CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARD ONLINE MARKETING - AN
EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The online marketing is one of the most interesting topics especially for researchers in the marketing field. It is a modern way of marketing a product or service to the targeted market around the world. This paper is an attempt to analyze customer satisfaction level in internet marketing. The primary goal of this research is to analyze the customer satisfaction of the online customers in cuddalore customer. The theoretical framework discusses in brief about the effects of customer retention on customer satisfaction. To understand the customer satisfaction level of online cuddalore customer shoppers, we pursued with the collection of quantitative data with the help of online survey. From marketing and strategic point of view we will point out those factors that might affect the customers, while purchasing goods online.
INTRODUCTION

Internet and the World Wide Web have amended the business competitions and tailored the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) relationship by introducing an innovative retailing platform that provides for electronic one-on-one communication with the customers. The Internet possesses a capability of revolutionizing the business conventional format and the customer service experience in many ways. In the era of globalization and with the wonderful expansion of the Internet, various businesses have globalized their sales and marketing efforts for their products and services all through the net. Over the decades maximum business organizations have been providing various products like books, hardware, software, toys, household appliances etc to their customers through online. Online shopping is the process of buying and selling of the goods and services through online. It includes transferring of funds online, supply chain management, marketing over internet. It is the use of technology for better marketing performance. Through online shopping different type of business and organizations has gained a tremendous opportunity to increase their sale and to maintain a direct relationship with its customers. The increasing use of internet by the young generation in India provides an emerging prospect for online retailers. Unlike traditional marketing, online marketing has many advantages like global reach, availability of wide variety and cheaper products, if online retailers know the factors affecting Indian consumer’s buying behaviour they can further develop their marketing strategies to convert potential customers into active ones. Customer satisfaction is the key factor for customer retention and acquisition in online shopping system.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is a critical issue in the success of any business system, traditional or online. In a turbulent commercial environment, in order to sustain the growth and market share, companies need to understand how to satisfy customers, since customer satisfaction is critical for establishing long term client relationships. It is evidenced by the fact that over the last five years, customer satisfaction surveys have become common in many financial institutions. Thus a fundamental understanding of factors impacting customer satisfaction is of great importance to business.

ONLINE MARKETING

Online marketing refers to a set of powerful tools and methodologies used for promoting products and services through the Internet. Online marketing includes a wider range of marketing elements than traditional business marketing due to the extra channels and marketing mechanisms available on the Internet.

TYPES OF INTERNET MARKETING

There are several types of internet marketing, some which work alone, which work in conjunction with others. Here are some types of internet marketing.

Search Engine Optimizer

Search engine optimizer or SEO for short, is possible for popular search engine to index a website and boost it up to the top of the result page.

- He should revise the structure of website, web pages or blog.
- He should correct the errors.
- He should develop his own content.
- He should manage online campaign.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. The goal of SMM is to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach. The use of social media services to garner attention and website traffic is gaining just as much popularity as the networks themselves.

- Listening: Know when to engage
- Sharing: Turn your buyers into salesmen
- Measuring: Track ROI in social

Blog Marketing
Blog marketing is any process that publicises or advertises a website, business, brand or service via the medium of blogs. This includes,

- To raise the visibility of our company.
- To increase the sale growth and profit.
- To make a contribution to our industry.
- To give the public a look at what goes on within a real live publishing company about the feature of their upcoming products.

Pay Per Click Advertising PPC

Stands for pay-per-click, a model of internet marketing in which advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. Essentially, it’s a way of buying visits to your site, rather than attempting to -earnl those visits organically.

- It based on advertisers’ keyword list to show relevant content to the user.
- Using Pay per Click is the quick measurement of success.
- It creates a highly targeted audience to attract visitors.

E-mail Marketing

Email marketing is a way to reach consumers directly via electronic mail. Unlike spam, direct email marketing reaches those interested in your business’ area of expertise. It includes,

- It’s the easy, effective, and affordable way to keep your customer coming back.
- It should be professional to attract.
- About new product.
- Promoting their products by wishing special events.
- While giving feedback they put information about their product too.
- Save paper and postage.

Networking

A business model in which a distributor network is needed to build the business. Usually such businesses are also multilevel marketing in nature in that payouts occur at more than one level. The advantages of network marketing include:

- Flexibility of time.
- More Freedom.
- High chances at success.
- Free Training.
- Easy Business plan.
- Work at Home.
- Easy to run.

CONCEPT OF ONLINE MARKETING

Online marketing is the wave of the future. Businesses turn to the internet to market themselves in place of billboards and paper advertisements, and find that it is not only more effective, but much less expensive. However, internet marketing plays by an entirely different set of rules than traditional marketing does, and it is important to understand the basic concepts before embarking on any marketing endeavor.

In most general terms, any marketing in the Internet should be considered electronic marketing. As it has been mentioned, due to the technical peculiarities of the Internet, almost all forms of electronic marketing have certain features of direct marketing. It should be noted that marketing by e-mail is not a predominant form of electronic marketing. Marketing by e-mail has the notably expressed advantages of electronic marketing, i.e. apart from businessmen’s own websites; marketing by e-mail is the cheapest and the most accessible. Very often marketing by e-mail is identified with a socially undesirable or even negative marketing, spam, since social challenges raised by electronic marketing manifest themselves in its form rather dislikes. Due to the abovementioned reasons, in this article marketing by e-mail is regarded as the fair representative of all types of direct electronic marketing.

IMPACT OF INTERNET MARKETING

Clearly, marketing’s tool kit is experiencing an unsettling amount of change. The boom in direct and database marketing, the dawning of electronic commerce, new ways to automate sales force management and the sudden blossoming of the World Wide Web all suggest that the discipline is under pressure to redefine itself. The stock market is well aware that something important is developing; venture capitalists and technology companies are making large bets; and students at business schools, alert to any hint that their investment in the development of personal skills might have to pay off in a changed environment, show particular interest in new methods of market making. Mass marketing concepts and practices are taking advantage of new ways to become more customized, more responsive to the individual. The challenge facing the companies today is how to take strategic advantage of these opportunities to build more desirable products and services, build brand equity and increase revenues and profits. The Internet represents new opportunities for the marketers and sales people because it provides a wide reach for all marketing efforts conducted on it. International markets can be opened up at low costs. Advertising and promotion costs in other countries can be significantly reduced, if not eliminated. With the use of the Internet there can be continuous customer support. Services can be made available through interactive e-mail systems on the net. This saves time and money. In addition, feedback (i.e., research data) from the marketplace can be likewise collected on an on-going basis, and in many cases, in the form of ‘real-time’ data. New products and services can be tested through interactive questionnaires on the Internet. This feedback forms the basis of market identification and segmentation that enables marketers to better position their products.
PROCESS OF ONLINE PURCHASING

Many studies frequently mention that there is a vast amount of window shopping taking place online but the number or the rate of surfers who turn into purchasers or regular buyers are very low. This might happen because of the lack of consumer intention to purchase an offering from the online environment at the outset. It might also happen because of various problems that arise during online shopping driving the consumer to abandon the task in the middle. Therefore, while one stream of research should identify the reasons behind the purchase reluctance of consumers, another area of concentration should be why people abandon their shopping carts and stop the purchasing process in the middle. Such attempts can help to understand how to turn surfers into integrators’, purchasers, and finally, repeat purchases by making them enter into continuous interaction with this environment. Common reasons for purchase reluctance are the difficulties and costs of distance shipping, inadequate amount of purchase related information, troubles experienced after the purchase such as delivery or refund problems, general security fear, and various perceived risks such as financial, product-related or psychological risks. On the other hand, the reasons of abandoning purchases are much more technical such as unexpected shipping costs or transaction complexity. In other words, some consumers accept to shop from the Internet in principle but technical complexities or ineffective systems discourage them. Regardless of the pessimistic state of events, marketers should not be hopeless about the future. Once the risks consumers perceive about shopping through the Web are reduced, the environment still promises a high potential for selected consumer segments. Studies show that consumers who search for product related information through the Web have stronger intentions to make purchases online. Therefore, building on the information advantage can be expected to pay off in the future. Constructing effective decision support systems and assisting consumers with interactive decision tools are also successful attempts that need to be developed further. However, investing on the pre-purchase stages of the decision making process is not adequate. Developing and testing the effectiveness of specific “selling” strategies and tactics for the cyber market are also crucial. Studies that focus on currently unavailable but possible tools of cyber shopping in the future, such as the use of artificial shopping agents that work on behalf of consumers in the online market, are also very valuable efforts enlightening the road for future studies.

CATEGORIES OF ONLINE MARKETING

The Internet Marketing into four categories: communicating, selling, providing content and providing a network function.

Communication

A range of different businesses uses the Internet as a way to communicate with their customers. Marketers can use this essentially useful medium to build relationships with new customers or enhance the interaction with existing customers. Internet provides many alternative options for marketers that help them to interact and communicate with the consumers. Email, email lists, online chat and forums offer quick and easy communication between different parties.

Selling

Consumers today have less time to work. Companies use direct marketing to sell their goods. The significant advantage of the Internet selling is that it is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Large and small businesses develop websites and sell via the Internet through innovative use of technology and more attractive features than in traditional marketing. The way the information appears to the consumer can affect the online decision of purchasing a product. As to that, firms should pay attention on the designing and structuring of an effective website. Moreover, online selling sites can be used to offer much more products than can be shown in a printed catalogue. In addition, consumers can enjoy self-service services such as, tracking their purchases and orders or saving their information to be used in later transactions.

Providing Content

Businesses must provide their customers with all the necessary information about their company, their services and products. A content website allows visitors to interact with interesting and useful information and not with unnecessary and irrelevant data. Every website should have the capability of keeping people on the website and getting people to return. Companies performing in the world of internet marketing should create websites that provide all the needed information to their customers by keeping the content fresh and updated.

Providing a Network Function

Except from content, websites can also provide useful functions for visitors. This can be done by using the network to make access to information provided by another website possible. For example, Yahoo! created a menu for websites that enables owners of other websites to register their URLs.

INTERNET MARKETING TOOLS

Internet is not only a place for buyers and sellers to discover product information it also plays a role of intermediary. Therefore, the buyers and sellers could be matched on the internet. To accelerate the match, online marketing tools were implemented. The internet marketing strategy is vital for achieving goals. However, whether the internet activity fulfilled the initial goal is uncertain. A critical influential factor is the instruments which execute the internet activities. Therefore, internet marketing tools were generated to accelerate the internet marketing activities. New types of intermediary have evolved that sort information and bundle our needs and wants on the web. They act as “hubs” to buyers and sellers.

MAIN POTENTIAL DRIVERS FOR CUSTOMER ADOPTION OF ONLINE MARKETING

Accessibility and Convenience

The possibility to shop anytime, from anywhere is the most obvious and most commonly cited advantage of online marketing, and was found to be the most important perceived consumer benefit of internet shopping in cuddalore customer district.
Since the boundaries of online marketing are not defined by geography or national borders, consumer will benefit from a wide selection of vendors and products - including a wider availability of hard-to-find products.

Online Delivery
For digital products, the whole commercial cycle, including distribution, can be conducted via a network, providing instant access to products immediately when a need arises.

Test and Trial Online
Digital products can be tested over the internet prior to making purchase decisions, reducing uncertainty.

The Real Time Nature of the Medium
The internet can provide consumers with up-to-the minute information on prices availability, etc.

Time Savings
Consumers may benefit from the shopping process being faster in the market space than in the market place as a result of the rapidity of the search process and the transactions.

Possibilities for Comparison Shopping
By allowing consumers to shop in many places and conduct quick comparisons of offerings and prices (Hoffman et. al. 1995, Hart et al. 2000), Internet market places have the ability to reduce search costs for price and product in formations.

Access to Extensive Information
An important consumer benefit is the access to greater amounts of dynamic information to support queries for consumer decision-making.

Privacy and Anonymity
The internet has the potential to offer consumers benefits with respect to a partial, or even a total privacy and anonymity/pseudonymity throughout the purchasing process.

Competitive Prices
By embracing online marketing consumers may benefit from price reductions as a result of increased competition as more suppliers are able to compete in an electronically open market place as a result of reduced selling prices due to reduction in operational/transaction costs and manufacturers internalizing activities traditionally performed by intermediaries.

Availability of Personalized Offers
Consumers can benefit from IT enabled opportunities for personalized interactions and one-to-one relationships with companies, which allow for products, services and web content to be, customized more easily.

The Social Nature of Purchasing Process
Since consumers differ in their social disposition, Many customers may find an impersonal purchasing situation desirable for social reasons or simply because they find the verbal contact with a seller time-consuming. Moreover, the lack of physical sellers creates sales setting where there is virtually no pressure to buy.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS ONLINE MARKETING
Online shopping involves seeking information and carrying out activities that provide the customers the information that help them to arrive at an informed decision and conduct business. On the other hand, online buying represents technological infrastructure used to exchange data and purchase product or services electronically. The important online marketing such as types online buyers, online purchase experience, website highly used, mode of payments, influenced the purchase of products in the online marketing, type of products you are buying in the online marketing, awareness regarding online marketing, Customer satisfaction towards the website, Customer satisfaction price in online marketing, Customer satisfaction towards products in Online marketing, after sale services, delivery of product and so on.

SUCCESSFUL WEBSITES
For Web sites to be a success, it should be informative, entertaining, challenging, and unique. The homepage should be short, clear and simple to avoid wasting the customer’s time. They should be Understandable and easy to search information needed. Moreover, it must continuously be up-to-date for most recent information about the company; customers like to see modification in the website.

Products/services available should be represented clearly by key words or images on the Web site. Programs should be set up to find out which kind of customers are interested and what can keep customers coming back. This is the key of marketing strategy to know your customers, as well as, what they want. A company should create a Web site with unique SME knowledge and should not put Web links that are not completed. There are different marketing strategies for the Internet:

Targeting
This is different from the traditional segmentation because the customers come to you, they initiate contact, control information flow and control message content. Accessibility is primordial for customers. Market the Web sites through packaging or “click-through” from other companies’ Web sites. “Click-through” banner advertising is a sort of digital word-of-mouth which is becoming a stronger means of the Web.

Product Strategy
Brand recognition is made clear on the Internet but the number of purchase is not there yet. Sometimes the products are not available on the Web site and consumers hesitate before getting this particular product. To increase their confidentiality, recognized vendors should be mentioned on the Net. Authenticity is important for both sellers and products.

Pricing Strategy
In the long run, it will be good if firms can concentrate on offering products with the unique characteristics. Online shoppers will differentiate by the benefits and quality of the products/services. Otherwise, a low price strategy should rely on cost advantage and high volume to be able to compete.

**Distribution Strategy**

There is a necessity of a direct-to-customer mechanism. The industry has to be the first providing unique services to always be ahead of competitors.

**Promotional Strategy**

This depends on the marketing research and consumer preferences. A “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) section should be provided in the Web site and high-level marketing officers should also be involved for a stronger marketing message for the company’s vision.

In fact, the FAQ, through Internet, can save over one million dollars by providing what customers want. It also reduces online catalogue processing costs and cycle time. Other than that, grouping and Ranking the content of the Web site is effective so as to group consumer needs and to provide a good Structure for navigation of the Web site according to a consumer.

**ONLINE MARKETING AUCTIONS**

Internet auctions can be characterised in two ways: third-party auction sellers such as eBay, Amazon.com and Yahoo! that auction goods for others (either individual sellers or corporate chains), and direct auction sellers which create their own auctions online via their company websites. A substantial number of retailers and catalogue firms are taking advantage of the boom in these online auctions to unload merchandise and increase sales, and growth in the online auction category is now well documented. Catalogue marketers as diverse as The Sharper Image, Ross-Simons, Cameraworld.com, and CompUSA are all successfully auctioning products online.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS**

- Companies should have more risk reduction activities as perceived risk could strongly influence consumers' online purchase decisions. And specific types of perceived risk like online frauds should be taken care of in different scenarios. Hence, the shopping sites should sport a Certificate of Authenticity (a seal or small sticker designed to demonstrate that the item is genuine and risk free) and should have a security symbol in order to safe shopping.
- Companies should improve consumers’ value perceptions about the products and reduce consumers’ perceived risk in the online shopping environment by providing quality products, timely delivery and fulfill their expectations. Also the companies should make their website easy in use and risk reduction activities should be taken care.
- The study suggests that the Indian customers give the most importance to security and privacy to generate trust. Perceived privacy of customer information can be improved by ensuring that at no point of time the customer is asked for irrelevant personal information.
- The psychology of an Indian consumer is still the same of checking the product physically before purchasing it, which creates a mental hurdle for online shopping. So the companies should devise certain strategies so as to reduce the scams. The Indian customers want to experience the product before to buy the product. So, online stores selling customized products should stress more on providing this facility and provide better communication with the customers through telephone or online salesperson.
- People are averse to online shopping because there is a difficulty in returning the faulty products. Hence the companies should make the arrangement so that try and buy facility is available at the customer doorstep and one can return if the product is faulty.
- Online stores should use effective implementation of website factors such as information design, features, communication, privacy and security, as a marketing tool by which trust towards the website can be created among the consumers and subsequently enhance purchase intention.
- The only worry of consumers is regarding the trustworthiness of some websites, since they have to give their credit card details to shop online. Many of the consumers are aware of the various online scams due to which they are very concerned and reluctant while providing their credit card information online. Also the online purchases take a longer time in shipments and deliveries.
- One of the most reasons for not doing online shopping is that there is a less chance of making reasonable negotiations and bargaining. It has been found that Indian Consumers are price sensitive. Hence the price sensitive consumers do not take much interest in online shopping. So the companies should allow considerable bargain for the customers.
- Most of the people feel that products available through online shopping are costly because of the shipping charges whereas in the traditional shopping there are no such charges. So the companies should provide the facility of free delivery in order to create excitement among non users.

**CONCLUSION**

Customer satisfaction has a direct impact on loyalty and hence businesses should focus on satisfying their customers. Customers should be encouraged to make use of the online customer support services in case of any inconvenience. Also, in internet shopping, customers decide to purchase a product or service based on its review. By providing reviews, a customer indirectly recommends the brand or product to others. Since product or service review is increasingly important for its growth, online customer should encourage their customers to provide constructive feedback in their websites. To summarize, online businesses in Cuddalore customer will have to focus on acquiring new customers through advertisement, publicity and discount packages. These customers will have to be retained and satisfied as both lead to higher levels of customer loyalty. However, it is a big challenge to retain customers and urge them to be loyal in a volatile environment like internet shopping.
Online shopping is becoming more popular day by day with the increase in the usage of World Wide Web known as www. Understanding customer’s need for online selling has become challenge for marketers. Specially understanding the consumer’s attitudes towards online shopping , making improvement in the factors that influence consumers to shop online and working on factors that affect consumers to shop online will help marketers to gain the competitive edge over others.

REFERENCES