



The Implications of Digital Marketing on Business Performance

Oana PRICOPOAIA^{*}, Adrian MICU^{**}, Irina Olimpia SUSANU^{***}

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted November 2022

Available online December 2022

JEL Classification

M31, L26

Keywords:

digital marketing, digital marketing tools, digital marketing strategy, business performance, social media-marketing, entrepreneurs, interview

ABSTRACT

The correct application of digital marketing strategies has a direct impact on favorable results within a business. Social media marketing is not just a trend for a long time, now it has become a necessity, the company that stays only with traditional advertising can lose both existing customers and potential customers. The purpose of the conducted research is to identify among young entrepreneurs the motivations for using the concept of content marketing in their business, the role of social media networks in promoting a business, the evaluation of the impact of following a digital marketing plan on the final results of the company, the analysis of the implications of using tools of digital marketing and the need to establish digital marketing channels at the level of a business. We are witnessing an extraordinary evolution of marketing and how it is understood, applied and quantified through the results achieved. Digital marketing has become indispensable for all entrepreneurs, and in order to cope with the market in which they operate in relation to the numerous competitions and the increasingly sophisticated demands of consumers, entrepreneurs take into account the digital marketing channels suitable for their business, designing and following a guide of digital marketing and the use of effective digital marketing tools.

© 2022 EAI. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Marketing through digital media is increasingly used among companies due to the benefits it brings, among which we can mention: the rapid spread of information, direct interaction with the target audience and attracting new consumers. In the digital age, companies are more concerned with the idea of satisfying the customer's need than making a quick profit. Digital marketing is guided towards customer needs and increasing brand value. If the customer is satisfied with the interaction with the company, the product or service offered by the company gains value in the market, is recommended and repurchased. By applying the digital marketing strategy, the company that operates in the online environment identifies how the objectives can be achieved, and by determining the digital tactics, it follows the way to achieve the established objectives.

Combining computer science with modern research methods leads to the emergence of very effective marketing techniques that explain the actions of buyers in the online environment. Marketers can determine how shoppers act online by analyzing their wants or demands against the choices they make. Promotion in social media can be controlled throughout the course of the campaign, and the results are monitored through statistics related to the activity of the official page on the Internet. At the present time, everything takes place online. The Internet is a free launch pad, it is not only a form of promotion, it is also an effective way to reach different categories of customers. Consumer segmentation is done to identify consumer needs more quickly. Thus, the geographical extent is no longer taken into account because consumers can choose the company themselves according to subjective criteria or even according to the way in which the advertising is done. All results of a digital marketing campaign are analyzed, verified and measured.

In the online environment there is a large amount of information about the products and services offered, the opinions of other consumers or official statistical data about the company's activity in relation to the market it operates on, all these data being free and available to the public. Therefore, the collection, structuring and interpretation of information are essential in the application of a digital marketing strategy.

^{*,**,*} Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania. E-mail addresses: oana.pricopoaia@ugal.ro (O. Pricopoaia), adrian.micu@ugal.ro (A. Micu), irinasusanu@gmail.com (I. O. Susanu)

2. Literature review

Digital marketing has transformed the way companies manage and communicate with society and their customers around the world (Diez-Martin, Blanco-Gonzalez & Prado-Roman, 2019). At the present time, digitization has become an intensively studied topic, and digital marketing is much more dynamic and easier to measure through the prism of the effectiveness of the activities carried out in the virtual environment. The field of marketing has changed a lot in recent years due to the evolution of the Internet. Digitization involves improving and updating processes according to current market needs (Gapsalamov, Bochkareva, Vasilev, Akhmetshin & Anisimova, 2020). Digital transformation is an effective process applied to eliminate possible inconveniences and to identify new technologies through which the customer's needs are satisfied. According to the authors Kayumovich and Annamuradovna (2020), the Internet allows the highest level of individualization of the content provided to the consumer. Poturak and Softic (2019) argue that digital marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention by exchanging ideas and opinions with numerous customers. Customer retention requires a lot of effort from the organization (Pradhan, Nigam & Ck, 2018).

To create exceptional advertising, an agency needs three things: (1) management to prove such advertising, (2) creative people to deliver it, and (3) clients to buy it (Aitchison, 2006). Digital marketing is the widely used innovative approach to communicate and promote products and services without limitations of time, space and cost (Kim & Ko, 2012). To apply a successful strategy, the company must know the current context in the environment in which it operates, the news on the business market and digital promotion tools (Pricopoaia & Susanu, 2021). The challenge given by the digital environment forces companies to rethink their strategies and redesign their value propositions promoted to the customer in order to succeed in obtaining profit. Digital marketing involves the perfect process for connecting companies and consumers (Coviello, Milley & Marcolin, 2001).

With the development of social media platforms (social networks, blogs and video sharing services) consumers actively participate in content and interact in real time with the firm (Hess, Lang & Xu, 2011). Kim and Ko (2012) identify three essential aspects in the use of social networks: entertainment, interaction and trends. Digital marketing promotes business, builds customer relationships, and strengthens the online community. Internet sales increase thanks to interactive advertisements that fulfill several requirements: concrete exposure and emphasis on emotional or cognitive state, indicating an exact category of products or services to which it belongs, emphasizing the brand or mark and presenting an objective or subjective message, but which captures consumer attention. Digital marketing tools offer companies the opportunity to increase their visibility in the online environment and promote their websites, products and services, thus obtaining the ultimate competitive advantage that determines the achievement of the highest level of efficiency and performance (Susanu, Damian, Avram & Rusu, 2019). Thus, Kotler and Keller (2012) state that digital business develops and takes place on the Internet, being dependent on the online environment, supporting the idea that through digital marketing businesses improve and establish the maintenance of a high level of well-being for both consumers and society.

The use of social media tools improves customer interaction and satisfaction increases because these tools facilitate optimal communication between sellers and customers (Alameaki and Korpela, 2021). According to the author Unni (2020) as consumers become more participatory in the online environment and digital culture grows, companies try to keep up with trends because modern consumers are not loyal to a company but look for more options and expect a personalized experience.

3. Research methodology

As part of this research effort, we have carried out a qualitative analysis in order to identify the implications of digital marketing on the performance of a business. Thus, between 10.10.2022 - 24.10.2022, we ran pilot research in which the tool used for data collection was the interview guide (<https://forms.gle/umAfxjt9ZkGN5tG9A>). The sample was established according to representativeness criteria and was made up of a number of five interviewees, young entrepreneurs from the south-eastern area of Romania who are active in the digital environment.

The researched aspects were: the role of digital marketing within a business, the application of digital marketing strategies and the development of the digital marketing plan, the role of social media networks in promoting a business, analyzing the implications of using digital marketing tools and the need to establish effective digital marketing channels on the performance of a business in the online environment. All research data and information are confidential and are kept as such without being published. This research complies with the legal provisions regarding the norms of ethics and deontology within the institutions of the national education system.

3.1. Qualitative research through the semi-structured interview

Defining the research topic: The implications of digital marketing on business performance

Title Known to Subjects: The Role of Digital Marketing

Subjects: Entrepreneurs from the south-eastern region of Romania who are active in the digital environment

Research hypotheses:

- Most of the entrepreneurs in the analyzed sample use content marketing to attract the target audience and later to convert them into target audience.
- A large proportion of the sample members prefer social media promotion for the advantages it offers considering the three essential characteristics of social media marketing: communication, influence and dialogue.
- In general, the entrepreneurs in the sample run their activities in the digital environment following a well-established marketing plan and an effective marketing strategy.
- Most of the entrepreneurs in the analyzed sample use digital marketing tools to manage and measure the results of the company's activity on certain digital channels.

Research objectives:

- Identifying the motivations for using content marketing in business;
- The role of social networks in promoting a business;
- Evaluating the impact of following a digital marketing plan on the company's final results;
- Analysis of the implications of using digital marketing tools;
- The need to establish digital marketing channels at the level of a business.

3.2 Conduct of the interview***Objective 1. Identifying the motivations for using content marketing in business - For what purpose do entrepreneurs currently use content marketing?***

- Are you using content marketing in your business?
- What kind of content do you use?
- What are the reasons why you use content marketing in your business?
- What are the main elements of a content marketing strategy?
- What are the reasons why you apply web content marketing?

Objective 2. The role of social media in promoting a business - How have the results and performance indicators impacted the use of social media for business promotion?

- What social networks do you use to promote your business?
- How can social media improve marketing campaigns?
- From your point of view, what is the role of social media marketing in a business?

Objective 3. Evaluation of the impact of following a digital marketing plan on the final results of the company - How do entrepreneurs use digital marketing to promote their business?

- Are you guiding your business with a digital marketing plan?
- Why is a digital marketing plan needed?
- What does an effective digital marketing plan mean for you?
- What should the digital marketing plan contain?

Objective 4. Analysis of the implications of using digital marketing tools - What are the implications of using digital marketing tools for a business?

- What are the most effective online marketing tools that can help your business grow?
- What are the purposes of using digital marketing tools?
- If you had to convince an offline-only entrepreneur to also use digital marketing tools, what would be the main advantages you would present to them?

Objective 5. The need to establish digital marketing channels at the level of a business - What is the role of establishing digital marketing channels at the level of a business?

- Why is digital marketing needed?
- How do you determine which is the best digital promotion channel for your business?
- Which of the digital marketing channels do you find to be the most effective?

The answers of the subjects participating in the interview are centralized in table no. 1.

Table no. 1 Content analysis

The topic discussed	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Horizontal analysis
1. Reasons for using content marketing in business						
Using content marketing at the business level	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	1 = 5 times
Content marketing	1. Textual contents (blog, e-book and mini-guides) 2. Visual elements (infographics, pictures, images) 3. Video, (webinar and live shows)	1. Textual contents (blog, e-book and mini-guides) 2. Visual elements (infographics, pictures, images)	1. Textual contents (blog, e-book and mini-guides) 2. Visual elements (infographics, pictures, images) 3. Video, (webinar and live shows)	1. Textual contents (blog, e-book and mini-guides) 2. Visual elements (infographics, pictures, images) 3. Video, (webinar and live shows)	1. Textual contents (blog, e-book and mini-guides) 3. Video, (webinar and live shows)	1 = 5 times 2 = 4 times 3 = 4 times
Content marketing - purpose of use	1. Lead generation 2. Increase brand visibility 3. Increase sales 4. Increasing the number of interactions with customers and their loyalty	4. Increasing the number of interactions with customers and their loyalty 5. Informing the public about the products and services offered	1. Lead generation 5. Informing the public about the products and services offered 6. Strengthening customer relationships	2. Increase brand visibility 3. Increase sales 4. Increasing the number of interactions with customers and their loyalty	2. Increase brand visibility 5. Informing the public about the products and services offered 6. Strengthening customer relationships	1 = 2 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 2 times 4 = 3 times 5 = 3 times 6 = 2 times
Main elements of the content marketing strategy	1. Establishing the main performance indicators 2. Establishing the available budget 3. Establishing objectives 4. Choosing the type of content	1. Establishing the main performance indicators 2. Establishing the available budget 4. Choosing the type of content	5. Identification of the application context 4. Choosing the type of content	1. Establishing the main performance indicators 2. Establishing the available budget 3. Establishing objectives	1. Establishing the main performance indicators 3. Establishing objectives 5. Identification of the application context	1 = 4 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 3 times 4 = 3 times 5 = 2 times
Web content marketing - purpose of use	1. Brand awareness 2. Audience research 3. Brand appreciation 4. Determination of purchase 5. Stimulating interest	1. Brand awareness 2. Audience research 4. Determination of purchase	1. Brand awareness 3. Brand appreciation 5. Stimulating interest 6. Determination of purchase intent	2. Audience research 3. Brand appreciation 4. Determination of purchase 6. Determination of purchase intent	1. Brand awareness 3. Brand appreciation 4. Determination of purchase	1 = 4 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 4 times 4 = 4 times 5 = 2 times 6 = 2 times
2. The role of social media in promoting a business						
Use of social media networks	1. Facebook 2. Instagram 3. Tik Tok	1. Facebook 2. Instagram 3. Tik Tok	1. Facebook 2. Instagram 4. LinkedIn	1. Facebook 2. Instagram 3. Tik Tok 4. LinkedIn	1. Facebook 2. Instagram 3. Tik Tok	1 = 5 times 2 = 5 times 3 = 4 times 4 = 2 times

The topic discussed	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Horizontal analysis
The link between social media and marketing campaigns	1. Data collection based on target audience searches 2. Social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers	1. Data collection based on target audience searches 3. Promote your content using attractive images and creative text to convey an original message 4. Keeping customers informed of new products or upcoming events	2. Social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers 4. Keeping customers informed of new products or upcoming events 5. Social media marketing can help send customers directly to the company's website	1. Data collection based on target audience searches 2. Social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers 5. Social media marketing can help send customers directly to the company's website	2. Social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers 4. Keeping customers informed of new products or upcoming events 5. Social media marketing can help send customers directly to the company's website	1 = 3 times 2 = 4 times 3 = 1 time 4 = 3 times 5 = 3 times
The role of social media marketing	1. Increase brand awareness 2. Facilitate sales 3. Support customers 4. Build an effective connection with your target audience	1. Increase brand awareness 4. Build an effective connection with your target audience 5. Enables direct interaction with customers and the market	3. Support customers 4. Build an effective connection with your target audience 6. Gather market intelligence 7. Find out how the brand is perceived by the public	1. Increase brand awareness 2. Facilitate sales 8. Generate new customers 9. Effectively monitor relations with the target audience	1. Increase brand awareness 2. Facilitate sales 10. Enables the effective launch of promotions and the rapid distribution of news about the company's news	1 = 4 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 2 times 4 = 3 times 5 = 1 time 6 = 1 time 7 = 1 time 8 = 1 time 9 = 1 time 10 = 1 time
3. The digital marketing plan						
Guiding the activity according to a digital marketing plan	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	1 = 5 times
The need to have a digital marketing plan	1. Research competitors and digital marketing trends 2. Study the market 3. Analyze examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors 4. Allows the setting of digital marketing tactics	1. Research competitors and digital marketing trends 2. Study the market 4. Allows the setting of digital marketing tactics	1. Research competitors and digital marketing trends 2. Study the market 3. Analyze examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors	1. Research competitors and digital marketing trends 2. Study the market 3. Analyze examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors 4. Allows the setting of digital marketing tactics	1. Research competitors and digital marketing trends 2. Study the market 4. Allows the setting of digital marketing tactics	1 = 5 times 2 = 5 times 3 = 3 times 4 = 4 times

The topic discussed	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Horizontal analysis
Establishing the effectiveness of a digital marketing plan	1. Setting strategic objectives 2. Building the ideal consumer profile 3. Market and competition analysis 4. Establishing the action plan 5. Measuring results 6. Competitor analysis 7. Establishing the corresponding digital marketing strategy	1. Setting strategic objectives 3. Market and competition analysis 4. Establishing the action plan 7. Establishing the corresponding digital marketing strategy 8. Testing some ideas and checking the results	1. Setting strategic objectives 2. Building the ideal consumer profile 3. Market and competition analysis 5. Measuring results 7. Establishing the corresponding digital marketing strategy 8. Testing some ideas and checking the results	1. Setting strategic objectives 2. Building the ideal consumer profile 3. Market and competition analysis 4. Establishing the action plan 5. Measuring results 6. Competitor analysis	1. Setting strategic objectives 3. Market and competition analysis 4. Establishing the action plan 6. Competitor analysis 7. Establishing the corresponding digital marketing strategy	1 = 5 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 5 times 4 = 4 times 5 = 3 times 6 = 2 times 7 = 3 times 8 = 2 times
The content of a digital marketing plan	1. Summary of the current situation analysis 2. Definition of objectives 3. Defining the segments of potential customers 4. Defining key messages relevant to target customers 5. Decision on the promotion mix and communication channels	1. Summary of the current situation analysis 5. Decision on the promotion mix and communication channels 6. Creating the calendar of activities 7. Budget allocation 8. Evaluation and follow-up	1. Summary of the current situation analysis 2. Definition of objectives 3. Defining the segments of potential customers 7. Budget allocation 8. Evaluation and follow-up	1. Summary of the current situation analysis 2. Definition of objectives 5. Decision on the promotion mix and communication channels 6. Creating the calendar of activities 7. Budget allocation 8. Evaluation and follow-up	1. Summary of the current situation analysis 2. Definition of objectives 5. Decision on the promotion mix and communication channels 6. Creating the calendar of activities 8. Evaluation and follow-up	1 = 5 times 2 = 4 times 3 = 2 times 4 = 1 time 5 = 4 times 6 = 3 times 7 = 3 times 8 = 4 times
4. The implications of using digital marketing tools at the business level						
Online Marketing Tools Used in Your Business	1. Social Media Management Tools 2. Email marketing tools 3. Search engine optimization tools 4. Content and planning tools	1. Social Media Management Tools 2. Email marketing tools 3. Search engine optimization tools 5. Mobile marketing tools	3. Search engine optimization tools 4. Content Tools and planning 5. Mobile marketing tools	1. Social Media Management Tools 2. Email marketing tools 3. Search engine optimization tools 4. Content and planning tools 5. Mobile marketing tools	1. Social Media Management Tools 2. Email marketing tools 3. Search engine optimization tools 4. Content Tools and planning 5. Mobile marketing tools	1 = 4 times 2 = 4 times 3 = 5 times 4 = 3 times 5 = 4 times
The purpose of using digital marketing tools	1. Effective promotion and low costs 2. The ability to follow the results of the campaigns carried out 3. Clear goal setting 4. Rapid collection of consumer information 5. Measuring the results of the campaigns carried out	1. Effective promotion and low costs 2. The ability to follow the results of the campaigns carried out 3. Clear goal setting 4. Rapid collection of consumer information 6. Business relationship management	1. Effective promotion and low costs 3. Setting clear objectives 4. Rapid collection of consumer information 5. Measuring the results of the campaigns carried out	1. Effective promotion and low costs 3. Setting clear objectives 4. Rapid collection of consumer information 5. Measuring the results of the campaigns carried out 6. Business relationship management	1. Effective promotion and low costs 2. The ability to follow the results of the campaigns carried out 4. Rapid collection of consumer information 6. Business relationship management	1 = 5 times 2 = 3 times 3 = 4 times 4 = 5 times 5 = 3 times 6 = 3 times

The topic discussed	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Horizontal analysis
Advantages of using marketing tools obtained by an entrepreneur	1. Providing market information 2. Access to a large-scale market 3. Valued brand image 4. The possibility to target customer categories much better 5. Better control over communication methods and promotion methods 6. Increasing brand awareness	5. Better control over communication methods and promotion methods 7. Increasing brand visibility 8. Increase revenue and conversions	1. Providing market information 4. The possibility to target customer categories much better 5. Better control over communication methods and promotion methods 6. Increasing brand awareness 7. Increasing brand visibility 8. Increase revenue and conversions	1. Providing market information 3. Valued brand image 4. The possibility to target customer categories much better 5. Better control over communication methods and promotion methods 6. Increasing brand awareness 7. Increasing brand visibility	1. Providing market information 2. Access to a large-scale market 3. Valued brand image 4. The possibility to target customer categories much better 6. Increasing brand awareness 7. Increasing brand visibility	1 = 4 times 2 = 2 times 3 = 3 times 4 = 4 times 5 = 4 times 6 = 4 times 7 = 4 times 8 = 2 times
5. The role of digital marketing channels at the level of a business						
The need to use digital marketing	1. Reducing expenses 2. Improved customer service 3. Obtaining competitive advantages 4. Automation of some processes 5. Increasing business potential 6. Analysis and comparison of competitors	6. Analysis and comparison of competitors 7. Effective strategies for achieving goals 8. Evaluation of the company's activities at the time 9. Ensures a constant presence in the online environment	1. Reducing expenses 2. Improved customer service 3. Obtaining competitive advantages 4. Automation of some processes 5. Increasing business potential 6. Analysis and comparison of competitors 7. Effective strategies for achieving goals	1. Reducing expenses 2. Improved customer service 3. Obtaining competitive advantages 5. Increasing business potential 6. Analysis and comparison of competitors 7. Effective strategies for achieving goals 8. Evaluation of the company's activities at the present time	2. Improved customer service 3. Obtaining competitive advantages 5. Increasing business potential 6. Analysis and comparison of competitors 7. Effective strategies for achieving goals 9. Ensures a constant presence in the online environment	1 = 3 times 2 = 4 times 3 = 4 times 4 = 2 times 5 = 4 times 6 = 5 times 7 = 4 times 8 = 2 times 9 = 2 times
Establishing the most effective digital marketing channel in order to promote the business	1. Identification of the current situation of the brand 2. Establishing business objectives 3. Establishing marketing objectives 4. Establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience 5. Determining the available budget	2. Establishing business objectives 3. Establishing marketing objectives 5. Determining the available budget 6. Lead generation 7. Market research 8. Branding	2. Establishing business objectives 3. Establishing marketing objectives 4. Establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience 5. Determining the available budget 7. Market research 8. Branding	1. Identification of the current situation of the brand 2. Establishing business objectives 3. Establishing marketing objectives 4. Establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience 5. Determining the available budget	1. Identification of the current situation of the brand 2. Establishing business objectives 4. Establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience 6. Lead generation 7. Market research	1 = 3 times 2 = 5 times 3 = 4 times 4 = 4 times 5 = 4 times 6 = 2 times 7 = 3 times 8 = 2 times

The topic discussed	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Horizontal analysis
Effective digital marketing channels	1. Online store 2. Social media marketing 3. Content Marketing 4. Blogging and vlogging	1. Online store 2. Social media marketing 3. Content Marketing 5. Video marketing 6. E-mail marketing 7. SEO and PPC	2. Social media marketing 3. Content Marketing 4. Blogging and vlogging 5. Video marketing 6. E-mail marketing 7. SEO and PPC	1. Online store 2. Social media marketing 3. Content Marketing 4. Blogging and vlogging 5. Video marketing 6. E-mail marketing	1. Online store 2. Social media marketing 3. Content Marketing 6. E-mail marketing 7. SEO and PPC	1 = 4 times 2 = 5 times 3 = 5 times 4 = 3 times 5 = 3 times 6 = 4 times 7 = 3 times
Vertical analysis						

Source: authors' processing

Vertical analysis involves the individual interpretation of each respondent's answers.

Subject 1 - age = 32 years, background = urban, gender = female

Topic 1 uses content marketing in the form of textual content, visuals and video. Content marketing is used to: generate new customers, increase brand visibility, increase sales, increase customer interactions and customer loyalty.

He believes that the main elements of the content marketing strategy are: establishing performance indicators, determining the available budget, establishing objectives and choosing the type of content. It also applies web content marketing to: brand awareness, audience research, brand appreciation, determining purchase among target audience and stimulating audience interest.

The social media networks used are: Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. He believes that social media can improve marketing campaigns by collecting data based on the searches of the target audience, and social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers. It identifies the following goals of social media marketing at the business level: increasing brand awareness, facilitating sales, supporting customers and building an effective connection with the target audience.

Subject 1 guides its activity by a digital marketing plan because it researches competitors and digital marketing trends, studies the market, analyzes examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors and allows setting digital marketing tactics. He believes that an effective digital marketing plan involves: setting strategic objectives, building the ideal consumer profile, analyzing the market and competition, establishing the action plan, measuring results, analyzing competitors and establishing the corresponding digital marketing strategy. The digital marketing plan should contain the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the definition of the objectives and the segments of potential customers, the definition of the key messages relevant to the targeted customers and the decision on the promotion mix and communication channels.

Online marketing tools used at the business level are: social media management tools, email marketing, search engine optimization, content and planning tools. The reasons for using digital marketing tools are: effective promotion and low costs, the ability to track the results of campaigns, clear goal setting, quick collection of consumer information and measurement of campaign results.

It is believed that the benefits of using digital marketing tools obtained by an entrepreneur are: providing market information, access to a large-scale market, valued brand image, the ability to target customer categories much better, better control over communication methods and methods of promotion and increasing brand awareness. The need to use digital marketing is explained by: reducing expenses, improved customer service, obtaining competitive advantages, automating some processes, increasing business potential, analyzing and comparing competitors.

Topic 1 states that establishing the most effective digital marketing channel for promoting the business is done according to the aspects pursued, more precisely after: identifying the current situation of the brand, establishing business and marketing objectives, establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience and determining the available budget. He uses effective digital marketing channels such as: online store, social media marketing, content marketing, blogging and vlogging.

Subject 2 - age = 34 years, background = urban, gender = male

Topic 2 uses content marketing in the form of textual content and visual elements. He states that the purpose of using content marketing can be explained by: increasing the number of interactions with customers and their loyalty, but also informing existing and potential customers about the products and services offered. Main elements of the content marketing strategy are: establishing the main performance indicators, establishing

the available budget and choosing the type of content. He uses web content marketing for: brand awareness, audience research and purchase determination. The social media networks used are: Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok.

Topic 2 explains the need to link social media and digital marketing campaigns by: collecting data based on target audience searches, promoting content using attractive images and creative text, and keeping customers up to date with company news. The benefits of using social media marketing identified by topic 2 are: increasing brand awareness, building an effective link with the target audience, and interacting directly with customers and the market. It also guides its activity by a digital marketing plan.

It considers the existence of a digital marketing plan necessary because it researches competitors and digital marketing trends, studies the competitor's market, and enables the setting of digital marketing tactics. Determines the effectiveness of a digital marketing plan by: setting strategic objectives, analyzing the market and competition, establishing the action plan, establishing the appropriate digital marketing strategy, testing ideas and verifying results.

The digital marketing plan contains: the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the decision on the promotion mix and communication channels, the creation of the calendar of activities, the allocation of the budget, evaluation and follow-up. Online marketing tools used at the business level are: social media management tools, email marketing tools, search engine optimization tools, and mobile marketing tools.

It uses digital marketing tools for effective and low-cost promotion, the ability to track campaign results, clear goal setting, quick consumer information collection, and business relationship management. He believes that the advantages of using digital marketing tools obtained by an entrepreneur are: better control over communication methods and promotion methods, increasing brand visibility and increasing income and conversions.

The importance of using digital marketing is shown by: analysis and comparison of competitors, effective strategies to achieve goals, evaluation of the company's activities at the time and constant presence in the online environment. The effectiveness of a digital marketing channel for business promotion aims at: establishing business and marketing objectives, determining the available budget, generating leads, market research and branding. Effective digital marketing channels are: online store, social media marketing, content marketing, video marketing, email marketing, SEO and PPC.

Subject 3 - age = 29 years, background = urban, gender = female

Topic 3 uses at the business level content marketing such as textual content, visual elements and video. He uses content marketing to generate leads, inform existing and potential customers about the products and services offered, and strengthen customer relationships. He believes that the main elements of the content marketing strategy are: identifying the context of application and choosing the type of content. Web content marketing is used to: build brand awareness and appreciation, drive interest and drive intent. He uses Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Running social media marketing campaigns allows for immediate customer interaction and feedback, keeping customers up-to-date with company news, and sending customers directly to your website. Prefer social media marketing for: providing customer support, building an effective connection with the target audience, gathering market intelligence and identifying brand perception among the public.

The guidance of the activity is carried out according to a digital marketing plan, thus through the digital marketing plan research competitors and digital marketing trends, study the market and analyze examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors. The effectiveness of a digital marketing plan is established by: setting strategic objectives, building a consumer profile, analyzing the market and competition, measuring results, establishing the appropriate digital marketing strategy and testing ideas.

The digital marketing plan must contain: the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the definition of the objectives, the definition of the segments of potential customers, the allocation of the budget and the evaluation of the results. Online marketing tools used at the business level are: search engine optimization tools, content planning tools and mobile marketing tools. Digital marketing tools are used for effective and low-cost promotion, clear goal setting, quick collection of consumer information, and measurement of campaign results. The main advantages of using digital marketing tools obtained by an entrepreneur are: providing information, the possibility to target customer categories much better, better control over communication methods and promotion methods, increasing brand awareness, increasing brand visibility, increased revenue and conversions.

Digital marketing is necessary for reducing expenses, improving customer service, gaining competitive advantages, automating processes, analyzing and comparing competitors, and effective strategies to achieve goals. The choice of the most effective digital marketing channel for promoting the business is made for establishing business and marketing objectives, establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience, determining the available budget, market research and branding. He believes that the most effective digital marketing channels are: social media marketing, content marketing, blogging and vlogging, video marketing, email marketing, SEO and PPC.

Subject 4 - age = 36 years, background = urban, gender = male

Topic 4 applies at the business level content marketing such as textual content, visual elements and video. He uses content marketing to increase brand visibility, increase sales, increase customer interactions and customer loyalty. The main elements of the content marketing strategy are: setting the main performance indicators, setting the available budget and setting the objectives.

It claims to use web content marketing for: audience research, brand appreciation, determining intent and purchase. Favorite social media networks are: Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and LinkedIn. He believes that social media marketing allows data collection based on target audience searches and immediate interaction, in addition it can help send customers directly to the company's website.

It also states that social media marketing allows increasing brand awareness, facilitating sales, generating new customers and effectively monitoring relationships with the target audience. Topic 4 guides its activity by a digital marketing plan. The need for a digital marketing plan is justified by: researching competitors and digital marketing trends, studying the market, analyzing examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors and setting digital marketing tactics.

The effectiveness of a digital marketing plan is established by setting strategic objectives, building the ideal consumer profile, analyzing the market and competition, establishing the action plan and measuring the results. Subject 4 believes that a digital marketing plan must contain: the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the definition of the objectives, the decision on the promotion mix and the communication channels, the creation of the calendar of activities, the allocation of the budget, evaluation and follow-up and the control of the results.

Online marketing tools used at the business level are: social media management tools, email marketing tools, search engine optimization tools, content tools, planning tools and mobile marketing tools. The purpose of using digital marketing tools is aimed at: effective promotion and reduced costs, clear goal setting, quick collection of consumer information, measurement of campaign results and business relationship management.

Subject 4 identified the main advantages of using digital marketing tools obtained by an online entrepreneur, being: providing information, valued brand image, the possibility to target customer categories much better, better control over communication methods and methods of promotion, increasing brand awareness and increasing brand visibility.

The need to use digital marketing aims to reduce expenses, improve customer service, gain competitive advantages, increase business potential, analyze and compare competitors, effective strategies to achieve goals and evaluate the company's activities at the time.

Establishing the most effective digital marketing channel is carried out for: identifying the current situation of the brand, establishing business and marketing objectives, establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience and determining the available budget. He states that the most effective digital marketing channels are: online store, social media marketing, content marketing, blogging and vlogging, video marketing and email marketing.

Subject 5 - age = 33 years, background = urban, gender = male

Topic 5 applies at the business level content marketing such as textual and video content. The use of content marketing aims at: increasing brand visibility, informing the public about the products and services offered and strengthening customer relations. Main elements of the content marketing strategy are: establishing the main performance indicators, establishing objectives and identifying the context of application. It uses web content marketing for brand awareness and appreciation, but also to determine the purchase decision among the public.

Topic 5 uses Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok to promote the business. He considers online marketing campaigns necessary because social media allows for immediate interaction and feedback from customers, keeps customers up to date with company news, and can help send customers directly to the company's website. Social media marketing increases brand awareness, facilitates sales, and enables effective launch of promotions and rapid distribution of information.

The guidance of the activity is carried out according to a digital marketing plan. It considers the existence of a digital marketing plan necessary because it researches competitors and digital marketing trends, studies the market and enables the setting of digital marketing tactics. Topic 5 establishes the effectiveness of a digital marketing plan by setting strategic objectives, analyzing the market and competition, establishing the action plan and the corresponding digital marketing strategy. The digital marketing plan contains: the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the definition of the objectives, the decision on the promotion mix and the communication channels, the creation of the calendar of activities, the evaluation of the results and the follow-up.

He uses online business marketing tools such as social media management, email marketing, search engine optimization, content, planning and mobile marketing tools. It uses digital marketing tools aimed at: effective promotion and low costs, the ability to track the results of the campaigns carried out, the rapid collection of information about consumers and the management of business relationships.

Subject 5 identified as advantages of using the marketing tools obtained by an entrepreneur in the online environment: provision of information, access to a large-scale market, valued brand image, the possibility of targeting customer categories much better, increasing the degree of brand awareness and increased brand visibility. Apply digital marketing for: improved customer service, gaining competitive advantages, increasing business potential, analyzing and comparing competitors, effective strategies for achieving goals and constant online presence.

It states that it is necessary to establish the most effective digital marketing channel for: promoting the business, identifying the current situation of the brand, establishing business objectives and the relationship between the brand and the target audience, generating leads and market research. He believes that the most effective digital marketing channels are: online store, social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, SEO and PPC.

5. Conclusions

Five people were involved in this research: three men and two women, aged between 29 and 36, young entrepreneurs active in the digital environment. From the research carried out, we noticed that all subjects use content marketing at the business level in the form of textual content (blog, e-book and mini-guides), visual elements (infographics, pictures, images) and video (webinar and live). Respondents identified multiple benefits of using content marketing, namely: generating new customers, increasing brand visibility, increasing sales, increasing the number of customer interactions and customer loyalty, informing the public about the products and services offered, and strengthening customer relationships.

Also, the interviewees identified the main elements within a content marketing strategy that can guarantee the success of a promotion campaign, namely: establishing the main performance indicators, establishing the available budget and marketing objectives, choosing the type of content and identifying the context of application. Respondents listed from their own experience the reasons why they apply web content marketing within the business: brand awareness and appreciation, audience research, purchase determination, interest stimulation and purchase intent determination. Young entrepreneurs use Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and LinkedIn to promote their business.

The respondents explained how marketing campaigns can be improved by using social networks, thus presenting some of the advantages obtained: collecting data according to the searches of the target audience, social media allows immediate interaction and feedback from customers, promoting content using images attractive and creative text to convey an original and effective message, keeping customers up to date with company news, and last but not least, social media marketing can help send customers directly to the company's website.

The young entrepreneurs specified for what purposes they use social media marketing at the level of their business, and the answers were: increasing brand awareness, facilitating sales, providing customer support, building effective links with the target audience, interacting directly with customers and the market, gathering information from the market, identifying the perception of the brand among the public, generating new customers, effectively monitoring relations with the target audience, effectively launching promotions and quickly distributing news about the company's news.

From the analysis carried out, we noticed that the respondents guide their activity according to a digital marketing plan, and the targeted aspects are: researching competitors and digital marketing trends, studying the market, analyzing examples of successful digital marketing strategies of competitors and setting digital marketing tactics. The respondents explained what an effective digital marketing plan entails from their point of view, and the answers were multiple, thus, the digital marketing plan must allow: setting strategic objectives, building the ideal consumer profile, analyzing the market and competition, establishing action plan, measuring results, analyzing competitors, establishing the appropriate digital marketing strategy, testing ideas and verifying results.

Moreover, they specified what is the content of a successful digital marketing plan, namely: the summary of the analysis of the current situation, the definition of the objectives, the segments of potential customers and the key messages relevant to the targeted customers, the decision on the promotion mix and communication channels, creation of the activity calendar, budget allocation, evaluation and follow-up.

Respondents stated that the most effective online marketing tools that can help their business grow are: social media management, email marketing, search engine optimization, content, planning and mobile marketing tools.

The purposes of using digital marketing tools are represented by: effective promotion and reduced costs, the ability to track the results of campaigns, clear goal setting, quick collection of consumer information, measurement of campaign results and business relationship management.

The interviewees also explained that if they had to convince an offline-only entrepreneur to also use digital marketing tools, the main advantages they would present to them would be: quick provision of market information, access to a market on a large scale, appreciated brand image, the possibility to target customer categories much better, better control over communication methods and promotion methods, increase in brand awareness, increase in brand visibility, increase in income and conversions.

The subjects believe that there is a need for digital marketing within each company, motivating their opinions by presenting the following benefits obtained, such as: reducing expenses, improved customer services, obtaining competitive advantages, automating some processes, increasing business potential, analyzing and comparing competitors, strategies effective for achieving the goals, evaluating the company's activities at the current moment and the constant presence in the online environment.

To establish the appropriate digital promotion channel for their business, the subjects take into account the objectives pursued, for example: identifying the current situation of the brand, establishing business and marketing objectives, establishing the relationship between the brand and the target audience, determining the available budget, generating leads, market research and branding. Respondents believe that the most effective digital marketing channels are: online stores, social media marketing, content marketing, blogging and vlogging, video marketing, email marketing, SEO and PPC.

Synthesizing the information gathered, we identify the importance given by the interviewed subjects to digital marketing and the essential role attributed to digital marketing strategies within their business. So, without the application of digital marketing, a company fails to keep up with the continuously developing market. In the future for greater accuracy of the results we want to expand the research to a national level to study a representative sample in order to get an overview of the implications of digital marketing on the performance of a business.

References

1. Aitchison, J., & Mandache, P. (2006). *Inovație în advertising: cum să creezi cele mai bune print-ad-uri pentru brandurile secolului XXI*. Brandbuilders.
2. Alamäki, A., & Korpela, P. (2021). Digital transformation and value-based selling activities: seller and buyer perspectives. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 16 (2).
3. Coviello, N., Milley, R., & Marcolin, B. (2001). Understanding IT-enabled interactivity in contemporary marketing. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 15(4), 18-33.
4. Diez-Martin, M., Blanco-Gonzalez, A. & Prado-Roman, C. (2019). Research Challenges in Digital Marketing: Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 11(10), 2839, 1-13.
5. Gapsalamov, A., Bochkareva, T., Vasilev, V., Akhmetshin, E., & Anisimova, T. (2020). Comparative analysis of education quality and the level of competitiveness of leader countries under digitalization conditions. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 11(2), 133-150.
6. Hess, T., Lang, K. R., & Xu, S. X. (2011). Social embeddedness and online consumer behavior. *Electronic Markets*, 21(3), 157-159.
7. Kayumovich, K. O. & Annamuradovna, F. S. (2020). The main convenience of Internet marketing from traditional marketing. *Academy*. 1 (52).
8. Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business research*, 65(10), 1480-1486.
9. Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business research*, 65(10), 1480-1486.
10. Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. (2012). *Marketing Management*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
11. Poturak, M., & Softic, S. (2019). Influence of social media content on consumer purchase intention: Mediation effect of brand equity. *Eurasian Journal of Business and Economics*, 12(23), 17-43.
12. Pradhan, P., Nigam, D., & Ck, T. (2018). Digital marketing and SMES: An identification of research gap via archives of past research. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce*, 23(1), 1-14.
13. Pricopoaia, O., & Susanu, I. (2021). The Impact Of Using Social Media Platforms In Business Promotion. In *Proceedings of the INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE* (Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 930-938). Faculty of Management, Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.
14. Susanu, I. O., Damian, D., Avram, C., & Rusu, R. (2019). A Model for Analyzing the Efficiency of SEO and Adwords Campaigns in the Romanian and American Online Media. *Risk in Contemporary Economy*, 401-406.
15. Unni, M. V. (2020). Does Digital and Social Media Marketing Play a Major Role in Consumer Behaviour?. *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, 3(4), 272-278.