

Journal of Management & Public Policy

Vol. 15, No. 3, March 2024 Pp. 58-67

ISSN 0976-0148 (Online) 0976-013X (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47914/jmpp.2024.v15i3.004>

Evaluating the Effects of Search Engine Optimization Techniques on the Efficacy of Digital Marketing

Snehil Singh*

ABSTRACT

Search engine optimization (SEO) is vital for businesses that want to improve online visibility in current scenarios. In a digital era where most consumers use search engines as the starting point to locate products or services, occupying a prominent position in search engine results is crucial. This article examines the nuances of SEO techniques for boosting the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts. In addition, the article delves into how SEO is revolutionizing the digital marketing landscape. In the article, the author reviews the primary goals of SEO, click behavior in search results, the importance of first-page ranking, and mobile search usage. In the article, the author has discussed factors influencing website stay, trust in search results, influences on click decisions for products and services, repercussions of visiting beyond first page results, and the importance of staying updated with SEO trends. The article provides incisive views on how SEOs contribute to digital marketing.

KEYWORDS: Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Digital Marketing, Internet, Organic Traffic, Communication

*Post Graduate Student of Journalism & Mass Communication, Amity University, Noida, India

E-mail: snehil.singh2@s.amity.edu

INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario, the information-rich internet has emerged as the gateway to a competitive edge in the business world via online presence and visibility. On the front lines of this digital space, we encounter search engine optimization (SEO), the most essential tool for digital marketers. SEO involves optimizing websites to enhance user-friendliness and boost search engine rankings, thereby increasing organic traffic and attracting potential customers. The role of SEO in digital marketing is immeasurable, especially in creating a trustworthy and productive online presence for businesses as they journey to achieve long-term growth and dominance.

The rise of digital marketing has transformed the field of marketing. Two major factors, the staggering growth in internet users and the ever-expanding range of online platforms, are responsible for this trend. Businesses are responding to this shift by widely adopting digital marketing, leveraging the internet's power to reach a wider audience and establish innovative connections with customers. As the globe prepares for a digital future, businesses must realign their marketing plans to match consumer behavior. Enterprises should seize this opportunity to employ efficient digital marketing skills, as more people are accessing information, making purchases, and finding entertainment through online platforms, which will benefit them when they connect with their target audience.

To leverage the benefits of SEO, companies must first comprehend what drives their audience into taking action online; what do they like? Which sites do they visit most frequently? How often and where do you see them engage with content, among other things? Once equipped with such knowledge, it becomes easier for one's company to ensure that all digital campaigns are designed around meeting these needs and establishing prospective customers' preferences to attract them towards the brand. Several common strategies are used in Internet advertising, including search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, email marketing, social media advertising and content creation or curation to give clients what they want. These methods increase an organization's visibility on search engines like Google, attracting more visitors who may become potential buyers later.

Besides, one can also use paid ads through platforms such as Facebook, where you only pay when someone clicks your ad while sending traffic back to the site, thus creating awareness about offers available but not limited only by organic reach. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that there isn't any universal rule when it comes to digital marketing; what works best for another business may not necessarily work well with yours too, hence the need for continuous analysis coupled with adjustment of various elements employed during this process; otherwise, such initiatives won't be productive enough in terms of reaching out and engaging with customers. Because SEO is a significant aspect of digital marketing, this research paper sheds some light on its wide-ranging significance and implications. This research aims to highlight the interrelationship of SEO and digital marketing. This study aims to illustrate the mechanisms through which SEO pushes up an online presence to spread traffic, facilitating high income for companies operating on the digital scale. This research paper aims to identify current trends, best practices, and emergent opportunities to offer relevant insights into the dynamic nature of SEO with respect to digital marketing.

The paper also recognizes the change in consumer attitude patterns in which mobile devices override traditional online communication. The significance of mobile-friendliness in SEO arises as smartphone ownership increases and is a significant internet source through browsing and information searching. Therefore, this study will focus on adapting SEO techniques to consumers' needs and preferences using mobile platforms and will care for the adequate balance between various digital channels. This paper draws a picture of SEO as broadly understood in digital marketing. The study delves into the complexities of SEO implementation, its effect on online discoverability, and how it interplays with digital marketing channels, among others, to proffer helpful and practical recommendations for businesses in the continually evolving digital sphere.

INSIGHTS FROM EXTANT LITERATURE ON SEO AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Search engines are complex information sorters. They use web crawlers to scan hundreds of billions of pages of content to sort that content and index it into useful results pages. Search engines are the biggest source of access to information on the Internet, and their importance is increasing daily (Egri and Bayrak, 2014).

SEO is a well-structured process of augmenting the number of visitors to a particular website by listing it on the first page of the online search on Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. There are three types of SEO, viz. On-page SEO, Off-page SEO, and Technical SEO. The success of On-page SEO depends on how efficiently keyword research has been done and leveraged. Companies can use a combination of transactions, informational and navigational keywords to ensure their contents are visible to the target audience on any search engine. Likewise, Off-page SEO can be attained through comments, forums, guest posts, etc. Social bookmarking is another tool used for Off-page SEO. Technical SEO looks at the loose ends in website architecture and plugs the loopholes.



Figure 1: Impact of SEO in Digital Marketing

SEO augments the effectiveness of digital marketing through cost-efficient marketing strategies, credibility and trust, adaptation to changing algorithms, improved user experience, enhanced online visibility, quality traffic generation, mobile optimization, and data-driven decision-making. Garg (2017) rightly observed: "SEO is an integral part of digital marketing. It is responsible to take your website visibility to a higher position and keep you up above all your competitors. It increases website visibility, user traffic, conversion rate, and ROI. A good ranking site is more exposed to users as compared to others. It is based on logic by Google, which uses the rank of the website". Great content on the website must be at the top of search engine research pages (SERPS) to gain traction with the users/target audience

(Terrance et al., 2017). According to Iskandar and Komara (2018), there is no substitute for vigorous SEO strategies for branding.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eleven experts in SEO and digital marketing. Relevant extant literature has also been examined to build a holistic perspective on the research theme.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Understanding of SEO

Most of the experts involved in the study asserted that they possessed a reasonable comprehension of SEO. The essence of digital marketing revolves around SEO's crucial role in enhancing a website's ranking on a search engine results page (SERP). SEO empowers businesses to optimize their online presence, ensuring that their content appears prominently when users search for information or goods relevant to their brand.

Primary Goal of SEO

Most experts in the field emphasize 'traffic building, ' which they regard as the primary objective of SEO in digital marketing. This comprehension forms the foundation for the primary purpose of organic search, which is to draw customers to websites that interest them. By strategically optimizing elements such as keywords, content quality, and website layout, businesses may attract more people to their websites. As a result, this can enhance brand awareness and engagement, potentially leading to more conversions.

Click Behavior on Search Results

According to the experts who participated in the study, the users typically prioritize the top few search results, which solidifies the importance of ranking well on search engine results pages (SERPs). Having the highest ranking in search engine results is advantageous in digital marketing as it increases the likelihood of being discovered by consumers and generates clicks and organic traffic. The given practice highlights the imperative of employing suitable SEO strategies to enhance the exposure of an advertisement on search engines and elevate its click-through rates.

Importance of First Page Ranking

Being present on the first page of Google search is a competitive factor in digital marketing. The experts unanimously observed that a high SERP is necessary for the success of digital marketing. Research findings have repeatedly demonstrated that most views occur on the first page of search results. To obtain high exposure and organic traffic, businesses should strive to secure the top positions on search engines.

Expectations from Search Results

The experts maintained that different users have varied expectations when they click on search engine results depending on their needs and expectations. Some individuals may seek specific indicators that correspond with their inquiry response, while others anticipate obtaining general insights regarding the issue. The foundation of digital marketing and SEO is the understanding of user intent, which enables the development of content that aligns with the preferences and needs of users, thereby generating high levels of engagement and satisfaction.

Mobile Search Usage

The necessity of incorporating mobile optimization into any digital marketing campaign is further substantiated by the growing prevalence of mobile phones as the primary device for web access. According to the participating experts, the companies should ensure that their websites are mobile-friendly and flexible enough to ensure that the perusing experience is consistent across various screen sizes, as an increasing number of users have transitioned to the internet via mobile devices. Neglecting mobile optimization may lead to a decrease in visitor traffic and may also harm the effectiveness of an individual's digital marketing initiatives.

Factors Influencing Website Stay

According to experts, users are likely to stay on a particular website due to the relevance and quality of the content, which is in sync with search queries. Consequently, this demonstrates the unmistakable impact of content quality and relevance on the retention of website visitors. In digital marketing, the presentation of high-quality and valuable content increases user

engagement on the website and the trust and credibility of the brand among consumers. This, in turn, promotes customer loyalty and conversions.

Trust in Search Results

According to the experts involved in the present study, users are likely to trust search results if the indexing is relevant and objective; the necessity of citation and authority as critical elements of SEO is underscored by the conjectures regarding trust grants to sites that appear at the summit of search results. Top-ranked websites and search results displayed first in the search results are perceived as more trustworthy. Even so, users may also consider the website's user experience, content quality, and brand reputation when selecting search results. Mastering the elements of SEO is essential for trust-building in digital marketing, as it is not solely focused on search engine rankings.

Influences on Click Decision for Products/ Services

The multidimensional nature of consumer behaviour in the digital ecosystem is underscored by the numerous factors that determine when consumers click on the search results. Although the brand and persuasive content that captivates the user's attention, such as a description, is crucial, the user will only peruse your website if it is on the first page of search engine results. Businesses can enhance their search engine rankings, expand their advertisement topics, and optimize their meta descriptions to achieve the desired click-through rate and attract sufficient customers.

Visiting Beyond First Page Results

The value of an insightful SEO on the site is underscored by the contradictory concept of sites abandoned after the first page of search results. Although it is fundamental for businesses to surpass their competitors in search engine results pages (SERPs), they should recognize the significance of being positioned on the second and subsequent pages. To achieve a higher level of visibility beyond the first page, optimizing for long-tail keywords, enhancing content relevance, and enhancing the user experience is necessary. This will increase organic traffic and inquiries.

Importance of Staying Updated with SEO Trends

The digital marketing industry, as well as search engines and the algorithms they employ, are subject to rapid change, according to the experts involved in the present study. This is evidenced by the widespread consensus that it is imperative to remain vigilant for emerging SEO trends. Firms must consistently develop search engine optimization-based policies that align with the evolving search engine algorithms, business trends, and consumer demands to remain competitive and generate long-term revenue. By being aware of the SEO market trends, businesses can capitalize on the high potential and avoid the errors that may arise in the future.

Perception of the Relationship Between SEO and Digital Marketing

Although the landing page is essential for SEO, digital marketing, and visibility on Google, it points out the need for a comprehensive approach to achieving online success. SEO is necessary for establishing all digital marketing strategies, as it controls the extent to which a webpage can be highly ranked, the volume of traffic a site receives, and the number of conversions an online business generates. Modern digital campaigns will be supported by SEO strategies, enabling enterprises to expand their online presence, attract qualified visitors, and achieve their marketing objectives.

Contribution of SEO to Digital Marketing Effectiveness

The substantial contribution of SEO to the efficacy of online campaigns suggests that it plays an essential role in developing organic traffic and enhancing a proper online presence. Furthermore, SEO reduces advertising expenditures by improving the website's visibility and attracting more qualified potential consumers. Subsequently, SEO facilitates the organization's sustainable expansion. Businesses that aspire to enhance their digital marketing performance, generate exposure to their target audience, and achieve higher search engine rankings can allocate resources to SEO initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a central element in the digital environment for companies that prioritize their presence online and aim to outperform the competition. This study has unveiled SEO's complex importance in the digital marketing world, implying its

cutting-edge impact on organic website visitors, higher brand visibility, and, eventually, business achievement.

The report reveals that SEO is not just a technical concept of digital marketing but one of the critical pillars of success of any company striving to survive and grow in the fast-paced and fierce online market. More than 70% of consumers now turn to search engines first to discover and shop for products and services, and for that reason, making it to the number one spot on search engine results pages (i.e., SERPs) is now of utmost importance for businesses aiming to convert new customers and retain an existing one.

SEO that is done the right way presents a long-term business growth objective with well-grounded research on survey data and literature review. The transition from user habit analysis to optimizing content for mobile platforms is part of adaptive SEO strategies, which must always keep up with customers' changing behavior and new tech innovation. In addition, ethical SEO principles are essential to a business's reputation building, as they serve as the foundation upon which users and search engines trust the business's content. By focusing on quality content creation, relevancy, and user experience, businesses can successfully pass the test of time, build trust among their target audience, and become noticeable digital brands.

To sum up, this research underlines the irreplaceable role of SEO in contemporary digital marketing methods and its direct outcomes on businesses. The main aim of SEO is to increase the number of people searching for products or services that the business provides online, and this can be achieved by improving knowledge and application of effective SEO strategies. These strategies can significantly improve the business's exposure to the online market, resulting in increased customers and, in the end, more revenue and growth for the company. As the digital sphere grows and becomes more sophisticated, the relevance and, hence, the significance of trends and the best practices in SEO will be even more critical to the success of businesses looking to stay ahead and be considered successful in the realm of the digital age.

In addition, the study emphasizes that SEO is a dynamic area, hence the need to monitor it

all the time and be ready to adapt since the digital world keeps developing at a fast pace. Being SEO-focused is not enough as search engine algorithms keep changing and consumer behaviours are going through another reformation; organizations must remain agile and responsive, keeping up with their SEO strategies to ensure their relevance and competitiveness.

Also, the study reiterates the significance of user orientation in constructing SEO strategies. Through comprehension and consideration of the customer's personality, preferences, and intentions, enterprises can provide content that influences the customer personally and propels a high level of engagement. Furthermore, the consumer-oriented approach increases the success of SEO efforts and strengthens the relationships customers build, resulting in customer loyalty and recommendations.

The ethical questions in SEO approaches are critical for all the stakeholders. By observing ethical principles and proper criteria, organizations can create a transparent relationship with consumers and search engines, which, in the long run, will give them a trust base and opportunities to continue attracting users. Continuous dedication to SEO, an implicit imperative, attention to the development of trends, and centring user-oriented strategies and ethical practices in the presented arenas will aid the business in enjoying long-term success in the dynamic digital sphere.

REFERENCES

- Egri, G., & Bayrak, C. (2014). The role of search engine optimization on keeping the user on the site. *Procedia Computer Science*, 36, 335-342.
- Garg, B. (2017). *What is the importance of SEO in digital marketing? Why without SEO digital marketing is dead or fails.* <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-importance-seo-digital-marketing-why-without-dead-bhanu-garg/>
- Iskandar, M. S., & Komara, D. (2018). Application marketing strategy search engine optimization (SEO). In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering* (Vol. 407, No. 1, p. 012011). IOP Publishing.
- Terrance, A. R., Shrivastava, S., & Kumari, A. (2017). Importance of Search Engine Marketing in the Digital World. *ICITKM*, 14, 155-158.