will alter your initial search. The typical consumer will read reviews on retailer websites, read blog posts and other articles related to the purchasing decision, ask friends via social media, and they may even be doing this all from a mobile device. Should the consumer be performing these searches and research via mobile device, there's also the opportunity to simply complete the process and make a purchase with a click of a button.

In this very rudimentary example, the components of the digital marketing landscape create an "experience" for the consumer. All of these elements (websites, images, social media content, mobile application content, and more) should portray the same brand image in the consumers' mind and convey the same marketing messages, while also contributing to overall branding efforts. Imagine the various elements of digital marketing technologies as a piece of a puzzle. Each piece fits with other pieces (hopefully seamlessly) to result in a cohesive picture.

While the basic principles of marketing have remained the same, the ways in which we accomplish marketing goals have seen significant advancements in recent years. Among the many challenges for marketers today is the creation and retention of loyal customer groups (Aaker and Marcum 2017). The digital landscape of today adds many complexities to brand building such as ever-changing media, on-demand expectations, consumers now having more control, the difficulties associated with effective integration of messages, and the subsequent impact on delivering on brand customer experiences. Marketers must also compete with more "noise" than ever before to reach consumers. The consumer of today has a much shorter attention span than in the past and many have embraced

an "on-demand" mentality. Digital marketing offers unique ways to meet consumers where they are and to break through the "noise." Digital allows brands to engage with potential and existing consumers and to capture the voice of the consumer, all the while allowing consumers to be part of a brand's marketing message and narrative. New and innovative technologies are allowing marketers to target specific audiences with personalized digital content that contributes to the development of consumer awareness, facilitate sales, and impacts trust and loyalty. Content that is informative, entertaining, functional, and resonates with the audience is a backbone for a strategic approach.

One of the most valuable assets an organization has is the brand names associated with their products or services (Keller 2013). The key to effective branding is for consumers to perceive differences between brands in a particular category; utilizing digital allows marketers to make those differences more recognizable through a strategic narrative. Digital marketing, and the associated digital brand engagement, involves a disciplined and strategic approach to ensure more meaningful and intimate connections. Just as a logo is considered part of a brand, a brand's digital footprint is as well. From a company webpage, to its social media profiles, to its e-mail content, and mobile applications, it all represents a brand and contributes to a narrative surrounding that brand. The notion of a "brand" via a marketing lens is important as it helps to achieve a competitive advantage (Kapferer 2004). If leveraged appropriately, all of these assets help to create meaningful connections and opportunities to engage with consumers. The development of a strong brand identity over several digital channels is considered digital branding (Poulis et al. 2017). Digital channels offer much more flexibility in terms of the length of content, costs, and availability as opposed to traditional media such as magazines or television. As we proceed through this book, think about how the platforms and tools can be used to create and broadcast this narrative. Reflect on the narratives you consume each day in your personal and professional lives. How do these narratives impact your behavior as a consumer?

Brand awareness relates to brand recognition and brand recall (Keller 2013), and it plays an important role in the consumer decision-making process. When a consumer is confronted with multiple brands, will they

be able to recognize a brand as one they have previously been exposed to; will they recall a brand from memory when thinking of a specific brand category? Consider how these elements impact a purchase decision, and how digital can help with brand awareness via social media posts, digital advertisements, e-mail communications, and other digital platforms. Once an organization has established a sufficient level of awareness for the brand, the next step is creating a brand's image. The brand image reflects the perceptions consumers may have of the brand. Brand awareness and positing brand image directly correlates to brand equity. And to build brand equity, you must shape how consumers think and feel about your product (Keller 2013).

An organization's website may detail offerings and host additional content to contribute to brand image, while their social profiles share similar content, but also allow for engagement with their audience. Similarly, the organization's e-mail database offers a direct path to a consumer to pull them along through the decision-making and purchase-making process, while an associated branded mobile application facilitates the purchase process or engagement with the brand. An organization may have an excellent product or service, but in what ways are they able to communicate this with consumers and potential customers while also facilitating engagement with the company? Marketers have many more tools in their toolbelt than just a decade ago. The idea of branding is not new, but it has become an actionable buzzword in the marketing landscape as we see new digital technologies abound that are breathing new life to almost extinct brands.

Digital marketing does not solely revolve around digital tools and data. Effective digital marketers understand the relationship between the various digital platforms and associated tools, and the intersection with an organization's overall marketing strategy. Further, they understand the relationship between the brand and the consumer and how to best engage digitally in a meaningful, personalized, and relevant manner. They understand customers are connected and informed, as well as empowered. And, they understand digital marketing contributes to the future of a brand and the customer experience. The creation of an excellent digital experience takes into account all facets of digital marketing as one cohesive unit.

When considering a strategy for digital, one must begin with goals. As we know, goals should speak to an organization's defined mission and vision. These goals will inform each area of your strategic approach to digital. These goals will also scaffold to the tactics you choose to use via digital technologies, and ultimately how you will measure success. When formulating a digital strategy, it is paramount to be extremely specific with setting goals as you begin to strategize. As you try to determine the goals of your strategy, think about how your efforts might tie to rebranding or branding, promoting brand awareness, differentiating your product or service from the competition, communicating value propositions, impacting consumer sentiment, promoting your organization's unique selling proposition, and more. As goals become more clearly defined, one is better able to see how each of the digital technologies will contribute.

In the past, we relied on the one-to-many approach; we had to push our messages to mass audiences with little differentiation in content or target audience. The message from brand to consumer is then perceived by the consumer as advertising, and thus less meaningful. In today's digital environment, we are able to provide a much richer experience for both the consumer and the organization. Marketers are able to contribute to brand building by essentially giving a brand a digital personality and making sustained connections with consumers through digital channels. Through a variety of consumer experiences or marketing activities, many brands take on personality traits or values. Digital channels allow a brand to exhibit human-like characteristics like humor, authority, fun-loving, trustworthy, warm, or even glamorous.

Customers often interact with brands as though they are real live people (Aaker 1996), and we see this play out on social media in particular. It is not uncommon for brands to embrace their unique personalities within their Tweets on Twitter; it has even become a trend for brands to do this with one another using catchy hashtags and GIFs. A brand may choose to create this image and personality via digital technologies such as social media posts, viral videos, visuals on websites and in e-mails, and more. It is worth noting that once a personality has been established, it becomes very difficult for a consumer to accept anything that is incongruent to that personality. Consumers tend to choose brands that have a brand personality that is consistent or much like their own self-concept.

They may relate to the image and reputation of a brand that defines their perceived unique behavioral characteristics. However, some consumers may align with a brand based on their own desired image as opposed to their actual image. Consumers may find it aspirational to be identified with brand signs and symbols; there can be symbolic associations for the consumer.

Consumers and brands today now have many touch points, and thus, many opportunities to ensure a consolidated "branded" message. However, it is important to understand that the notion of branding is not simply the logo, the product, or the service. It is much more than that; it also encompasses customer service, employees, brand-generated content and user-generated content, engagement via digital channels, and more. Simply having more touch points does not equate to increased influence (Kotler et al. 2017). Brands need to push to differentiate themselves in meaningful ways, connect with customers in ways that add value, and focus efforts on leveraging the power of digital connectivity to strengthen relationships. Marketers need to drive initiatives across an organization to ensure a brand delivers on its promises everywhere along the consumer journey.

Brand strategies help to establish a clear and distinctive identity for your products, services, and the organization overall (Romo et al. 2017). The importance of building your brand internally cannot be understated. When employees know the reason a brand exists, and the mission and vision behind strategic initiatives, they will find a higher sense of purpose. Internal branding impacts everyone from the frontline employee who deals directly with the consumer, to those working in nonconsumer-facing roles. This is especially important for service-oriented firms such as Southwest Airlines and specialty retailers like Nordstrom. The consistent external branding messages must also be consistent internally. Employees who "get it" will be imperative to all digital initiatives from user experience design, to content creation, to content curation, to those who engage via social on behalf of the brand, and all the way to the employee who may be interacting with consumers offline in a brick and mortar facility.

Branding is based on making human and emotional connections. Our consumer of today in this digital environment demands that connection

and personal attention. In order for a brand to thrive, the brand must work to create an emotional connection with customers that cannot be easily replicated. Brands that are able to foster a sense of community and resonate with the consumer will be able to sustain disruptive and turbulent times. The importance of achieving that emotional connection cannot be understated. Marketers must strive to develop and uplift brands in order to secure emotional investment along with market share. Strong brands are critical financial assets that will contribute to sustainable growth over time.

It has never been more important for a brand to authentically communicate who they are, what they stand for, what they do, and how the consumer perceives them, than ever before. A brand is built through brand attitude, brand attachment, brand involvement, brand personality, customer delight, and brand experience (Brakus et al. 2009). The brand experience in the digital age should be one that helps create a connected and customer-obsessed experience. Brands that are able to distinguish themselves among consumers will have a leg up, and how they choose to do this impacts all points of strategic digital marketing. In a time where consumers have so many options for purchases, effective branding and brand building in a very strategic and integrated way will differentiate the winners from losers.

Customers, Target Audiences, and Buyer Personas

Customers today expect a certain level of authenticity and relevancy and have somewhat higher expectations. As marketers, we are charged with meeting their needs and expectations at the right time with the right offer, via the right channel. The idea of throwing out many approaches and seeing what "sticks" (like cooking pasta) is by no means effective or sustainable. Here is where the idea of a target market or target audience comes in to play. A target market, or more specifically, a target audience, describes a particular audience of consumers who will find your product or service the most relevant. The term target audience is generally more popular among business to consumer (B2C) companies than business to business (B2B). The identification of a target market or audience will allow you to tailor your strategy to fit the target. Targeting is a fundamental aspect of

a brand strategy (Kotler et al. 2017). However, there are still companies who feel that everyone, or everyone who buys their product or service, is a target. This could not be further from the truth. This view is held by those who presume if you market to all, all will buy. Instead, ask yourself who is the end user, and who is *not* the end user.

Understanding consumers is fundamental to traditional marketing; it is also fundamental to digital marketing. A good marketer knows who their target customers are inside and out. As we look to the online or digital customer, this becomes even more important, given the geographic barriers are less confining and attitudes in online shopping differ than brick and mortar. Interestingly, a consumer may actually behave differently in the digital space as a consumer than they do in the traditional offline landscape. A solid understanding is absolutely paramount in order to craft an effective strategy regardless of the product, service, marketing channel you may utilize and more. The creation of profiles that identify the needs of the consumer allows for a much more strategic approach to marketing efforts. Also important in this work is the identification of problems your target audience may have that your company can solve. This work can then be translated to multiple channels with the digital landscape.

When planning a strategic approach to digital marketing, along with setting goals and exploring target audiences, consider: Who do we want to show our marketing messages to? What technologies do they use? Does it make more sense to send marketing messages out via Twitter? Or does it make more sense to utilize e-mail marketing? The identification of a target audience will impact nearly every facet of your strategy. It will impact the images you use, the content you share, the platform you choose to share it on, the keywords you utilize, and the tools you leverage throughout implementation. Through digital, marketers are able to increase their reach by exposing advertisements and/or content to a new audience, or reinforce brand messages with the use of a current and defined segment (Poulis et al. 2017). This highly defined target becomes easy to identify through effective use of data that comes from a variety of sources such as web history, social media postings, and user profiles.

Also important in this planning stage is the idea of buyer personas. Buyer personas are somewhat fictional character representations of your

preferred user or buyer based on marketing research and what you know about your existing customer. Notice the difference between a buyer persona and a target audience. Your target audience may be a group of the population you wish to target your marketing messages to. However, a buyer persona offers significantly more detail; it allows you a more insightful look at motivations and goals. A buyer persona is used more often by the B2B segment and is considered a subset of an ideal customer profile. Identifying and defining the types of people who will be most receptive to your product or service (or solution to their problem) is the first step to an effective buyer persona.

The process of creating a buyer persona is much like target audience identification: you will explore demographic, psychographic, and behavioral information. But with buyer persona, you will go a bit further to explore goals and motivations as well. The notion of creating and utilizing a persona embodies a consumer-centered approach. Personas were initially created by Cooper (1999) as a way to create a hypothetical user. Personas are able to provide a means for capturing both qualitative and quantitative data in an easy to digest manner; however, some believe creating personas leads to stereotypes (Turner and Turner 2011). It is very common for marketers to utilize a buyer persona when strategizing and brainstorming about marketing messages. We want these messages to resonate and evoke action. In order to do this, we need to know about the buyer on a much deeper level.

Buyer personas are often a product of research, surveys, and interviews of multiple types of people. You may research a mix of customers, prospects, and even others outside of your contacts database who might align with your target audience. It is not uncommon to create a character based on these personas with a fictitious name and image. These images or characters are used by marketers to create a more intimate relationship by being able to envision who these persons are and what motivates them. The creation and utilization of personas in marketing embodies a user-centric approach. Having a deep understanding of your buyer personas will help in your planning for just about anything related to customer acquisition and retention. The customer persona, in general, informs the customer journey map. This customer journey is a sequence of points where a consumer has direct or indirect touch points with a product

brand or service. The customer experience at each of these touch points impacts the perceived relationship quality between brand and consumer. Keep in mind that these touch points may occur offline and online, and this journey is structured sequentially. Once armed with a buyer persona, it becomes much easier to determine the best course of action for creating and disseminating marketing messages as part of a digital strategy or campaign.

Inbound Marketing

The idea of sending one-to-many communications is no longer as effective as it once was. Organizations need to promote themselves through digital technologies to bring customers to the brand. Marketers must look to pull the consumer to the brand and guide them through the customer journey in a one-on-one scenario. Thus, it is important to understand what the customer journey looks like from the consumer point of view. A customer journey map is imperative as it will provide data to inform decision making. Both the consumer and the brand must actively participate in this process to make meaningful connections and create experiences that are valuable for both parties. These connections contribute to the customer experience and build upon branding initiatives. Digital mediums offer marketers a measurable way to strategically initiate connections with prospective consumers. Digital also allows for personalization, building trust and relationships, facilitating real-time engagement, and impacting customer retention and associated strategies. All of these elements contribute to the digital brand experience.

Nearly every business will strategically focus on the idea of generating leads, making sales, capturing new customers, and retaining the consumers they already have. Upon delving deeper, such goals require different approaches. As a marketer, you must decide what you want your digital marketing campaign to accomplish. This all stems from first identifying business objectives as these objectives will speak directly to the type of campaign employed and the tactics used within the campaign. One reason many new businesses do not achieve the success they had hoped relates back to not having objectives clearly agreed upon and the business just diving into digital tools (such as building a website or starting a social

media feed) without having determined objectives and strategy first. It is like building a home without a blueprint. Having a clear picture of business objectives will make setting goals and defining a digital marketing campaign significantly more effective (Chaffey and Smith 2017). Some businesses choose a strategy that will help build brand community, or inform and acquire new leads and customers, monetize leads and customers to generate revenue, or even increase brand awareness. Worth noting, one approach does not trump the others. A successful brand will strive to run a combination of campaigns. Running a campaign to acquire new customers does not necessarily have the same outcome as a campaign to build community or a campaign to monetize existing customers. For example, the notion of blogging is phenomenal for growing brand awareness and providing informational content to prospective consumers. However, there is a little chance, if any, to monetize.

The traditional notion of a campaign assumes a specified start and end date. However, a digital campaign could run from as short as one day (think prepping and promoting a flash sale on Instagram or the like) to several years. In a traditional marketing setting, a campaign may be several weeks of direct marketing to consumers for a specific goal and objective. Once deployed, it becomes difficult to tweak the approach. A digital campaign allows marketers to be significantly more agile, enabling us to make minor tweaks and to optimize a digital marketing strategy as needed.

Crafting, curating, and generating relevant content through every stage of the customer journey will impact customer satisfaction and opportunities for the brand to engage with the consumer. Not to mention the increase in conversions from lead to customer, and brand loyalty to boot! Loyalty is considered to be the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage (Dick and Basu 1994). Failure to utilize content that your audience deems valuable or helpful will lead to less than stellar results. If you are not providing content that resonates and engages the audience, you will be unable to create and nurture meaningful relationships. Content can be created or curated and can come in many forms. Video is hugely popular, along with other visuals like GIFs, infographics, and podcasts. This content contributes to your brand and brand personality (and thus authenticity) and can also be

used as an inbound approach, pulling the consumer toward you via the content that is shared on multiple channels. Curation of content from other sources can be a good way to show your audience it is not all about you. It shows you are engaging about all things that resonate with your audience but do be sure you are sharing credible content from credible sources, and giving credit where credit is due. Curating content is also a good way to fill up your content calendar when you may not have enough original created content to fill it, or if you are seeking something specific that is not your area of expertise, or even to simply show you keep up with the current news and industry trends. This is yet one more way to differentiate your brand from the competition.

Regardless of the technological advances, marketing is still focused on a mutually beneficial relationship between customers and brands. The development of this relationship can be tied to the customer journey. Consider the example earlier, searching for new running shoes. Digital marketing helps us in moving a potential lead from one stage of the journey to the next. It is this journey, which may start and stop in varying places for varying consumers, that has the potential to create differentiated experiences. As a digital marketer, your job is to look at this journey and identify where you can infuse excellence via digital technologies to create an amazing customer experience. All of the research a consumer will do before purchase, the actual purchase process, and post purchase evaluation are all part of a branding narrative. Consumers see images on TV related to the product and images online via websites, blogs, and social media that influence the decision-making process, as well as consumer reviews and articles related to the product. All of these elements tie together to contribute to a brand narrative, both brand produced and consumer produced. Anyone on digital media has the ability to initiate sharing their views, feelings, and issues about a brand and associated brand experiences (Aaker 2015). Marketers will need to lead the convergence of brand and customer experiences, and marketing to deliver consistent experience across all touch points.

Think of iconic brands or brands that you associate positively with. What messages do they send you? What images do you see when you think of these brands? Now think of a brand that you may have a negative feeling about. What images do you see? What narrative do you think of?

Did this narrative come to you via brand messaging pushed toward you? Do they originate from the brand or users? Perhaps marketing messages from the brand do not resonate with you or are contradictory to your beliefs. Or, did this narrative come to you via other consumers? Perhaps you saw many negative reviews on Amazon or negative comments on Facebook about a particular brand or product. This content online is generated from both the brand and consumers.

Key Takeaways

For any type of business, this always-changing landscape can become overwhelming. The online space is very competitive, and organizations must develop their own unique marketing strategy via digital tools. The idea of "digital marketing" has evolved over time and has now become an umbrella term to describe the process of using digital technologies to acquire customers and build customer preferences, promote brands, retain customers, and increase sales (Ahuja and Loura 2018). Digital technologies facilitate the creation of marketing messages and aid in creating and delivering value for consumers through customer experience and through delivering value to other stakeholders. Digital technologies are filling gaps between customers and brands in significant ways, such as customer experiences and interactions. Digital is a critical component to branding in a competitive environment and provides marketers with new channels for customer communications and promotions (such as websites, social media, search engines, mobile, and e-mail) that can provide significant value to customers as well as acquire the right customers.

The creation and sharing of content to achieve set goals is a backbone to the coming chapters of this book, as well as a digital marketing campaign. Content serves as the foundation for your campaign and directly impacts all areas of digital marketing. From branded websites or blogs, e-mail, and social media platforms, to nonbranded content created and promoted by end users (known as user-generated content or consumer-generated content), it is all part of the narrative. You will see the idea of content marketing interwoven throughout the chapters of the book.

As you read the following chapter, understand that a digital marketing campaign varies in length depending on business goal and objectives.

It can be a continuous process, or a short campaign, and is made up of several platforms and tools used in a very strategic and cohesive manner. At the heart of any successful campaign is the alignment of business goals and objectives with your digital marketing goals, objectives, and tactics. Organizations can promote brand awareness and differentiation through a variety of technologies, but the basic tenets of marketing still apply, as does the notion of conveying your value proposition consistently online and offline. This online communication of your value proposition should reinforce core brand values and clearly outline what a customer can get from your brand that they cannot from any other brand. Tools such as social media platforms, e-mail, SEO, SEM, websites, mobile technologies, and a host of other digital tools allow an organization to optimize the exposure of brand narratives across digital platforms.

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Jessica L. Rogers

"A brand is nothing but a promise delivered. Marketing has evolved dramatically, becoming even more present in the digital age. Dr. Jessica Rogers's book serves as the perfect guide for anyone looking to understand the intricacies of branding, marketing, and how each brand delivers on their promises to their customers." —**Jeffrey Hayzlett, Primetime TV & Podcast Host, Speaker, Author and Part-Time Cowboy**

The field of marketing has seen an evolution in how brands communicate with consumers, how consumers communicate with brands, and how consumers communicate with one another. Digital technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, social media, and email contribute to what is known as the digital marketing landscape. Digital marketing offers unique ways to meet consumers where they are, engage with potential and existing consumers, capture the voice of the consumer; allow consumers to be part of a brand narrative.

This book is geared towards both students and professionals looking to explore the interconnectedness of digital technologies for marketing and branding purposes. This book offers an overview of the digital marketing landscape and how the various elements of digital can work synergistically. When the power of an integrated digital strategy is optimized, both consumers and brands benefit.

The Digital Marketing Landscape serves as a practical guide for both students and professionals in a variety of settings. Readers will become familiar with terminology, understand how the different areas of digital marketing connect and work together, and gain the knowledge needed to generate valuable and actionable managerial insights for more informed decision-making.

Dr. Jessica Rogers holds a PhD in business administration with a specialization in marketing. Her research centers on organic social media marketing engagement, brand loyalty, and Gen X females. Dr. Rogers has taught in the university setting for over a decade, and has over 16 years of field experience.

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