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Editorial

Digital Marketing for Sustainable Growth: Business Models and Online Campaigns Using Sustainable Strategies

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Abstract: In recent years, digital marketing has transformed the way in which companies communicate with their customers around the world. The increase in the use of social networks and how users communicate with companies on the Internet has given rise to new business models based on the bidirectionality of communication between companies and Internet users. Digital marketing, new business models, online advertising campaigns, and other digital strategies have gathered user opinions and comments through this new online channel. In this way, companies have started to see the digital ecosystem as not only their present, but also as their future. From this long-term perspective, companies are concerned about sustainability and the growth of their business models. There are new business models on the Internet that support social causes, new platforms aimed at supporting social and sustainable projects, and digital advertising campaigns promoting sustainability. The overarching aim of this Special Issue was to analyze the development of these new strategies as well as their influence on the sustainability of digital marketing strategies. Therefore, we aimed to analyze how companies adopt these new technologies in a digital environment that is increasingly concerned with the sustainability of business models and actions on the Internet.

Keywords: sustainable digital marketing strategies; sustainable business models; sustainable management; social network analysis for sustainability

1. Introduction

This Special Issue reviews strategies for the sustainable development of companies, with a particular focus on digital marketing analysis. Within this digital ecosystem, there are different online campaigns and sustainable business models that have appeared in recent decades as the basis of new digital marketing strategies [1]. In general, these new techniques for the exploitation of resources and digital business models are based on the collection and extraction of data from different sources of information on the Internet such as user-generated content (UGC) or content derived from digital strategies such as the Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) [2].

In this relation, the contributions to this Special Issue have different areas of specialization within the indicated strategies for the sustainable development of companies in digital environments. In the first place, digital business models are studied to understand how their viability and profitability are sometimes based on the good use of the information that companies obtain from the Internet and the analysis of their strategies [3].

In addition, different digital marketing techniques are considered in order to evaluate the impact of their development both at the business level, in terms of departmental organization or identification

of internal problems, and from the point of view of the online reputation of companies as part of the benefit of the use and development of these strategies in environments such as specialized platforms, electronic commerce, or social networks [4].

Contributions to this Special Issue also analyze the different strategies categorized within the knowledge-based analysis. These data-based strategies add value to the performance analysis of digital marketing strategies that companies develop on the Internet [5]. Knowledge-based strategies focus on the analysis of data generated by digital actions. In this respect, we identified some techniques linked to online sustainable strategies such as data mining, sentiment analysis, textual analysis, Big Data analysis, social network analysis, and so forth [6,7].

We also identified the area of social media analytics focused on the analysis of user behavior in specialized social networks on specific topics and at specific times; here, the aim was to identify key issues related to the sustainability of companies and the strategic development of their digital tactics [8,9].

The analysis of this research area highlights the importance of studying digital techniques or strategies linked to the concepts of digital behavior and neuromarketing [5,10]. Both concepts are related to the understanding of the links between the feelings and reactions of users who enjoy the content designed and published by companies in digital environments to increase user engagement [11].

Finally, we also considered information systems and customer management systems for the correct implementation of the analysis of all these strategies, since most of these systems generate data that can be used to obtain patterns or identify unlikely associations [12].

Next, each contribution to this Special Issue summarizes its main contributions to the literature with respect to sustainable strategies on the Internet in digital business models, digital marketing techniques, knowledge-based analysis techniques, social media analytics, digital behavior and neuromarketing as well as customer relationship management systems. Finally, the conclusions are presented regarding the success for the growth of companies in their digital strategies and their links with sustainability in digital business models.

2. Digital Business Models

Under the influence of new technologies and the development of the Internet, in the last several years, new business models focused on the use of sustainable strategies within their corporate social identity and marketing strategies have started to appear [13]. With the development of these technologies, the concept of sustainability has acquired links not only with the environment, but also with sustainable development, types of resources used by companies as well as the technologies and tools used by companies [14,15].

The Internet has become a tool for the sustainable growth of many companies; now, these companies have to adapt their business models to allow their product and service sales 24 h, seven days a week as well as to enable global shipments for the use of strategies of e-commerce that have become increasingly more ambitious and global [16].

These new business models are based on how Internet users behave in social networks, which also involves the analysis of user-generated content and the tools those users employ [17].

3. Digital Marketing Techniques

This Special Issue has identified that there are many digital marketing techniques that can be linked to the sustainability strategies of companies. However, the challenge is to make users perceive that the companies themselves are developing these strategies in a sustainable way and launch messages that are positive and generate positive feelings in users who surf the Internet [18].

The digital marketing strategies most used by companies are those related to search engine optimization, search engine marketing, social media marketing, programmatic advertising, and influencer marketing, among others [6]. Digital marketing techniques are increasingly being used that

are complemented by algorithms that analyze the feelings that users have regarding how companies share their messages over the Internet [7].

There is no doubt that digital marketing techniques must also provide a message of support for sustainability, the environment, and the success of business models in a sustainable way because, here is the key for users to perceive that companies are doing sustainable actions over time [19].

4. Knowledge-Based Analysis Techniques

UGC has become the basic data source for the analysis of databases generated by social/digital platforms and search engine users [8,17]. Accordingly, researchers and companies have started to apply various UGC-analysis techniques to investigate sustainability and sustainable development.

Such techniques include textual analysis, sentiment analysis, or data mining; these techniques have been widely used to identify indicators and variables that can help companies improve their business models and Internet strategies [7,12].

Due to the employment of these techniques, extensive amounts of data can be analyzed to identify patterns that make sense and establish unlikely relationships between the content generated by users and the objectives that companies have to achieve success in a sustainable way. Undoubtedly, the area known as knowledge-based analysis is taking an increasingly global perspective that strongly supports the analysis of issues related to environmental sustainability and Internet resources [8].

5. Social Media Analytics

Likewise, social networks have become the platform or ecosystem where users exchange opinions and comments on various topics of interest [19]. Accordingly, social networks can be meaningfully used to identify topics on digital platforms (topic-modeling), categorize these topics into categories of indicators, and then link them to the type of use that companies make of them [9].

At the same time, social networks also serve as meeting points of many equal users who support a common cause and who use social platforms to share their thoughts with other users.

Accordingly, as demonstrated by numerous studies, it is meaningful to investigate such user-generated content based on relevant indicators such as hashtags on Twitter [11]. The samples used in such analyses help identify key concerns of users in social networks; in addition, they also help establish whether e-sustainability or sustainable development of the strategies that companies promote has an impact on user loyalty toward a brand or influence user perceptions of sustainable elements used in the manufacture of a product or service [15].

6. Digital Behavior and Neuromarketing

In a digital ecosystem, in order to analyze how users relate to each other, a key point to understand user behavior is to explore the role of bidirectional information between companies and users [2].

In this respect, studying digital behavior and neuromarketing is essential for a deeper understanding of how users perceive sustainable strategies and environmentally-friendly business models adopted by companies [5].

Neuromarketing is used not only to analyze the digital behavior of users, but also to create hypotheses as to how users think and make decisions on the Internet. Relevant techniques can be used to understand where users look as well as analyze the micro-expressions of user faces or their behavior in digital ecosystems, for example, by analyzing impulses or reactions to specific content [8]. Based on the results of such analysis, companies can better understand their online users, and therefore improve their messages and communication aimed at promoting and supporting sustainable causes [1].

7. Customer Relationship Management Systems

In a digital ecosystem where new channels of information and distribution of digital content appear every day, applied information systems have come to play a fundamental role in data management

and administration. These databases are the result of user behavior and engagement in response to companies' online promotion and social communication strategies [12].

In this context, it is obvious that saving and the sustainability of the resources that companies use to analyze, collect, and download data are supported by the use of tools that enable data management [16]. Accordingly, new business models can increase the profitability of their strategies by, for example, reducing the number of employees working on (or algorithms employed for) data analysis [20].

8. Conclusions

In the last several decades, the term 'sustainability' has grown exponentially to encompass different multidisciplinary areas in the field of business. With the evolution of the Internet and new digital business models, sustainability has come to play a fundamental role in the positioning strategies and digital reputation of companies [21,22].

The communication of companies with users through the Internet using the UGC or eWOM has become a vital factor for the development and support of social strategies and actions that companies want to spread online. The data generated as a result of these strategies have been used to establish and analyze indicators or variables, which, from an exploratory point of view, add value, identify trends and patterns, and increase the value of know-how of companies that have adopted new digital business models.

The understanding of user behavior, emotions, and reactions to the messages of the companies, together with appropriate management of the data generated as a result of these actions, has strengthened companies' business strategies and management as well as data collection and analysis.

Through the employment of these new strategies, companies can promote their sustainable strategies and inform users about such promotions or sustainable activities.

In summary, today, digital marketing—as the ideal channel to understand how users behave and interact with companies through the Internet—has become a fundamental piece for the dissemination and communication of sustainable actions performed by companies. Data, data management, and objectivity of sustainable messages launched by companies are key to the success and growth of new digital business models based on sustainable development.

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