

**DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TECHNIQUES AND ONLINE SMEs USABILITY:
A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to review extant related literature on entrepreneurs' application of Digital marketing and the technical operations for resulted oriented performance in the online market space. The objective therefore is investigate through extensive literature reviews the digital marketing techniques and strategies and their application in the marketplace and market-space how the small and medium scale enterprises can use these techniques to improve their marketing performance. Businesses have gone online and the ones that do not adopt the trend will loss customers to the one that has gone digital. The paper is a conceptual one, hence the use of literature review to marketing carry out the survey. Related literature on digital marketing techniques and their relevant application by existing firms were done to understand patterns and their uses. The findings showed, that no modern day business can survive without going digital. Imbeds in digital marketing application are immediacy, speed, the disappearance of distance; larger market-space, 24/7 business operations, worldwide visibility among others. The implication of this study to marketing practice is to encourage SMEs to go online, by highlighting the benefits and show that adoption can improve the business of the entrepreneurs. The researcher recommends the adoption of digital marketing by SMEs to ensure worldwide visibility and performance.

Key Words: entrepreneurship, digital marketing, Techniques,

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides a technical outline and discussion of the basics of Digital Marketing, (DM). The outline and discussions includes an introduction to digital marketing and strategic planning and development. Within the strategic planning contents strategies as conceptualized are carried out through the application of the techniques that suits the targeted audience, thus the two are not the same but are strongly related. Our contribution offers theoretical and practical insights relative to this growing marketing area, with information on the main areas for which DM techniques are particularly suited, (Anukam & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012).

Strategy and Technique are different but strongly related within the planning context and in the online marketplace application. Strategies are things you think about, decision that direct your actions plan-mental imagery. Techniques are things you do on day-to-day basis to realize those mental images; they are the skills you manipulate at work to achieve results.

Strategy is used as a broad based conceptualization of a process; while technique is the single action taken to arrive at the expected results; and is strongly a part of the broad strategy. Strategy is a plan to assist the marketer achieves a set goal; a method or plan of action chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of goal or solution to a problem. Technique is referred to as the process or way in which something is done or method of carrying out a particular task, especially the execution or performance of a marketing campaign or in a game-plan.

Marketers need to understand what digital marketing entails in order to satisfy many marketing objectives at any given time. This is the essence of this chapter, to explain the various areas of application of digital marketing techniques, one by one. This section will help the entrepreneurs, organizations, or institutions to have a balanced knowledge of digital marketing techniques. Everything necessary in digital marketing techniques are listed and explained in this section, such as components of digital marketing techniques, tools used in the pursuit of digital marketing strategies and objectives. Internet is just like any other form of medium that can be used to reach target audience in order to market and advertise products, services, ideas, among others, (Anukam, & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

Why Study DM Techniques in the Battlefield Marketplace

The development of digital marketing techniques offer much potential for brands and organizations. Some of them are as follows:

- i). **Branding.** Platforms and 2.0 services are a great opportunity to build a brand image on the Web due to their scope, presence and constant updates.
- ii). **Completeness.** The possibilities to disseminate information through links offer consumers the chance to approach the organisation in a wider and customized way.
- iii). **Usability–functionality.** Web 2.0 offers simple and user-friendly platforms for all in order to improve user experience and allow for their activities.
- iv). **Interactivity.** In the context in which organisations try to forge long-term relationships with their audiences, Internet offers the possibility of having a conversation and therefore of generating a positive experience with the brand. Such interactivity can be basic, as product assessment, or become an all-encompassing experience.
- vi). **Visual communication.** In line with visual thinking, digital marketing offers marketers different image and video-based tools. This is an attractive way of reaching audiences that can lead to greater engagement.
- vii). **Relevant advertising.** Easy segmentation and customization of advertising in Internet maximise the output. Besides, free from the limitations of other media, this environment has allowed for more attractive advertising.
- viii). **Community connections.** Internet is a unique opportunity to connect organizations with their audiences and users among themselves. This connectivity can improve their experience and enhance the relationship with the product, brand or organisation.
- ix). **Virality.** The essence of Internet as a Web of interconnected nodes makes exponential expansion of any content possible. Taking the model of WOM (word of mouth) communication, viral communication becomes more relevant due to connectivity, instant-ness and share-ability of online platforms that enhance the dissemination of content.
- x). **Measuring output.** Online platforms rank first in the availability of follow-up options and the possibility to assess output. In any case, to make the best of all these possibilities, organizations must ensure that their Internet presence or their presence on their different 2.0 channels follows a strategy with concrete goals, in line with their brand or organizational image. Being on the Web without proper planning can not only mean a lost opportunity in terms of resources and potential, but also it can indeed have a negative impact on the organization, as the audience, their needs and perceptions regarding the organization are unknown;
*<https://www.marketingevolution.com>; <https://www.gobfw.com>>digital<blog;
<https://www.99design.com.blog>; <https://revive.digital>>blog).*

Techniques within the Digital Marketing Plan

A digital marketing, (DM) plan is a strategic document that takes the current situation of a particular organization and set out some short-term, mid-term and long-term goals and to determine the strategy and techniques to accomplish them. This document also describes the

responsibilities, the time frame and control tools for monitoring. Strategies are outlined within the plan and techniques are the practical means of achieving them.

The aims of a digital marketing plan include discussing organizations and their environment. Likewise, it needs to be a roadmap of how to manage the organization's marketing strategy, so that resources are properly allocated. The plan also helps control and evaluates output and tackles any potential deviation from the organization's expected outcomes. In this line, a marketing plan becomes a flexible document that must be adapted to the situation of the company and that must feed into the results obtained by each of the techniques developed, especially in the digital arena. In today's online battlefield marketplace, rather than a subtype of conventional marketing, digital marketing has become a new phenomenon that brings together customization and mass distribution to accomplish marketing goals. However, the particularities of the digital world and its appropriation for marketing have fostered the development of channels, formats and languages that have led to tools, strategies and techniques that are unthinkable offline.

Technological convergence and the multiplication of devices have led to an opening up of the ways in which we think about marketing in Internet and have pushed the boundaries towards a new concept of digital marketing—user-centered, more measurable, and interactive; <https://neilpatel.com>>what-is-digital-marketing; <https://convertful.com>>types>digital-marketing.

Digital Marketing Techniques

- i). Content Marketing,**
- ii). Social Media Marketing,**
- iii). Affiliate Marketing,**
- vi). Content Optimization/Search Engine Marketing,**
- v). Internet Display ads,**
- vi). Mobile Marketing,**
- vii). Website Optimization**
- viii). Television Advertisement**
- ix). Networking and Speaking Engagements**
- x). Direct Mail Marketing**
- xi). Cloud Technology in Marketing**
- xii). Email Marketing;**

Sources: (Anukam, & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

i). Online Content Marketing

Online Content Marketing: is a component of digital marketing that focuses on creating contents such as articles, info graphs, video, slide presentations, blog's posts, photos and the related. Online content marketing is a component of digital marketing that focuses on creating contents such as articles, info graphs, videos, slide presentations, blog's posts, photos, and so on.

ii). Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing focuses on marketing your products/services via social media platforms, there are sponsored contents, display ads, among others. Some categories of social media are:

Social networking, e.g. FACEBOOK, cokoyes.com; WIKIs, e.g. wikipedia.org; news aggregator; forums, e.g. cokoye.com, photo share, e.g. FLICKR, INSTAGRAM; and file sharing sites, for example slide share.

We are in a digital age, where information and knowledge are everywhere. Comparing with old marketing methods, the internet is a big smile and a perfect strategy to reach out to new customer horizons hitherto unimagined. Social media is an evergreen marketing strategy because most people and especially millennial tend to follow a brand on social media. A bigger percentage of social media users will recommend a service or a product if they are satisfied with its social media service. Social media is recording a high number of subscribers every day, making it an evergreen marketing strategy to reach new markets and maintain the available ones. As such, companies are opening social media pages for marketing and promotion of their products and services, (Anukam, & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

iii). Affiliate Marketing

Online affiliate marketing is a branch of digital marketing that allows you to have other websites' owners and internet users advertising and promoting your products and services, and get paid a commission whenever a sale is made or particular action is performed by the user/person they refer through their affiliate links. There is also an angle in this component that is called influencers marketing.

iv). Content Optimization/Search Engine Marketing

Web Search Marketing focuses on SEO and SEM, as well as in keyword selection for optimization. Content optimization commonly referred to as Search Engine Optimization utilizes your content for more visibility on the internet. If you want to make it a marketing strategy, the search engines rank highly optimized content higher on search engines page than the non-optimized content. Sounds complex, right? However, it's not. If you can write great content that both existing and potential customers can relate with, then you are good to go. Great content can improve your SEO ranking, meaning it is more optimized and many people will see your content and know what you are offering.

Keep the content flowing and be sure to use keywords that the customers are likely to look for on the web. As such, your content goes to the customers, and you make considerable marketing efforts via the web. Search engine marketing is a component of digital marketing where a message, advert or content is displayed and shown on search engines. There're paid and organic search.

- a). **A paid search:** paid search adverts are displayed on top, beside and bottom of searches.
- b). **Organic search:** organic search is that result you get whenever you perform a search in search engines using keywords. Organic search is achieved faster mostly by SEO (search engine optimization). In search engine optimization there're —on-page and —off-page optimization; ((Anukam, & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

v). Internet Display Ads.

Internet display has:

- a). **Banner exchange:** this has to do with exchanging your banner with another website's owner.
- b). **Sponsored banner:** paying for banner placement on a particular website, for example *www.cokoye.com* allows you to pay for banners to rotate all over the community.
- c). **Contextual ads:** contextual ads are displayed when particular keywords are searched in search engines, and whenever there're contents that match what you're selling or marketing. Also, on internet display ad, there're —above the folder — and —below the folder|| display ads.

vi). Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is a component of digital marketing that focuses on mini devices, such as tablets, mobile phones, feature phones, etc. This is often carried out using optimized mobile landing pages, applications, QR (quick response codes), text message, among others. Each of the components above has strategy, techniques, and options to effectively maximize their impact to digital marketing objectives and goals; (Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

vii). Website Optimization

If you are a serious contender in the marketing world, you must have a website to supplement your social media pages. The website must have a proper design because, in the first place, it reflects the image of your company. Website optimization involves designing a website from nothing. It involves adding keywords or phrases, image tags; editing Metadata to ensure that your site is accessible to a search engine. Website optimization is the same as the search engine optimization (SEO), and the content that you offer there must be significant and up to date. It is a diverse way of reaching potential customers.

viii). Television Advertisements

Television is a powerful way of communicating to the masses. It earns a slot in the evergreen strategy because advertising on television is far much better than an effective placement of an advert on a newspaper. A TV ad that appears during prime time hours will reach more audiences in a matter of seconds, thereby creating awareness of the existence of a service or a product. You can never go wrong with a television ad, however annoying it might be simply because it will still serve its objective, which is entering the minds of potential customers.

Television ads reach consumers when they are most attentive and allow you to convey the message in sight, sound, and motion. This gives your business and what you are offering instant credibility. It allows you to become a creative marketer and attach a personality to the business, and this works effectively especially for small businesses: (Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

ix). Networking and Speaking Engagements

One of the advantages of using speaking engagements is that you are directly speaking to a targeted audience. Their attention tells you they are interested in what you are offering and you will need only a small, professional, and spirited nudge to turn them into your consumers. Speaking engagements are a perfect marketing strategy that has the power to generate good leads. Talk of the good old word of mouth working for the best interest of your business. When it comes to networking, you can attend seminars and meet potential buyers or join associations or organizations where you can target potential customers. A face-to-face encounter with a potential buyer builds trust, which underpins the importance of sell-buyer rapport; (Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al. 2012);

<https://neilpatel.com>>what-is-digital-marketing;<https://convertful.com>>types>digital-marketing.

x). Direct Mail Marketing

If you send thank you cards to your customers for showing appreciation, they are more likely to purchase your products again. Consumers interested in your industry will take information leaflets very seriously and provide expert advice. Remember you have to use high-quality prints to impress your clients, and if this is a hassle, stick to direct mails. It is a pronounced way of making sure that your customers are always aware should there be any new product or service from your business.

xi). Cloud Technology in Marketing

Marketers are also using cloud-based technology to market their products and services online using integrated digital experiences. It targets consumers through social media pages and other online portals. Even as they try this marketing route, marketers must invoke the help of a cyber-security consultant with good expertise in protecting the technology, especially during this age where cybercrime is becoming like an everyday story. Marketers can use cyber-security, because they provide a great deal of technology protection, thereby safeguarding the online marketing interests.

xii). Email Marketing

E-mail Marketing offers interesting content to develop a successful newsletter. Email (electronic mail), has increasingly become a trend for marketers to communicate with current and prospective customers, a method that is formally called Direct Marketing. Marketing by mail is so popular because marketers are able to send direct messages to potential customers, which means that campaign can be extremely targeted and more affordable than traditional channels, and the return on investment is measurable. Emails are usually sent with the intention to sell, promote, educate, inform, or persuade and are most commonly packaged in the form of a newsletter, flyer, competition or sales promotion. <https://neilpatel.com>>what-is-digital-marketing; <https://convertful.com>>types>digital-marketing

Platforms for Digital Marketing Techniques Application

What is a digital marketing platform? A digital marketing platform is a solution that supports a variety of functions within the realm of marketing over the internet. Accordingly it is important to note that to classify a platform as a solution, it cannot claim to support every component of digital marketing, but rather will cover functionality like media buying, performance measurement and optimization and brand tracking. However, it may not cover other marketing effort like SEO, and Social Media.

Digital marketing has channels, depending on your target audience, this will determine where, how and which digital marketing platform to use. There are thousands of digital marketing platforms out there. Examples of platform are:

- i). **www.cokoye.com**: African open forum where Africans and people interested in Africa discuss issues online.
- ii). **www.facebook.com**: general social networking website.
- iii). **www.cokoyes.com**: African region social networking website.
- iv). **www.perfectvisualhost.com**: for website hosting, web address, and web design solutions in Nigeria.
- v). **www.adhang.com**: digital marketing agency in Nigeria, West Africa.
- vi). **www.africatopforum.com**: where buyers and sellers meet, and much more.

When it comes to platforms is important to say here that popularity doesn't mean effectiveness. The vital issue in digital marketing is performance and conversion (this is what helps you maximize your digital marketing spending and gives you good return on investment). Your competitors using a particular platform does not necessary mean they know what they are doing, so stick to the platform that assists you reach your target market.

This is main reason you need to measure, monitor and constantly evaluate many digital marketing metrics to ensure that results are consistent with company's objectives. This is where hiring agency like us Adhang.com becomes a good decision, especially if your target audience is Nigeria, or Africa's continent: AdHang for African region; (Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al. 2012).

Technical Tools for Day-to-Day Digital Marketing Usages in the Market-space and Marketplace

Strategies create a mental and documentary image of a decision to achieve a particular goal or goals, techniques are the day-to-day actions to achieve the set goals. Strategies are broader conceptualization of what to do; techniques are the singular actions to arrive at the destined place by the marketer. Digital marketing has tools by which techniques are used in carrying out its various operations on the platforms.

Listed below are major Digital Marketing Technical tools for use by SMEs:

- i). Article**
- ii). Press release**
- iii). Application**
- iv). Video**
- v). Blog**
- vi). Whitepaper**
- vii). Internet presentation**
- viii). Report**
- ix). Case study**
- x). Image/photo**
- xi). Website**
- xii). E-book**
- xiii). Banner**
- xiv). QR (quick response codes for mobile marketing)**
- xv). Info graph**
- xvi). Email**
- xvii). System/device (feature phone, laptop, desktop, tablet, etc.)**
- xviii). Podcast**
- xix). Text message**
- xx). News letter**

Sources: (Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper& Ellis, 2001; Enge, Spencer, Stricchiola, & Fishkn, 2012).

Needless to say, there must be a digital marketing plan. Online media marketing planning is important in digital marketing, just like any other marketing medium. Before planning, you need to know what the organization wants to achieve, and then think of how, when and where - to increase sales, educate the audience, increase leads, brand awareness, among others. Planning will enable you to have an organized and well written digital marketing blueprint that will guide the spending and direction of all the campaigns.

a). **Objective and goals:** you should have objectives and goals you want to achieve in your digital marketing plan at any given time. This will be the reason behind company's digital marketing campaigns.

b). **Strategy:** to achieve the goals, you need strategies. Whether you call it strategy or not, this will be methods, (techniques, ways, steps, or routines) you need to take or use to achieve your goals.

c). **Techniques:** to carry out your strategy in digital marketing technique is vital. The reader can download *AdHang's e-book —Digital Marketing Planning and Strategy*. This e-book is written to help you plan and execute effectively digital marketing campaigns and will help you position your company in the Digital Marketing battlefield marketplace;

(Retrieved from <https://www.adhang.com/digital-marketing-plan-template-straight-to-the-point/>)

Synthesis of Operations of the Significance of Digital Marketing in the internet market-space

- i). **Create awareness:** digital marketing can help you create awareness for your products, services, program, etc. This is done using various digital marketing components and strategies, therefore awakening the interest of the populace or consumers.
- ii). **Information:** digital marketing can help you to inform and educate your target audiences or consumers on any given issue important to the company or organization. Most people go online to learn; digital marketing lets you provide information for people online.
- iii). **Persuasion:** persuasion is one of ways digital marketing can help you. You use digital marketing to persuade a particular group of people or masses to agree/accept or patronize whatever the company or organization wants; (Retrieved from <https://www.adhang.com/digital-marketing-plan-template-straight-to-the-point/>)
- iv). **Promotion:** promotion is one of major things digital marketing can help you do. Digital marketing can help you promote anything by employing promotional elements online, such as direct marketing, publicity, advertising, public relation, etc. Promotion is common usage and help of digital marketing.
- v). **Goodwill:** digital marketing can help you portray and spread your good will message via internet to the masses or target audience.
- vi). **Increase Popularity:** digital marketing can help you increase popularity of any idea, endeavor, and brand via internet. Most of digital marketing activities, strategies and tactics are targeted at increasing popularity.
- vii). **Build or Repair Public Opinion:** digital marketing can help you build or repair public opinion on a given issue. This is common among public figures such as politicians, government's office holders, etc. Digital marketing is mostly used in this regard to portray good image of the personality or correct wrong impressions.
- viii). **To Project Goodwill:** digital marketing helps organizations, associations, and institutions to project goodwill by showing the populace what they have done or doing to make the society a better place, such as life improvement project, donation to charity, among others; <https://www.adhang.com/digital-marketing-plan-template-straight-to-the-point/>)

Concluding Thoughts

In a nutshell, this paper offers an overview of Digital Marketing Techniques for an active and effective Web presence. In conclusion, the above Digital Marketing Techniques are for specific objective and can work wonders if they are utilized appropriately the online SMEs who knows how to apply them. Digital marketing campaigns cost money, but it is nothing compared to the revenue that these evergreen techniques will bring to the business. Marketing has gone digital, and a combination with these techniques will surely garner good revenue and enable the digital marketer stay in business; ((Anukam, & Anyanwu, 2021; Anukam & Iweka, 2018; Laudon & Traver, 2012; Korper & Ellis, 2001; Enge, et al., 2012)

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