

A STUDY ON WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNET MARKETING IN THE PERCEPTION OF MARKETERS OF INDIA

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Introduction

The Internet is believed to be the most transforming invention in the human history and rightly so. Internet today has changed everything our style work, the way we learn, way of playing, the way we communicate and most significantly, the way we do business. The factor that has enabled this is the ease of accessibility of the internet anywhere any time. With most of the mobile companies now providing mobile internet, anything in the world is now just a click away. Moreover with about 27% of the world's population online, we can only begin to imagine the huge potential Internet has to offer for the businesses to market their products and services. The cut-throat competition clubbed with the dynamic market conditions has made Internet Marketing a business imperative because the Internet is an indefeasible trend. Under the existing circumstances a business that follows only the traditional and conventional marketing methods is bound to lose valuable customers without an online presence. People normally search for products and services with their computers and if a business is not on the web the usual perception is that it cannot be trusted and they are more likely to choose another company to do business with.

The Internet and the Marketing Concept

We introduce the marketing concept, and then consider its relationship to more recent concepts such as Internet marketing, e-commerce and e-business.

The word marketing has two distinct meanings in modern management practice. It describes:

1. The range of specialist marketing functions carried out within many organisations. Such functions include market research, brand/product management, public relations and customer service.
2. An approach or concept that can be used as the guiding philosophy for all functions and activities of an organisation. Such a philosophy encompasses all aspects of a business.

Business strategy is guided by an organisation's market and competitor focus and everyone in an organisation should be required to have a customer focus in their job.

Internet and ICT

A strong ICT infrastructure provides two important strategic capabilities. First, infrastructures enable data sharing across functions and divisions, which supports cross-functional decision-making and allows organisations to act more globally. Second, provide a base for faster development of business applications due to standardised platforms and common applications (Brown and Ross, 1996). The ICT, the convergence of computing, telecommunications and imaging technologies have had radical impacts on ICT users, their work, and their working environments. In its various manifestations, ICT processes data, gathers information, stores collected materials, accumulates knowledge, and expedites communication.

Web Site Development

Web site development has been suggested that it should be covered preparation; seeding; full-scale planting; growth; yield; growth outstrips infrastructure; pruning, weeding and re-planning; and finally maturity (Oliver and Johnson, 1999). A top-down approach by Artz (1996) was introduced for developing corporate Web applications that begins with defining the purpose of the application and proceeds through well-defined stages to Web page development.

As E-Commerce expands, the design of Web sites becomes a critical success factor. First, Web sites are the main interface between businesses and consumers. Second, the Web site may become one of the main factors in judging a corporation. 100 of judges used six criteria (business function, corporation credibility, contents reliability, Web site attractiveness, systematic structure and navigation) to find factors that make an award winning over 3000 Web sites (Kim, Shaw and Schneider, 2003). A number of informal development models for Web sites can be identified under a variety of guises. A synthesis of these informal approaches and case studies leads to the following general or an informal Web site development model: establish the need before the Web site is adopted as a solution; gather information before any Web site development takes place; develop and evaluate before creating the complete site; implementation should be done once all design decisions have been finalised; and maintain (Cunliffe, 2000).

Table: Informal Development Model, Tasks and Usability Methods for Web Sites

Stage Usability	Method
Establish the need – Before the Web is adopted as a solution	
Information providers business objectives Whether a Web site is the right solution Define success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one meetings (Rosenfeld and Morville, 1998, ch. 7) • Brainstorming (Rosenfeld and Morville, 1998, ch. 7)
Gather information – Before any Web development takes place	
Competitive analysis Key users Key user characteristics Key user tasks Information objects Relevant published research Reusable content resources Appropriate guidelines and heuristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive analysis (Nielsen, 1995a; Andrew and Musser, 1997; Rosenfeld and Morville, 1998, ch. 7) • Focus groups (Abels et. al., 1997a, b; Berndtsson, 1999) • Interviews (Rice et. al., 1996; Corry et. al., 1997; Berndtsson, 1999) • Surveys (Fuccella, 1997; Zimmerman et. al., 1997) • Questionnaires (Abels et. al., 1997a) • Scenarios (Nielsen, 1995a; Flemming, 1998, ch. 1; Rosenfeld and Morville, 1998, ch. 8) • Customer pathways (McGaffin, 1999) • Review appropriate existing studies of user information-related behaviour (Abels et. al., 1997a, b; Zimmerman et. al., 1997) • Design team brainstorming (Andrew and Musser, 1997; Erskine et. al., 1997; Rosenfeld and Morville, 1998, chs 7, 8)

Development and Design Stage

Prior competencies, competitive intensity, firm size, Web site age, firm age, and strategic commitment are six drivers that significantly influence a firm’s Web site development and effectiveness. The study also found that competitive intensity, prior competencies, firm age and firm size influence the firm’s strategic commitment, which has a mediating effect on Web site development (Kowtha and Choon, 2001). Another suggestion in the Web site development by Huizingh (2000), two important characteristics need to be focussed, content and design.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to **Strauss and Corbin (1990)**, “The research design is the plan for the study, providing the overall framework for collecting the data, outlines the detailed steps in the study and provides guidelines for systematic data gathering.” They further state that a research design is similar to an

architectural blueprint which plans on organizing and integrating results in a particular end product.

While **Booyse et al. (1993)** define research design as the consideration and creation of the means of obtaining reliable, objective, generalized and valid data by means of which formal announcements about the phenomenon may be confirmed or rejected. They further stated that the research design is a plan that will be applied during the investigation in order to answer the research questions, and aims at trying to ensure that answers to questions are accurate ones.

Kerlinger defines a research design as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation purposing to answer research questions and control variance.

Here, the “plan” stands for the overall scheme or programme of the research study embracing an outline of what the researcher intends to do ranging from the initial stage of formulation of his hypothesis and their working implications to the final stage of data analysis.

The “structure” of the research study is defined in a more specific way as the outline, the scheme and

the paradigm that is, model or an example. The structural schemes are prepared by drawing various diagrams to show the variables and their relation and juxtaposition with a view to facilitating operational research objectives.

The term “strategy” is more specific than plan and involves the methods and techniques for data collection and analyses so as to achieve the precise research objectives and deal with the research problems.

Internet Marketing & Web Development

We are witnessing of a fundamental shift, which is occurring in the world economy. Business are moving progressively further away from a world in which national economies were relatively isolated from each other by barriers to cross border trade and investment; by distance, time zones and language; and by national difference in government regulation, culture and business systems. National economies are merging into an interdependent global economic system. The rapidly emerging global economy raises a multitude of issues for business both large and small. It creates opportunities for business to expand their revenues, drive down their costs and boost their profits. While the emerging global economy created opportunities such as this for new entrepreneurs and established business around the world, it also give rise to challenges and threats that yesterday’s business did not have to deal with.

A powerful force drives the world towards a converging commonality, and that force is technology. It has proletarianized communication, transport and travel. The result is a new commercial reality the emergence of global markets for standardized consumer products on a previously unimagined scale of magnitude. The multinational corporation operates in a number of countries and adjusts its products and practices to each at high relative costs. The global corporation operates with resolute consistency at low relative cost as if the entire world were a single entity it sells the same thing in the same way everywhere. Communication technology i.e. Internet has always been a major driver of economic progress. The Internet, because of its global reach, rapid growth and potential for transmitting huge bundles of information at almost zero cost, well have a particularly dramatic impact in the near future. Internet and WWW promise to develop into the information backbone of tomorrow’s global economy.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was distributed to the companies or marketers based on the eight industries (Internet and ICT; tourism and hospitality; manufacturing; retailing; construction and real estate; printing and publishing; banking and finance; and education). Of the 1849 questionnaires, 200 were returned. The total of response rate was 10.8%. 100 questionnaires were returned from each country, therefore Malaysia and India. 93.5% of the samples received were from three industries namely retailing, Internet and ICT, and manufacturing. Samples received were less than 3% of the total population of distributed questionnaires for each industry. Even few methods have been applied to distribute the questionnaire, however, the feedback from five industries, therefore tourism and hospitality, construction and real estate, printing and publication, banking and finance, and education still low.

The distribution of questionnaires is based on size of the industry. Due to the population of each industry in Malaysia much higher than India, 56.6% of the questionnaires were distributed in Malaysia compare to India just only 43.4%. Minimum of 100 questionnaires were distributed for each country. However, due to the small population of industry in Malaysia and India, less than 100 questionnaires were distributed for three industries, therefore printing and publishing industry, banking and finance industry, as well as education industry for India. 57% of the questionnaires distributed were mainly from the Internet and ICT industry (Malaysia: 250, India: 150), manufacturing industry (Malaysia: 200, India: 150), and retailing industry (Malaysia: 150, India: 150).

Conclusion

This study has proved that there are positive correction between three factors, Internet and ICT, Web site development and Internet marketing. Web site development has a statistically significant positive impact on the Internet marketing in Malaysia and India. It also proved that the Internet and ICT has a statistically significant positive impact on Web site development in Malaysia and India. Marketing on the Web does not guarantee that a company will be able to avail itself of all the benefits (Wilson and Abel, 2002). As Moschella (1999) pointed out, organisations that are resource-rich are not necessarily more capable of fully utilising the Web. Some of these large organisations have failed to recognise the opportunities the Web offers and have either under-invested in Web-based communication or have invested unwisely (McMillan, 2001). Some organisational types seem to be more likely to survive than others (Koehler, 1999) and the

importance of organisational commitment to current technology (Cunningham, 2000).

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