

## DEVELOPING DIGITAL MARKETING IN VIETNAM

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### Abstract

In recent years, the development of information technology and communication has deeply impacted all aspects of social life. Digital Marketing and e-commerce are two important fields in Vietnam's digital economy. Digital Marketing involves using online tools and channels to reach, attract, and interact with target customers. Digital Marketing not only plays a vital role in Vietnam's digital economy but also involves utilizing online tools and channels to reach, attract, and interact with target customers. This article aims to study the current situation and analyze the difficulties and challenges that this field is facing. Based on statistical methods, synthesis, comparison, and research from relevant sources, the article has collected and analyzed data, evaluated the current situation to analyze and predict the application of advantages, and raised awareness of the importance of Digital Marketing. Accordingly, the authors propose solutions to enhance the effectiveness of Digital Marketing activities for businesses in Vietnam at the present stage.

**Keywords:** Development, Digital Marketing, Việt Nam.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, Digital Marketing has experienced significant development in Vietnam thanks to investments in technology infrastructure, legal frameworks, and the awareness and needs of businesses and consumers. The development of information technology and communication (ICT) has deeply impacted all aspects of social life, including the marketing field. Digital Marketing has become an integral part of the business strategies of companies and organizations. In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, new technology trends are profoundly influencing all aspects of social life, including marketing.

The Digital field in Vietnam continues to grow strongly in the coming years. This is a great opportunity for businesses and organizations to enhance the effectiveness of their business operations. Some key trends in Digital Marketing in Vietnam in the near future are as follows: (1) Video platforms: Video is becoming a prominent trend in Digital Marketing, with the development of video platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram Reels, etc.; (2) Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is being increasingly applied in Digital Marketing, helping businesses and organizations automate processes and improve operational efficiency; (3) Personalized customer experience: Personalized customer experience is becoming an essential trend in Digital Marketing, helping businesses and organizations build strong relationships with customers. The development of the Digital field in Vietnam has brought many benefits to businesses and organizations, such as increasing customer reach. Digital Marketing enables businesses and organizations to reach customers in multiple locations and at different times, enhancing their ability to interact with customers. Digital Marketing helps businesses and organizations better understand customer needs, allowing them to develop appropriate marketing strategies and improve business effectiveness. Digital Marketing helps businesses and organizations increase revenue and improve profitability. Therefore, Vietnamese businesses need to adapt and innovate their operations to overcome risks and seize new opportunities. This article provides an overview of the development of Digital Marketing, highlighting the challenges that Vietnamese businesses need to face in order to achieve sustainable growth in the current period.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the digital age, as consumers' ability to compare and learn is enhanced by the convenience of information technology, the internet, and social media, businesses and organizations must make even greater efforts to attract and persuade customers. Faced with increasing competition in the market, the marketing and business activities of companies need to be developed in a digital direction to increase the effectiveness of these operations. However, to have a better understanding of Digital Marketing, it is necessary to define the term "Digital." According to Caddell (2013), the term "Digital" is not only a platform that combines all online media to allow users to have self-experiences, but it also helps businesses connect and interact with customers simultaneously, thereby reinforcing messages and building customer relationships.

According to Kotler (2012) and Kotler & Keller (2012, 2016), Digital Marketing, or digital marketing in English, is the process of planning product strategies, pricing, distribution, and promotion of products, services, and ideas to meet customer needs, including the needs of organizations or individuals, based on electronic and Internet media. Building upon this perspective, Brosan (2012) believes that "Digital Marketing has shifted from a user-centric marketing approach to creating an experiential form with strong consumer interaction. It allows users to enjoy the power of Digital Marketing tools to satisfy their needs." According to research by Chaffey (2013) and Madhu (2019), Digital Marketing is the use of technology to support marketing activities to enhance customer understanding by meeting their needs. In 2016, Lamberton and Stephen introduced the concept of Digital

Marketing as the overall strategy that businesses implement on the online information technology platform to reach consumers and stakeholders. These strategies are highly interactive, focused, and measurable. Digital Marketing is divided into two main areas: (1) Digital Online Marketing and (2) Digital Offline Marketing. Digital Online Marketing includes Search Engine Optimization, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Pay-per-Click Advertising, Affiliate Marketing, Native Advertising, Marketing Automation, Email Marketing, Online PR, Local Marketing, and Sponsored Content. (2) Digital Offline Marketing includes Enhanced Offline Marketing, Radio Marketing, Television Marketing, and Mobile Marketing (Sanclemente-Téllez, 2017).

Digital Marketing, also known as Online Marketing, is the promotion of a brand to connect with potential customers using the internet and other digital media channels. This includes not only email, social media, and web advertising but also text messages and multimedia messages as marketing channels. Essentially, if a marketing campaign involves digital media, then it is digital marketing. In practice, digital marketing often refers to online marketing campaigns appearing on computers, smartphones, tablets, or other devices. It can take various forms, including online video, display advertising, search engine marketing, paid advertising on social media, and social media posts (Intuit Malchimp, nd).

In general, Digital Marketing is understood as the use of the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other digital channels to research and reach consumers (Chaffey, 2019). Compared to older marketing approaches, Digital Marketing's core strength lies in its ability to respond to customers quickly and cater to their individual needs. Today's consumers actively seek out goods and services that fulfill their specific demands, readily evaluating and sharing their opinions on products and services, even with wider online communities (Ozlen, 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a decline in most sectors of the economy. However, Digital Marketing has emerged as a bright spot, becoming the "best choice" for many businesses. Not only does it help businesses achieve better efficiency and improve their results, but it also enables clear goal setting and targeting of specific potential customers. Digital Marketing empowers businesses to be effective, set clear goals, and identify specific customers, leading to a rapid transition towards digital operations. Its importance is undeniable, making it a key driver of success in today's digitally driven landscape (Doan, 2023).

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research methods used were statistics, synthesis, comparison, and literature review. The statistical method was used to collect data on Digital Marketing activities as well as the development of digital marketing in the post-COVID-19 era to provide the most appropriate research results. In addition, the research team also used the method of analyzing and synthesizing theories and the method of analyzing research on different documents and theories by breaking them down into parts to understand the subject more clearly

## **4. THE REALITY OF DIGITAL MARKETING ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM DURING THE POST-COVID-19 PERIOD**

### **4.1 The Situation of Digital Marketing in 2022**

Based on the 2022 Digital Vietnam Report based on data from “We are Social”, the report provides an overview of the digital marketing market and trends in Vietnam in 2022, including indicators on internet users, social media, e-commerce, video marketing, influencer marketing, content marketing, and post-COVID-19 consumer behavior. The report also provides some insights for the implementation of effective digital marketing campaigns.

#### **4.1.1. Digital Marketing Market in the Vietnam**

##### **4.1.1.1. Internet Users**

The number of internet users in Vietnam reached 84.1 million in 2022, accounting for 77% of the population, up 5.5% from 2021. The number of mobile internet users reached 83.9 million, accounting for 76.9% of the population, up 5.6% from 2021. On average, each internet user in Vietnam spends 6 hours and 23 minutes on the internet each day, of which 5 hours and 58 minutes are spent on mobile internet. This suggests that digital marketing is becoming an important channel for businesses and organizations in Vietnam, as the number of internet users is growing and spending more time on online activities (We are social, 2023).

##### **4.1.1.2 Socia Media**

Social media is one of the key channels in digital marketing because it helps businesses and organizations to increase interaction, engagement, and communication with their target audience. The number of social media users in Vietnam reached 72.7 million in 2022, accounting for 66.4% of the population, up 8.1% from 2021. On average, each social media user in Vietnam spends 2 hours and 38 minutes on social media each day.

Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Vietnam, with 70.4 million users, accounting for 63.7% of the population. Instagram is in second place with 30.5 million users, accounting for 27.3% of the population. Other social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Zalo, etc. are also growing rapidly. In particular, the outstanding growth rate is prominent on the TikTok platform, which has opened up a new generation of social media for young people and also predicts that short-content platforms will occupy an important position in the future. From here, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have also implemented additional short-clip activities on their platforms, but TikTok is still a more advantageous channel.

This suggests that businesses and organizations need to keep abreast of social media trends and preferences to choose the right platform and create engaging and interesting content for their target audience (We are social, 2023).

#### **4.1.1.3 E-commerce**

E-commerce is one of the most effective channels in digital marketing because it helps businesses and organizations sell products and increase online revenue. The total value of e-commerce transactions in Vietnam reached \$12.6 billion, up 42% from 2021. Of this, the value of B2C e-commerce transactions reached \$7.8 billion, up 46% from 2021. On average, each internet user in Vietnam spends \$239 on e-commerce transactions each year. This suggests that consumer purchasing behavior has shifted significantly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. E-commerce has become a popular shopping channel, with rapid growth. Businesses and organizations need to improve the quality of their services, customer care, and user experience on e-commerce platforms, in order to compete and retain customers. This shows the importance and complementary relationship between digital marketing and e-commerce. Digital marketing and e-commerce both emerged and developed on the foundation of modern technology. If digital marketing is a way to quickly spread information, then e-commerce is a modern business method. When users are gradually switching from traditional to online forms of product information access, e-commerce is the path for them to switch from information access behavior to online shopping behavior quickly and easily.

In conclusion, the development of digital marketing and e-commerce has created a new global trade situation. This is also a challenge for businesses to access and use technology effectively to improve their competitiveness as well as meet the needs of consumers in the present and future.

### **4.2 The current trends of Digital Marketing in Vietnam**

#### **4.2.1 Video Marketing**

Video marketing is becoming a powerful trend in digital marketing because it has the ability to capture attention, convey messages, and create emotions for viewers. Currently, 95.5% of internet users in Vietnam watch online videos each month, with an average of 2 hours and 11 minutes of online video viewing each day. This suggests that businesses and organizations need to invest in video marketing to increase the effectiveness of their digital marketing campaigns.

Businesses and organizations need to choose the right video platform for their target audience and objectives, create high-quality, creative, and valuable videos for viewers, and optimize elements such as titles, descriptions, tags, embeds, sharing, and content analytics to get insights

#### **4.2.2 Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing is becoming increasingly popular in Vietnam, with the emergence of many influencers with large followings. In Vietnam, consumer preferences for following and supporting products are trending towards trusting the KOC (Key Opinion Consumer) group because of the natural and realistic nature of their content.

According to statistics and forecasts by Buzz Metric in 2023, as shown in "Influencer Marketing Trends in September 2023", influencer groups are likely to shift to the TikTok

channel with a growth rate of up to 98%, adding about 25,000 new accounts. Meanwhile, Facebook decreased by 0.08%, and Instagram decreased by 6.64%. In addition, a new force of influencer accounts has appeared that are not represented by personal information but mainly operate in the form of fan pages with a growth rate of 26.44% and Facebook Groups at 43.54%. The YouTube platform, although with the highest growth rate of up to 135%, actually only increased by 4,700 new accounts due to the very limited number.

#### **4.2.3 Livestream Marketing**

In 2022, Vietnamese consumers spent over 37 million hours on Shopee Live to connect and interact with their favorite sellers, seeking information about products they were interested in before making a purchase. They were spending more time on these platforms and expecting additional value and a more complete online experience. Furthermore, Vietnamese users were becoming more proactive when shopping online. They actively shared feedback and reviews about products they had used, helping other users make better purchasing decisions. According to Shopee's statistical report, the most active user group belonged to the age range of 18-34. This group had more than 1.5 times the number of orders, compared to the average number of orders per shopper in 2022. Younger users showed a keen interest in industries such as health and beauty, fashion, electronics, and home appliances. Among these, the most popular products included skincare, women's fashion, smartphones, and accessories (Duc Thien, 2023).

#### **4.3 Consumer Behavior in the Post-Covid-19**

Currently in Vietnam, the following changes or trends can be seen in the Digital Marketing industry:

- Vietnamese consumers spend an average of 6 hours and 23 minutes online per day. Of this time, 5 hours and 58 minutes are spent on mobile internet. This indicates that Vietnamese consumers are increasingly spending more time on online activities, such as watching videos, listening to music, reading news, studying, working, and shopping. According to a report by DataReportal, Vietnam has 71 million social media users, accounting for 72.7% of the population, and 68 million e-commerce users, accounting for 69.4% of the population. These are impressive numbers, which indicate the large potential of the Digital Marketing market in Vietnam.
- Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer shopping behavior has shifted significantly. E-commerce has become a popular shopping channel, with rapid growth. The total value of e-commerce transactions in 2022 reached 12.6 billion USD, up 42% from 2021. The leading e-commerce platforms in Vietnam, such as Shopee, Tiki, Lazada, and Sendo, have attracted millions of buyers and sellers on their apps. Businesses have also quickly adapted to this trend by strengthening their online sales channels, improving customer experience, and leveraging Digital Marketing tools to increase sales.

- Vietnamese consumers are increasingly interested in online content, especially entertainment, education, and news. This creates opportunities for businesses and organizations to implement effective Digital Marketing campaigns. According to the report, YouTube is the most used social media platform in Vietnam, with 80.8% of internet users accessing it monthly. Engaging, high-quality, and highly interactive video content can help brands increase awareness, impress, and build trust with customers. In addition, other platforms, such as TikTok, Zalo, Facebook, and Cốc Cốc, are also effective Digital Marketing channels, depending on the target audience, purpose, and content of the campaigns (We are social, 2023).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam in 2022 saw many changes and new opportunities. According to a report by We Are Social and Datareportal, there were 72.10 million Internet users in Vietnam in January 2022, accounting for 73.2% of the total population. Internet users in Vietnam increased by 3.4 million (+4.9%) from 2021 to 2022. This is an impressive figure, demonstrating the demand and potential of the Digital Marketing market in Vietnam.

One of the most prominent trends in the Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam in 2022 was the development of social media platforms. The most popular social media platforms in Vietnam in 2022 were Facebook, YouTube, Zalo, Instagram, and TikTok. These platforms are not only places for entertainment and socializing, but also effective channels for advertising and marketing for businesses. In addition, the Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam in 2022 also focused on optimizing the user experience on mobile devices. According to a report by We Are Social and Datareportal, there were 96.00 million mobile device users in Vietnam in January 2022, accounting for 97.4% of the total population. Mobile device users in Vietnam increased by 2.8 million (+3.0%) from 2021 to 2022. Mobile devices are not only a means of connecting to the Internet, but also a platform for digital services and applications, such as payment, shopping, education, healthcare, etc. Therefore, businesses need to design and develop content and marketing campaigns that are in line with the trend of mobile device usage by users.

In conclusion, the Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam in 2022 made significant progress, meeting the needs and desires of consumers. It also contributed to the development of the Vietnamese economy, surpassing the GDP target of 7% set by the Government in 2022. However, the Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam is also facing many challenges and competition, requiring businesses to constantly innovate and update new technologies and strategies, specifically:

- One of the main challenges is the lack of qualified and experienced human resources in this field. According to a report by the Department of E-Commerce and Digital Economy under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, only 24% of businesses have a dedicated department for Digital Marketing, while 76% of businesses have to outsource or do it themselves. This causes difficulties in planning, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of Digital Marketing campaigns. To overcome this challenge,

businesses need to recruit and attract talented people with expertise and experience in this field, while training and developing internal personnel to grasp new trends and apply effective marketing methods.

- Another challenge is the lack of data measurement and analysis to optimize the effectiveness of Digital Marketing. According to the above report, only 47% of businesses use data measurement and analysis tools to optimize the effectiveness of Digital Marketing, while 53% of businesses do not use or do not know about these tools. This limits the ability to track, evaluate, and improve the performance of Digital Marketing campaigns. To address this situation, businesses need to invest in modern data analysis tools and platforms and train employees to use them effectively. By collecting and analyzing data, businesses can identify trends, advantages, and disadvantages of marketing campaigns, from which to adjust and optimize Digital Marketing activities to achieve better results.
- Another problem in this industry is the lack of synchronization and interaction between Digital Marketing channels and content. The report also shows that only 37% of businesses use multiple Digital Marketing channels in a synchronized and interactive way, while 63% of businesses only use one or a few channels individually and non-interactively. This leads to waste and missed opportunities in creating a unified and continuous customer experience across Digital Marketing channels. To overcome this challenge, businesses need to consider creating an integrated and synchronized Digital Marketing channel strategy, including coordinating content and messages across different platforms such as websites, social media, email marketing, and online advertising. By interacting and synchronizing these channels, businesses can create a consistent image and continuous interaction with customers, enhance marketing effectiveness, and build sustainable relationships with customers.
- Finally, another problem is the lack of compliance and consumer protection in Digital Marketing. According to the report, 28% of consumers have encountered problems related to Digital Marketing, including dishonest advertising, fraud, spam, and violations of personal data security and privacy. These problems damage the reputation and trust of consumers for businesses that use Digital Marketing. To address this issue, businesses need to comply with advertising regulations and consumer protection rules. They need to develop strict policies and procedures to ensure that their marketing activities comply with regulations and respect customer privacy

Overall, the Digital Marketing industry in Vietnam is developing but facing various challenges and competition. Businesses need to confront and overcome these challenges by seeking and developing specialized human resources, utilizing effective data analysis tools and technologies, synchronizing and interacting between channels and Digital Marketing content, as well as complying with and protecting consumer rights. By doing so, businesses can leverage the potential of Digital Marketing to enhance marketing effectiveness, build a strong brand, and achieve success in an increasingly digital environment.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN VIETNAM

After the post-Covid-19 era, the Digital Marketing industry has witnessed many changes and new challenges. However, there are also numerous opportunities and potential for Digital Marketing businesses to leverage and create business value. Here are some recommendations to help these businesses effectively utilize Digital Marketing and achieve success in this new era:

- **Build a content strategy:** Content remains a crucial element in Digital Marketing. Businesses need to create high-quality, engaging, and relevant content for their target audience. At the same time, use tools and techniques such as SEO, keyword optimization, and data analysis to help the content be more discoverable and widely spread.
- **Utilize social media and influencer marketing:** Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. Businesses need to harness the power of social media to establish and maintain relationships with customers. Collaborating with influencers in relevant fields can also help businesses reach the right target audience and build trust.
- **Leverage customer experience:** Customer experience is a determining factor in the success or failure of a business. Use technology to provide better customer experiences, from website interactions and email marketing to customer support services. Create memorable experiences and foster positive interactions with customers to build trust and drive business growth.
- **Apply data and artificial intelligence (AI):** Data and AI play a significant role in capturing customer information, identifying trends, and optimizing Digital Marketing campaigns. Businesses need to invest in AI technologies to analyze data, generate deeper customer insights, and create smarter marketing strategies.
- **Create an omnichannel interactive experience:** Customers increasingly desire seamless shopping experiences across multiple channels, from websites and mobile apps to social media and online stores. Businesses need to ensure that the customer purchasing experience is consistent and compatible across different channels.
- **Boost online advertising:** Utilize online advertising tools like Google Ads, Facebook Ads, and YouTube Ads to reach the right target audience and enhance brand recognition. Online advertising allows for real-time effectiveness measurement and campaign optimization.
- **Focus on mobile experience:** The prevalence of mobile phones has increased the importance of mobile experience in Digital Marketing. Businesses need to ensure that their websites and applications are optimized for mobile experience, with fast loading speeds, user-friendly interfaces, and ease of use on mobile devices.
- **Build and maintain customer relationships:** Digital Marketing is not only about acquiring new customers but also about building and maintaining relationships with existing

customers. Businesses need to use email marketing, chatbots, and other interactive tools to maintain interaction and foster customer loyalty.

- Partner and collaborate with allies: In the rapidly evolving Digital Marketing environment, collaborating with partners can bring significant benefits. Businesses can partner with allies in similar or different fields to share resources, customers, and knowledge, thereby creating innovative and effective marketing strategies.
- Measure and optimize effectiveness: Finally, businesses need to ensure that they measure and track the effectiveness of their Digital Marketing campaigns. Use analytics and measurement tools to evaluate results and optimize campaigns based on collected data. Continuously improving and adjusting strategies based on analytical insights will help businesses achieve better results.

In general, Digital Marketing continues to play a crucial role in reaching and creating value for businesses. By implementing the recommendations above, businesses can effectively leverage digital strategies and generate additional value in an ever-changing business environment.

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