
“ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING SALES REVENUE FOR SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES”

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ABSTRACT

Small retail business leaders use online marketing to connect with consumers and the community. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies some small retail business leaders use to implement online marketing to increase sales.

Data were collected from 4 small retail business owners who successfully used strategies to implement online marketing in California. The conceptual framework for this study was Rogers's diffusion of innovation theory. Data collection techniques and sources were semi structured, face-to-face interviews, and review of public business documents, company websites, social media websites, and analytical tools.

A thematic analysis of the data yielded 4 themes: social media platforms and strategies, online marketing strategies and challenges, online content strategies, and follow-up strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Practical use of various online tools by business leaders leads to new opportunities. The Internet is a trusted source that consumers turn to before purchasing products and services. Business leaders use the Internet as a marketing tool for financial success and to aid in fostering communication with the visibility and channels of online sales and social media advertising becoming robust ways to reach various markets for business expansion.

In 2013, there were 28.8 million small businesses, representing 99.7% of all organizations. According to Jones, consumers are using Internet technologies in increasing numbers, which presents opportunities for businesses to reach and connect with more people through websites and social media sites. 69% of consumers use social media to share information about products and services. However, succeeding with online marketing requires resources to create quality content and build followers.

The benefits of online marketing include:

- (a) economic pricing,
- (b) the targeting of diverse demographics at once,
- (c) providing products and services conveniently, and
- (d) allowing customers to easily research products and services to expedite the purchasing decision.

Online marketing provides opportunities for businesses to gain economic value via collaboration with stakeholders, customers, and employees. Small retail business leaders must incorporate online marketing strategies into their business plan to decrease the possibility of failure, grow their business, and become more profitable.

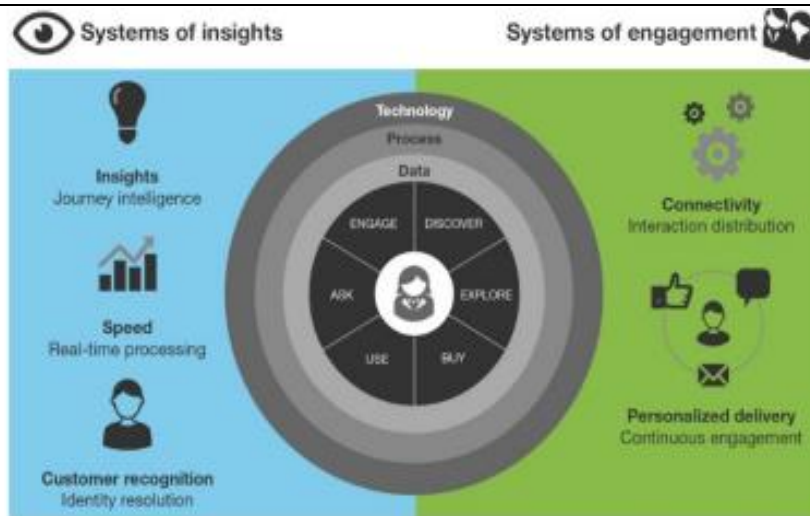
PROBLEM STATEMENT

Some small business retail leaders struggle to implement social media marketing strategies for advertisement, employee recruitment, and communication for increased revenue. In 2015, 31.8% of small retail businesses had websites to leverage online marketing, yet 67.4% could not grasp opportunities offered by online marketing, which resulted in a loss of opportunities in online markets. The general business problem was that small retail business leaders encounter difficulty using online marketing to increase the quality of communication with customers and to increase derivative sales.

The specific business problem was that some small retail business leaders lack strategies to implement online marketing to increase derivative sales.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies some small retail business leaders use to implement online marketing to increase derivative sales. The target population included business leaders from four small retail businesses in California who I selected because they had successfully implemented online marketing strategies to increase derivative sales. The implications for positive social change included the potential for business leaders to provide job opportunities for the public.



AIM OF THE STUDY

Small enterprises face challenges such as limitations of financial resources, marketing experts and they compete at a disadvantage against others within the industry to attract and retain customers. In determining small firms' competitive advantage, this study considers the firms' marketing strategy in pricing, customer loyalty, offering tailored products/services, customer satisfaction, and the role of digitalization in enhancing the marketing activities. Moreover, this study aims to fill in the above-mentioned gap in the small enterprises' marketing strategy literature and contributes to a successful marketing strategy in competing with market-dominating enterprises. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore small enterprise marketing strategies and the digital marketing that can help level the playing field in competing against others and gain competitive advantage.

Social media allow companies to interact with their customers in a new innovative way which exceeds traditional marketing methods, and this creates new opportunities for word-of-mouth since messages can be shared and spread out rapidly. By using social media appropriately, companies comprehend trends and understand what customers really want state that the use of social media increases customer relations and that companies need to communicate with their customers to be competitive. In a study on social media marketing in hotel industry, found that hotels have a misunderstanding of social media's use in marketing because they use it as just another advertising channel. They neglect the fact that they need to interact, socialize, and establish relationships with the customers. Vladimir claims that social media can be used to strengthen the communication between the customer and the enterprise, which in turn contributes to a stronger relationship. It is crucial for businesses to choose an appropriate social media, and it can be helpful to check out what social media the competitors are using to build relationships with customers to ensure the same opportunity as competitors. According to Sashi (2012), marketing with social media has already been shown to be an effective marketing tool. It has changed an enterprise's way of managing its brand to a more customer reentered open-source branding where customers are those who generate branding content. Furthermore, Ashley and Tuten claim that social media creates a chance for two-way communication between customers and companies and involve customers in the marketing process which can reinforce the relationship among them.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively investigate and analyze the factors influencing "Online Marketing Strategies for Increasing Sales Revenue for Small Retail Businesses". The research aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- 1. Social Media Engagement:** An exploration of how adept utilization of platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter can foster brand visibility, engagement, and ultimately, sales conversion.
- 2. Email Marketing Mastery:** Unveiling the nuances of crafting compelling email marketing campaigns to nurture customer relationships, propel product promotions, and drive repeat purchases.
- 3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** An in-depth analysis of SEO techniques customized for small retailers to ascend search engine rankings, bolster organic traffic, and augment sales prospects.
- 4. Content Creation and Distribution:** Shedding light on the significance of crafting captivating content that resonates with target audiences, and strategizing its dissemination across digital channels to fortify brand authority and drive traffic.
- 5. Data-Driven Decision Making:** Advocating the utilization of analytics tools to glean actionable insights from consumer behavior data, facilitating informed marketing decisions and optimization of campaigns.

- 6. Omni-Channel Integration:** Advocating for the seamless integration of online and offline channels to create a unified customer experience, fostering brand loyalty and maximizing sales opportunities.
- 7. Personalized Marketing:** Exploring the potency of personalized marketing initiatives, such as tailored product recommendations and customized messaging, in enhancing customer engagement and driving conversions.
- 8. Mobile Optimization:** Recognizing the burgeoning significance of mobile devices in driving online transactions, the report emphasizes the imperative of mobile-responsive websites and targeted mobile marketing strategies.

Scope And Limitations

Scope: Despite these limitations, online marketing can still be a valuable tool for small retail businesses to increase sales revenues. By carefully targeting their efforts, leveraging the strengths of their brand, and continually refining their strategies based on feedback and data, small businesses can overcome many of these challenges and achieve success in the online marketplace.

Limitations:

- 1. Limited Reach:** While online marketing can potentially reach a global audience, small retail businesses may struggle to compete with larger companies with bigger marketing budgets. This can limit the effectiveness of online marketing efforts in reaching a wide audience.
- 2. Budget Constraints:** Small businesses often have limited budgets for marketing activities. While online marketing can be cost-effective compared to traditional marketing methods, there are still costs associated with activities such as advertising, social media management, and content creation.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review should not only provide better understanding of the topic and expose relevant recent research studies, but strive to answer some of the research questions. It might further on provide ideas for future research of most suitable marketing strategies. In the context of this thesis marketing strategy is a synonym for a set of marketing activities or tactics. There have been numerous definitions and defined elements comprising it suggests to view it as “a pattern of decisions about products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the processes of creation, communication and delivery of products.”

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively investigate and analyze the factors influencing “Online Marketing Strategies for Increasing Sales Revenue for Small Retail Businesses”. The research aims to achieve valuable objectives.

5. METHODOLOGY

I used a multiple case study design in this study to collect and analyze data to explore the phenomenon under study. The multiple case study design addressed the how and why research question. **Hyett, Kenny, and Dickson-Swift** emphasized that researchers should use multiple case study designs in certain contexts to collect and analyze data. Case study design involves exploring the phenomenon within a contemporary setting to answer the research question.

Types Of Research

The basic types of research are as follows:

- **Descriptive vs. Analytical:** Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material.
- **Applied vs. fundamental:** Research can either be applied (or action) research or fundamental (or basic or pure) research. Applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organization, whereas fundamental research is mainly concerned with generalizations and with the formulation of a theory.
- **Quantitative vs. Qualitative:** Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity.
- **Conceptual vs. Empirical or Experimental type of research:** Conceptual research is that related to some abstract idea(s) or theory. It is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or to reinterpret existing ones. On the other hand, Empirical research relies on experience or observation along, often without due regard for system and theory. It is data-based research, coming up with conclusions which are capable of being verified by observation of experiment.

6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection methods for this study will involve both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data will be collected through surveys and interviews, while the secondary data will be gathered from existing literature, reports, and official documents.

A. Website Analytics: Utilize tools like Google Analytics to track website traffic, user behavior, and conversion rates. Analyzing this data helps identify areas for improvement.

B. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems: Implement CRM software to gather customer data, track interactions, and personalize marketing efforts.

C. Social Media Insights: Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide insights into audience demographics, engagement metrics, and content performance.

D. Email Marketing Metrics: Monitor email open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates to gauge the effectiveness of your email campaigns.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a User-Friendly Website: Ensure your website is visually appealing, easy to navigate, and optimized for mobile devices. Include high-quality product images, clear product descriptions, and a streamlined checkout process to enhance the user experience.

► **Optimize for Search Engines (SEO):** Improve your website's visibility in search engine results by optimizing for relevant keywords related to your products or services. Create valuable, keyword-rich content such as blog posts, product guides, and FAQs to attract organic traffic.

► **Utilize Social Media:** Establish a strong presence on social media platforms where your target audience spends time. Share engaging content, run promotions and contests, and interact with followers to build relationships and drive traffic to your website.

► **Paid Advertising (PPC):** Invest in pay-per-click advertising on platforms like Google Ads or social media advertising on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest. Target specific demographics, interests, or behaviors to reach potential customers who are likely to be interested in your products.

► **Leverage Online Marketplaces:** Expand your reach by selling your products on popular online marketplaces such as Amazon, eBay, Etsy, or Shopify. Take advantage of their built-in customer base and marketing tools to increase sales and exposure for your products.

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies some retail business leader use to implement online marketing to increase derivative sales. The ability of small retail business leaders to increase derivative sales with the use of online marketing strategies require employing the proper individuals, use of effective advertising methods, and selecting explicit online content. Through data collection and analysis, a total of four themes emerged, which was:

- (a) social media platforms and strategies,
- (b) online marketing strategies and challenges,
- (c) online content strategies, and
- (d) follow-up strategies.

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