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Various Forms Of E-Marketing Tools

The rapid evolution of the Internet over the past years has led to various changes in various aspects of the business world, most notably the marketing sector. The Internet has led many businesses to start experimenting with various types of Internet technology tools so as to support and improve their commercial activities. In this endeavor, various e-marketing tools have become available to e-marketers. Some of the most widely used e-marketing tools currently being utilized include search engine optimization, pay-per-click, web 2.0, and online social networks.

Search engine optimization or SEO is a technique employed to create traffic through the use of organic search results. The content is ranked according to its popularity, thus, the better and more popular the content is, the higher its rank in the search results. As a result, the use of SEO as a marketing strategy has to be accompanied by hard work and dedication as it is a long and demanding process to position an organization's website and its content at the highest rank of the search engine results (Wang and Zhang). Thus, business websites have to be SEO-optimized for them to appear on the first page of search engines. SEO is preferred to other e-marketing strategies as consumers trust and respect organic results and are more likely to click on organic search results as compared to paid search results. Furthermore, the high ranking of a website will remain so for as long as the content in it is relevant thus, SEO keeps content at

the forefront of the organization's target market long after it was developed (Armbrust et al, 53).

Closely related to SEO is pay-per-click. Pay-per-click is an e-marketing strategy that presents the content to target customers through acquiring advertising space in the sponsored results area of search engines results pages. Thus, an organization that buys advertising space pays a fee once a customer clicks on an advert and is directed to the company's website (Armbrust et al, 55). Unlike SEO which demands commitment and time for results to become evident, pay-per-click provides instant results because once the organization pays for the advertising space, the link to that particular organization's website automatically appears on the first page of the search engines results page. Consequently, pay-per-click is mostly appropriate for organizations that need to promote time sensitive content on service and product offers. Furthermore, pay-per-click allows a business to get its content out when the target market is full of authority websites all offering similar content.

Web 2.0 refers to a category of Internet technology and applications that include social references, RSS, wikis, and blogs. Web 2.0 technology attempts to expand the consumers market intelligence, knowledge, business participants' and social users' experiences through open-source online applications that are user-controlled and interactive. Web 2.0 technology enables the creation of informal networks by users thus, facilitates the generation and flow of knowledge and information and the dissemination of market intelligence (Mata and Quesada 60). For instance, websites present information, blogs allow various users to post comments on various content or products, wikis allow for the collective editing and creation of web pages, chats facilitate continuous communication over the Internet, and RSS allows for the retransmission of information across the Internet. A major characteristic of web 2.0 technology

is the exploitation of collective intelligence and it is the organizations that are able to tap into this collective intelligence that will be able to adapt to the changing marketing environment (Mata and Quesada 63).

Another method employed to market content over the Internet is the use of online social networks. An online social network can be defined as a web-based service that allows users to develop profiles, connect with other people's profiles that they have formed relationships with either online or offline and view connections related to their friends' profiles recursively. The main purpose of online social networks is to enable communication and relationships between users of the same social contexts (Mata and Quesada 64). As such, online social networks are critical to marketing as they are tools for mass communications that create, distribute news and influence others. From a market perspective, the users in a high traffic social network site can be considered as a potential market. Thus, a combination of several similar social network sites will have large numbers of users that present multiple marketing opportunities for organizations to promote their products and brands (Wang and Zhang).

In summary, the fast growth of the Internet and the related technologies have opened up new strategies and ways for businesses to market their products and services globally without utilizing vast resources. The four e-marketing tools listed can be used by all types of businesses, however, some are more suited for some businesses than others. For instance, the use of SEO is suitable for startup enterprises that have a limited budget as SEO requires little to no capital but only time and determination while offering long-term search marketing. Organizations that have adequate resources to devote to marketing, can use pay-per-click so as to carry out highly targeted advertising campaigns for their time-sensitive offers on their products. Web 2.0, on the other hand, should only be employed by organizations that have the ability to properly exploit

collective intelligence. Online social network marketing may be limited to some extent as not all target customers may use a social networking site, furthermore, not all members of a social network site may be in an organization's target segment. Ultimately, any business should make use of a combination of the e-marketing tools, making use of a specific tool according to the current needs of the business.

Works Cited

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