

Smart marketing in the digital age

In the present day, the success of marketing depends on its ability to facilitate and sustain meaningful, technology-driven experiences for consumers. Significant advances in technology and communications, facilitated by digital and social media, in recent years have greatly contributed to making experience delivery to consumers easier. Customers have abandoned the traditional one-way passive reception of products and brand offerings, and now consciously look for dialogues facilitated by technology where the real value-creation happens. Marketing's role has seen a steady jump in enabling effective user-brand interactions, putting the onus on brands for supporting product offerings with personalized technology-enabled marketing efforts. The shifting societal expectations demand that marketing organizations become genuinely involved with the local environment in a way that simple monetary contributions alone cannot achieve end-goals.

Modern youth, as a growing affluent customer base, is increasingly getting dissatisfied with conventional product offerings and expects experiential activities that captivate and motivate them to stick to a brand, a large part of which is generated through cutting-edge technology. In the modern world, digital media has become a way of life. Everyone has a smartphone, and most individuals and households have multiple smart devices, including tablets, phones and computers. This prevalence, coupled with the rise of Big Data, digital marketing tools and social media, has given marketers the power to pinpoint specific audiences with advertising messages. But while advertisers continue to pour money into digital media, consumers are so saturated that they have begun ignoring ads or actively avoiding them. The rise of advertisement frauds, where clicks are falsified to drive up the cost per click (CPC) and bid rates, has resulted in billions of wasted advertising dollars, with real people only viewing about 40 per cent of digital ads. To connect with consumers today, marketers need to re-think their strategy and focus on creating quality brand experiences, rather than on high-volume advertisement exposure. It is time to take a second look and put people first.

The theme of the 2019 IIM Indore NASMEI Marketing-IS Conference, "Smart marketing in the digital age", was to focus on identifying ways of enriching customer values through unique product offerings supported by engaging technology. We invited scholars across all disciplines within marketing and information systems to submit their works, research results and their refinements of future ideas, as well as their suggestions for special sessions, which have a direct or tangential connection to the conference theme. The conference deliberated upon various topics, falling under the following broad principles:

- Understanding consumer behaviour is essential for success. Leveraging technology, organizations need to explore and examine consumer behaviour which can provide them valuable insights for product development and marketing communications.
- Social media and digital marketing are playing a greater role by influencing consumer behaviour in the current marketing environment. The digital marketplace is evolving fast, and the success of any company depends on examining and analyzing individual consumers as well as deploying effective means to reach them through the powerful medium of the internet.
- Cultural and subcultural factors, society, reference groups and mass media can influence consumer behaviour. So, it is vital to understand how these factors affect a



customer when they are actively looking for a product/service to serve an important need. More importantly, how technology can serve as an enabler to help marketers not only understand the need better but also pull the customer towards their existing products/services.

Eight articles, out of the numerous papers presented at the 2019 IIM Indore NAMSEI Summer Marketing Information Systems conference, supply rich insights in the domain of technology-enabled customer behaviour across various contexts. Sushant Bhatnagar and coauthors, in the first paper, titled “Understanding consumer motivation to share IoT products data” explore the motivators for electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM: computer-generated reviews using Natural Language Generation NLG) intention to share Internet of Things (IoT) product data. This paper found five consumer motivators: personal innovativeness, enjoyment of helping, anticipated extrinsic rewards, moral obligations and venting negative feelings for e-WOM intention.

Neelika Arora and coauthors, in the second paper titled “YouTube channels’ influence on destination visit intentions: An empirical analysis based on the Information Adoption Model”, focus to understand how travellers adopt information through YouTube channels and how it influences the traveller’s intention to visit a destination. The paper found comprehensiveness, relevance, timeliness, source expertise and attitude the most significant predictors of a traveller’s destination visit intention through a YouTube channel, whereas source trustworthiness and accuracy were not found significant.

Veenu Sharma and coauthors, in the third paper titled “Tapping the potential space: Positioning of private labels” analyze the private label as a bargaining tool for a value retailer to increase its profitability and customer loyalty. The association between the various categories of products has been assessed and analyzed by using market basket analysis to the 1,223 transactions that took place in a value retailer store. The results provide insights for value retailer to cross-merchandise the product categories that have strong associations, to increase the probability of bundling and profitability. On the basis of the associations, a store layout has also been suggested to aid the value retailer for fully tapping the potential for private label products.

Meenakshi Handa and coauthors, in the fourth paper titled *Digital cause-related marketing campaigns: Relationship between brand-cause fit and behavioural intentions* empirically explore the consumer response towards an emerging genre of non-purchase-based online campaigns. The study’s findings about the relationship between a campaign characteristics, perceived brand-cause fit, participation effort and consumer behavioural intentions towards the campaign and the brand, present multiple theoretical and practical contributions.

Raksha Deshbhag and coauthors, in the fifth paper titled *Study on the influential role of celebrity credibility on consumer risk perceptions* determine the influence of celebrity credibility (trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise) on risk perception and buying intention of Indian FMCG consumers. A major finding indicates celebrity trust and celebrity expertise are the most important dimensions of celebrity to influence the risk perceptions of such consumers.

Neerja Kashive and coauthors, in the sixth paper titled *Employer branding through crowdsourcing: understanding the sentiments of employees* explore the role of social media for creating an attractive employer brand for any organization. The data was collected from 1,243 reviews from Glassdoor, an online crowdsourced employer branding platform for 40 top-rated employers across four different sectors. Text and sentimental analysis were done using SAS visual analytics for these reviews. Ten themes were generated including social

value, interest value, development value, economical value, work-life value, management value and brand value.

Neeraj Kumar Dubey and coauthors, in their seventh paper titled *Implementation and adoption of CRM and co-creation leveraging collaborative technologies: an Indian banking context*, conduct a case study to understand the way collaborative technological advancements are being exploited by organizations to develop superior CRM capability and achieve co-creation. This study analyzed and comprehended the design and implementation of CRM in an Indian bank in real-life settings to gain a better understanding of the adoption of new collaborative technological advancements by a bank for customer centricity and facilitating co-creation.

M.K.M. Manikandan in this eighth study titled *Store brand and perceived risk on private label brand attitude* intend to find the possible influence of retailer equity and perceived risk on private label brand (PLB) attitude for grocery products. The variables, retailer association and awareness, show positive influence, while functional risk shows a negative influence on PLB attitude.

As chair of the organizing committee of the 2019 IIM Indore NASMEI Summer Marketing Information Systems Conference, it gives me immense pleasure in bringing together this valuable special issue and I hope that future iterations of this or other conferences will take the agenda raised by these papers.

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