

Digital Marketing-It's Past, Present, and Future

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The first contemporary definition of marketing was introduced in 1897 as the “process of moving goods from producer to consumer with an emphasis on sales and advertising” (Berry, 2013). Digital marketing is a blanket term used to refer to “the practice of promoting products and services in an innovative way, using primarily database-driven distribution channels to reach consumers and customers in a timely, relevant personal and cost-effective manner” (Todor, 2016). There are many key people and key companies that played an important role to the digital marketing presence. Because of these people, digital marketing is now a necessity in this day and age.

The start of digital marketing technology can be traced back to the 1980s (Kapost, 2015). Technology and marketing are joined at the hip; however, it wasn't always this way. The shift from traditional marketing to digital began when computers became popular to the public. When people started to realize they were capable of reaching others via the internet to build connections, a tactic called “relationship marketing” was created (Kapost, 2015). Marketing has now changed from selling products towards a targeted group to selling as much as possible to a customer, treating them as individual people (Todor, 2016). With all this information being able to gather on a person from the big data, social media and various web sources used by this person, analytics on this particular person can be condensed easily and quickly.

Robert and Kate Kestnbaum were the pioneers of “database marketing”. Their marketing tactics were data driven; collecting customer and all commercial information in an electronic database. In the mid 80's, Robert Kestenbaum began developing different database marketing solutions with Robert Shaw, known to the digital marketing world as the “father of marketing automation” (Kapost, 2015). Both Robert Kestenbaum and Robert Shaw merged new purposes to

these marketing solutions such as contact strategy optimization, campaign management and marketing analytics (Kapost, 2015). In 1986, a contact and customer management company called ACT! also started the very first database marketing software (Kapost, 2015).. Companies started realizing that brand awareness was a way to get customers to be more aware of these marketing campaigns. Blogs, videos, eBooks, eNewsletters, email campaigns, SEO and social media marketing are all part of the digital marketing realm that companies are using (Halligan, 2009). Digital marketing is also a significant advantage and asset for companies because simply, it does not cost much. Compared to traditional marketing, where flyers would have to be printed and handed out to people, all the content is now available online and can be distributed easily and at a much faster rate. This influx of fast and easily obtainable information is perfect for the generation known as “Millenials”.

Millenials are known to be the “generation that was born with technology”. A majority of these digital marketing strategies target Millenials as they are statistically shown to be the ones shopping online the most, obtaining content via online news sources as well as getting their entertainment and social networking online. According to Smith, Millenials are the largest generational group to target for consumer industries due to their “hefty size” and buying power. Some researchers have discovered that Millenials talk about products and services online and to their peers to determine the worth of a product or service. The internet uses social media platforms to allow Millenials to express their opinions on a product or service online. Blogs and product reviews on YouTube can be a better way to promote a product or a service than an advertisement. It was proven through the research in Smith’s article that there was a substantial increase of response from Millenials regarding coupon notifications online. This was shown to

be one of the best forms of digital marketing for this generation. There was also a significant interest for email updates from the Millennials conducted in this research.

The dotcom bubble burst in 2000. Many big technology companies had to create a new strategy to communicate with their customers. The digital behavior was altered between the seller and the buyer and marketers began to rethink their process. Marketing automation wanted its part in the market but the rest of the world was growing so fast that it could not catch up with all the different devices and channels people used. However, social media was beginning to pick up and was becoming a big hit. Mayur Gupta states that, "If there was one thing that put the consumer right at the center and in control, it was the smartphone... it allowed the consumer to make choices on the go, and that power shift enabled brands to reinvent themselves." The social media apps on smartphones was revolutionary. It spoke to the Millennials and has now become the leading marketing outlets today. The visual effects appealed to the eyes of the generation. This generation is attracted to visuals, big bold words and the feel of having things instantly. With this generation's mindset, marketing tactics began to change and is still changing till this day.

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