THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING

DIGITAL MARKETING COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL MARKETING

A CASE STUDY OF BURBERRY - CHINA

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Abstract

The internet has greatly increased marketing opportunities, providing valuable access to a bigger consumer base than what was possible during the pre-internet era. However, marketers still communicate to consumers using different traditional marketing channels like TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, and face-to-face communication. To better understand these two seemingly contrasting points, this study examined the effectiveness of digital marketing compared to traditional marketing. Given the area to be investigated it was deemed appropriate that conducting a company case study would provide better insight in the effectiveness of both forms of marketing. Considering that one of the advantages of digital marketing is reaching a global audience, the company chosen for the study is a global luxury brand with international reach that has expanded over to the largest consumer market in the world; this company is Burberry and the locations chosen for the study are their branches in China (Beijing and Hong Kong). Particularly, the study examined whether digital marketing's impact is greater over traditional marketing taking into account the digital media that Burberry uses, and the influence of both types of media on Burberry's target market. The study sample consisted of 30 customers, and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data obtained were encoded in SPSS for analysis where descriptive statistics were generated. Generally, the results of the present study showed that while both digital marketing and traditional marketing influenced the customer's brand association; digital marketing was more effective compared to traditional marketing in all the areas examined. It can be concluded that digital marketing contributes greatly in increasing customers' awareness of the brand, interest in brand and purchase intention of the brand's products.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor for giving me guidance in completing this study. I would also like to thank him for believing in me, providing the encouragement that I needed to finish this study in a timely manner. I would also like to express my appreciation for my family, who has been there from the start and giving all the support I needed throughout the completion of this dissertation. Special thanks to all the study respondents for taking part in this study and giving their honest opinions. I wish to also acknowledge my colleagues and my friends, without the support of whom I would not have been able to complete this study. Finally, to everyone who has indirectly contributed to the success of this dissertation, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Technological advances have led to changes in marketing. Specifically, the internet has had a big impact in how businesses implement their marketing efforts today (Agarwal et al. 2011). Revolutionizing how consumers purchase services and products and how businesses are conducted (Bengtsson et al. 2007), digital marketing has significantly changed the traditional marketing landscape. The traditional model is more of a passive system that passes information to customers without being able to hear their response. While traditional marketing methods appear easier to implement, they do not provide businesses the value that digital marketing does. Take for instance, newsletters; they are easy to disseminate but not only does it not give customers adequate value (Chevalier and Gutsatz 2012) because they cannot inquire about the product with this form of one-way communication, it also does not allow the marketer to learn anything about the customers receiving the newsletter.

In this regard, a number of businesses have considered utilizing digital marketing to not only find innovative and new ways of marketing their services and products but also to find ways of connecting with consumers to learn about and influence their behaviour.

Despite this trend towards digital marketing and its apparent advantages, though, the question still remains – is digital marketing far more effective than traditional forms of marketing? We will attempt to answer this question through the study that follows.

The study was conducted in China and this included Mainland China (Beijing) as well as Hong Kong. The paper begins with an enquiry overview and provides the statement of the problem. A study background is also provided to give an overview of traditional marketing and digital marketing. The paper then offers an understanding of the effectiveness of marketing

through digital media through a comparison with traditional media in terms of how they influence consumers.

1.1   Enquiry Overview

The present study examined the effectiveness of digital marketing compared with traditional marketing in influencing the perceptions and purchase intention of customers. The comparison considered the following factors to gauge said effectiveness: ease of finding information about Burberry stores, perceived attractiveness and quality of Burberry products, perceived value for money/reasonability of pricing, satisfaction from using Burberry products, strength of Burberry's brand image, and customers' loyalty to the brand.

1.1.1   Problem Statement

 In the past decades, Dury (2008) indicated that marketers communicated to consumers using different traditional marketing channels like TV, magazines, newspapers, radio and face-to-face communication. However, these days, new channels of communication exist, such as the internet which has given marketers a number of opportunities. Current digital technologies using the internet, such as email and mobile apps, allow for affordable and active communication with customers. Moreover, they enable companies to gather valuable information about their customers. With this increased accessibility to information and a wider consumer base, the proliferation of the internet has opened numerous possibilities not only for the purchasing of goods but also for marketing different types of businesses (Okonkwo 2010). Although traditional marketing channels are still very much in use (Strauss and Frost 2011), the internet's continuous development via increased innovation (Eikelmann et al. 2007) has opened doors for new methods of marketing, impacting various industries including the luxury industry in China. This is evidenced by businesses in this industry using emails, websites, and social networks as

vehicles for their marketing initiatives. Given this, marketers now have two options: to stick with traditional methods which only allow a one-way communication with customers with no feedback; or utilize digital media and learn about the behaviour of their customers and learn how to focus timing and the content they advertise. Considering the above, digital marketing seems to be the obvious choice because of the numerous opportunities it provides. However, only a few studies have been conducted with regard to these two forms of marketing. Hence, we have limited information on the effectiveness of digital marketing over traditional marketing. The present study aims to answer that question of effectiveness making this initiative vital in the current business marketing landscape.

1.2   Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.2.1   Study Aim

To compare the effectiveness of digital marketing and effectiveness of traditional marketing.

1.2.2   Study Objectives

a. To examine whether digital marketing's impact is greater compared to traditional marketing.

b. To examine the digital media that Burberry commonly uses.

c. To determine the type of media that has the greater influence on the target audience.

1.3 Research Questions

a. Does digital marketing have greater impact compared to traditional marketing?

b. What digital media does Burberry commonly use?

c. Which media has the greatest influence on the target audience?

1.4   Study Background

According to Eisenhardt et al. (2007), the landscape of media has changed dramatically over the past few years with digital media platforms such as social media, online communication forums, online communities and blogs now supplementing traditional media like televisions, magazines and newspapers. This level of change is so great that digital media outlets are affecting the performance of marketing, including sales (Freberg et al. 2007). In this regard, understanding traditional and digital marketing effectiveness and interrelatedness is vital. The large population of internet users in China makes it essential to understand how digital media affects luxury consumer and how it is more effective compared to traditional media.

Internet users tend to be more involved in terms of interacting and finding new tools and people, and this is considered as a major feature of internet use (Gummesson 2006). Gillin (2009) attests that the internet has changed the behaviour of consumers and developers' interactivity; and consequently has led to the emergence of digitalism and new networks and services. These tremendous changes in turn, have altered businesses' marketing efforts to a great extent. Marketing firms are struggling to find ways of exploiting the communication between consumers and obtaining information. Thus, various studies have focused on what makes digital media services, networks and channels important to marketers; understanding consumer behaviour;and how to prioritize and use the new opportunities presented.

Gorry and Westbrook (2009) note that, the main goals of companies are to attain sustainable growth and make profit. Marketing can influence the growth of a business and become a powerful strategy. This means that determining an effective marketing strategy is crucial in attaining high market share, sales rate and desired brand image. Given that marketing is a process of delivering, exploring and creating value to meet wants and needs of target

consumers at a return; companies, consequently employ a number of marketing strategies when they promote, create and sell services and products that can meet the needs of their target consumers.

Alistair and Copulsky (2006) wrote that digital marketing is an important marketing approach that has gained attention these days. Martin (2009) indicates that although marketing has relatively remained the same over the past years, technological development has impacted markets, hence the marketing landscape has immensely transformed. Marketing today has taken a number of different forms, for instance, businesses can utilize electronic newsletters, banner advertising, or search engine optimization and advertising. These are digital marketing practices that are largely used and this implies that traditional marketing's influence has diminished lately. For instance, E-selling or internet selling has become more established with digital marketing and to some extent Microblogs and social networks (Twitter and Facebook) are replacing traditional channels. Since a considerable number of customers are internet users, digital media has become a very important marketing medium. Digital marketing takes advantage of the popularity of internet usage as it is nowadays the most popular way to connect with people and search for information or generate content to be viewed by others (Cutlip et al. 2006).

Companies are investing millions in digital media since they believe it provides the opportunity of enhancing the company-customer relationship because it allows two-way communication which positively affects brand equity (Harris & Whalen 2006). The reason why there has been an increased focus on digital media significance is that this positive effect on brand equity is magnified by the higher number of internet subscribers and users worldwide. Reports by Keller (2012) reveal that globally, the growth rate of internet use was 566.4% in the past decade and the internet users were over 2.4 billion in June 2012 and this number will double

in the coming years. Along with the popularization and development of mobile devices,

marketers and brands seem to be inclined towards adopting digital marketing media to advertise

and promote their services and products globally to expand their market share.

The luxury brand market has also gained from the internet by embracing digital

marketing. However, there are concerns that the use of the internet cheapens brand image of

luxury brands due to over exposure and lack of control of how the message of the content is

received (Chaffey et al. 2006). Also, according to Epstein (2005), when a customer relationship

has already been built, it is important to contact the customers on a regular basis. In most

investigations, it is reported that the main reason for customers switching to competitors is

insufficient contact with the customers. The company's objective therefore must entail enforcing

not only ongoing business processes and but also communication with customers. One way to do

this is to incorporate customer-oriented values into the company's marketing strategies. Being

customer-oriented allows a marketer to be sensitive to the needs of customers; and if the

marketer correctly acts on insights gained, the possibility of customers shifting to competitors

may be mitigated. Noting Epstein and Buhovac's (2006) point, companies which do not

accustom themselves to the rising needs of customers may lose their share of profits to

competitors.

Kirkby and Marsden (2006) believe that digital media has taken a larger position in

people's lives, and marketers' interest in online interactivity is growing. Information technology

has empowered customers resulting in a market power shift from firms to customers. With these

shift in the market, firm interaction and participation with their customers have become

necessary in the creation of value creation. However to create exclusive value for consumers

businesses should also understand their customers well and also understand the role of different

digital media channels (Brynjolfsson et al. 2006). Online business activities have been described

as an eco-system, where all channels of digital media interrelate with one another. Every channel

plays a unique role with specific advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, it is important for

businesses to have knowledge on how different channels of digital media are optimally combined

to maximize the positive results of their marketing activities.

1.4.1   The Concept of Luxury

According to Chevalier and Gutsatz (2012), luxury brands are exclusive and selective

brands. In contrast, Clode (2012) notes that such definition is restrictive and does not account for

how luxury brands are identified today in terms of their placement and the perception of

customers about them. According to Wertime (2008), luxury is more of a dream rather than a

product. These days, the definition of luxury tends to be relative. That is, based on an

individual's definition of indulgence and pleasure. There are arguments that the definition of

luxury definition should focus on the consumer's perception of luxury. Another vital intangible

concept associated with luxury is the brand's prestige. Prestige is the idea of having privilege and

this idea goes beyond the actual product.

1.4.2   Case Study Company

Burberry understands that digital marketing orientation and participation of customers is

vital to survival in the digital age (Chevalier and Mazzalovo 2012). Hence, Burberry has

implemented digital marketing techniques and it has effectively helped them increase online

sales allowing Burberry to become a market leader in the Chinese fashion industry. Burberry

was an early adopter of social media and uses Twitter, Instagram, SinaWeibo and Facebook to

connect to consumers and unveil and market products (Butler 2013). Moreover, Burberry has

over 800,000 twitter followers, 11.6 million Facebook fans and their Youku and YouTube have

received over 12 million views making Burberry to be the only fashion brand with highest customer engagement (Burberry Group 2012). The investment of Burberry in digital technology drives customer engagement, improves operational effectiveness and improves their retail disciplines, further strengthening the brand image (Burkitt 2011). This is reflected in their 2012-2013 annual report which shows that Burberry realized a 12% increase in global wholesale/retail revenue; 14% of which is accounted for by sales in China. This shows that China was the fastest-growing target market (Daily 2013) and is very crucial in the global sales of Burberry (The Economist 2012).

1.5   Study Location

The study focused on the major Burberry stores in mainland China and Hong Kong where there are hundreds of Burberry customers visiting the stores every single day. The number of customer visits per day made these locations the ideal places to conduct a survey - making it more likely that the researches successfully meet the targeted number of completed questionnaires given the short period of time available for the study. Specifically, these major locations were the Burberry outlet in new Sparkle Roll store in Beijing, and the Burberry outlet at the Pacific Place in Hong Kong.

1.6   Rationale of the study

The study examines the effectiveness of digital marketing over traditional marketing; hence, the issues covered can successfully help the case study company to prioritize their tools of marketing. The study also highlights the drawback and benefits of the marketing tools, thus the study can help in creating a better understanding about marketing media.

1.7   Dissertation Structure

The dissertation has five main chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, presents the background and introduces the research problem and objectives. Chapter two provides a literature review describing the theoretical background and models of digital marketing and traditional marketing, and also comparing past studies. Chapter three on outlines the methodology of the study. Chapter four presents the study's results based on the analysis stipulated in chapter three. Finally, chapter five provides the conclusion and implications of the study and also offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This section presents concept clarifications, trends in digital marketing, basic marketing concepts and strategies, details on digital marketing and traditional marketing models, and also compares past studies on digital marketing and traditional marketing.

2.1 Concept Clarifications

Chiu et al. (2005) describes traditional marketing as any kind of advertising, campaign or promotion that involves traditional communication channels like magazines, newspapers, billboards, newsletters, flyers, commercials, television, radio, catalogues and face to face communications to convey a message to target customers. On the other hand, digital marketing refers to the use of digital technologies and the internet together in order to reach target consumers and attain marketing objectives in a manner that is cost effective, personal and timely. Similarly, Chiu et al. (2005) simply referred to digital marketing as marketing that uses digital technologies like tablets, computers and smartphones that can access the internet to engage consumers or business partners.

2.2   Trends of Digital Marketing in China

China currently consists of a fifth of the entire world population. It is also recognized as the largest global consumer market with about 100 to 150 million well-off consumers. Given this enormous consumer base, China has been ranked number three among the largest world luxury markets (Clode 2012). In addition, China is not just the second-largest economy in the world today (Butler 2013) but it also has the largest number of internet users worldwide, and is projected to be one of the largest e-commerce countries by 2015. Accordingly, social media has been observed to play an important role in China as it helps consumers interact and make

decisions regarding purchases. Looking at statistics, China has more than 550 million people who use social media where over 80 percent of them have multiple accounts. According to Burkitt (2011), 95 percent of internet users who live in Tier 1, 2 and 3 cities use social media on a regular basis and social media is recognized as the major determinant of the entire Chinese lifestyle. Chinese consumers use the same strategy used by consumers in other countries to make decisions, and the fundamental rules for interacting with them efficiently are the same (Butler 2013). This therefore makes it easier to understand the importance of social media towards customer equity for all kinds of brands engaged in Chinese markets, including luxury brands. The use of social media exposes these online users to international luxury brands. And because material wealth is considered a sign of success (The Economist 2012) and gives one status, the demand for these global luxury items are higher in the Chinese consumer market.

Consequently, China is a market that is essential for global luxury brands, including Burberry (Burberry Group 2012). Having surpassed the luxury market in Japan, which was the largest in the world until recently, China is a major driver of luxury market growth, with consumption by Chinese in China and abroad attributable to over a quarter of the global purchase of luxury products.

Given the above, it is no surprise that Burberry has invested heavily in engaging consumers in China through digital marketing. Apart from launching an official website in Chinese language in 2013 where seasonal shows can be livestreamed like in western markets, Burberry's shop assistants have iPads to help Chinese customers order colours or sizes that may run out of stock (Daily 2013). In addition, Burberry actively participates in Chinese social media platforms such as SinaWeibo (which is the Chinese version of Facebook and twitter), Douban, and Youku (video streaming sites like YouTube) which have enabled Burberry to outperform

their rival luxury brands in China. For instance, Burberry's SinaWeibo alone has 500,000 followers (Burkitt 2011).

2.3   Types of Media

There are various theories that have been developed to understand communication media behaviour and attitudes (McNeal 2012). In this section, we specifically examine the two types of media that is of particular interest to this study: traditional media and digital media.

2.3.1   Traditional Media

According to Glen (2006), traditional media is also known as 'old media' and is mainly described as the media introduced before development of the internet and uses different pre-internet technologies or platforms like newspapers, television, radio, magazines., books and other print media. Generally, the traditional media functions by communicating messages one way to a large number of audiences considered as homogeneous, hence, traditional media can also be regarded as the 'mass media', which is primarily intended for a mass audience.

To date, it is believed that traditional media continues to play a vital role in the distribution of information and connecting people. The ability of traditional media to target a wide audience with influential and strong messages greatly impacts the society. According to Jaeki and Zahedi (2006), radio and television have influenced the daily lives of people, including their routines. This implies that in practice, people adjusted their routines daily based on the programs and schedules of traditional media.

Smith and Chaffey (2005) mentioned that over the years, traditional media has played three leading roles and these include influencing, educating, and informing people. Furthermore, traditional media allows people to take part in events thus interacting with societies over dispersed geographic locations. Traditional media channels like newspapers, radio and television

bring the outside world into people's homes. For example, the recent World Cup was able to create strong conversations in a global scale due to traditional media. The traditional media programmes provide listeners and viewers with topics to converse about for days (Niederhoffer et al. 2007).

With advantages however, also comes drawbacks. One criticism against traditional media is its one-directional approach or one-to-many communication approach where one entity, such as a company, distributes a message to many people but allows no means for these people to communicate back. This issue is what brings us to Digital media which for the most part, is able to address this gap.

2.3.2   Digital media

Bengtsson et al. (2007) defines digital media as encompassing internet applications or tools that are used by people to share profiles, opinions, perspectives, content and insights and thus facilitating interaction and conversations online between online communities. According to Fang et al. (2007), digital media offers marketers a wide variety of tools and possible uses such as social media, search engines, online partnership, viral marketing, mobile marketing, online PR, marketing using opt-in-email, display advertising. Among these, social media is the most dominant. Its advantages include being able to reach a wide audience and it enables the building of a strong online presence.

Generally, social media has six types including online forums, media sharing, micro-blogging, social networks, bookmarking websites, and social news. However, certain social media can overlap with other social media types. For instance, social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and MySpace include media sharing features like video and picture sharing (Pires et

al. 2006). These digital media platforms enable individual expression and friendly conversation; and they enhance broad and diverse participation while increasing collaboration among users.

Agarwal et al. (2011) attests that digital media have caused a big shift in how people read, discover, and share information, news, and content. In addition, Evans (2009) explains, that digital media is a combination of technology and sociology, transforming the flow of information from one-to-many (monologue in traditional media) into many-to-many (dialogue). Hence digital media has contributed to transforming users into publishers from content readers hence democratizing information. This definition gives emphasis on the ability to create content and people's role in the creation.

2.4   Marketing

According to Trusov et al. (2010), Marketing refers to the process of executing or planning the pricing, distribution, conception or promotion of services, ideas or goods in order to create an exchange which can meet the objectives of organizations or individuals. Hence, marketing in firms is a collective process in which groups or individuals exchange services or goods depending on their wants and needs.

2.4.1   Marketing Mix Theory

Marketers consider various marketing elements to effectively satisfy the wants and needs of their customers. The Marketing Mix Theory has been commonly used in understanding the effectiveness of marketing since they are tactical tools of marketing that are blended by firms to elicit a response from the target market (Kotler 2003). Further, it was stated by Picard (2010) that a marketing mix consists of all possible ways that a firm can influence demand for their products or services. Marketing mix basically represents a mixture of key marketing elements. These

marketing elements can be represented as '4P's' which stand for product, promotion, place and price.

2.4.1.1 Product

Product refers to anything offered in a market such as ideas, services, and physical objects; for the purpose of acquisition, utilization, or consumption to satisfy a need or a want (Kotler 2003). The marketing tools considered for product include design, variety, and quality.

2.4.1.2 Promotion

Promotion refers to the activities aimed at communicating the benefits of the product on sale in order to persuade the target market to purchase the product (Kotler 2003). The marketing tools considered for promotion include personal selling and advertising.

2.4.1.3 Place

Place encompasses the activities of the company that make a product available to buyers (Kotler 2003). The marketing tools considered in place include channels and inventory.

2.4.1.4 Price

Price refers to the sum of money charged for the services or products; or the amount of value that customers exchange for the advantages they gain from using or having the service or product (Kotler 2003). The marketing tools considered for prices include discount and price list.

2.5   Traditional Marketing

According to Chevalier and Dina (2006), the concepts and principles associated with traditional marketing describe the consumer behaviour, product, nature and the competitive activity present in the market. Such concepts and principles are vital in developing products, planning brands and product lines, reacting to competitive responses and designing communication. To attain its objective, traditional marketing uses mass advertising approach

(Smith et al. 2006). The basis of such concept is founded on the supposition that when marketing messages are sent to a large audience the probability of converting some of them into consumers is very high.

However, Villanueva et al. (2008) noted that, a number of experts believe that marketing messages that target a huge audience leads to wastage of resources of advertisement through addressing both the targeted individuals as well as those the company does not intend to target. This idea has been supported by Chang and Chan-Olmsted (2005), who described wastage by media as noise. Additionally, this mass marketing advertising approach goes against the fundamental marketing concept which postulates that production and marketing of services and products must be done on the basis of expressed wants and needs of the consumers.

Dutta-Bergman (2004) says that in the traditional marketing setting most businesses have adopted a product-centred approach of marketing, a strategy that prioritizes selling of particular items or a group of items over all other objectives of marketing. Despite achieving the objectives of conventional media marketing, experts in the industry have made several criticisms concerning practices of this kind of media marketing (LaRose and Eastin 2004). These criticisms include what is referred to as the manipulative marketing approach. Yochai (2006) has described manipulative marketing practice as a form of delivering advertisements that are misleading through strenuous selling, with an objective of increasing demand so that the increased supply will have an equivalent demand.

On the other hand, it is reported that the techniques of traditional marketing have a great rate of success and have been proven while web-based techniques like social media are highly dependent on customers or clients accessing the online medium as well as having knowledge on using the internet. Moreover, Kozinets (2002) also wrote that traditional media appears to…

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