

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
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Master Study
Evaluation of Marketing Communication

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

B.Sc. Ravi Sharma, BSc

Business Administration

Thesis title

Evaluation of Marketing Communication

Objectives of thesis

The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the marketing communication and to compare social media and traditional media marketing with a view to understanding their benefits and limitations.

Methodology

The theoretical part will be processed as a specification of basic definitions. With the usage of methods of deduction, induction and comparison of the theory and theoretical rules will be stated which leads to successful accomplishment of the aim of the thesis in general.

The practical part will be based on the own empirical research using primary data collection, data process, analysis and evaluation. Final recommendations will be based on the results of the research.

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marketing, marketing communication, online marketing, social media

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Fill, Ch. *Marketing Communications- Interactivity, communities and content*, 5th edition. Harlow: prentice Hall, 2009, ISBN 978-0-273-71722-5

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my master's study titled "Evaluation of Marketing Communication" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the study. As the author of the master study, I declare that the study does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on- 30/11/2023

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Evaluation of Marketing Communication

Abstract

In today's dynamic business landscape, companies adapt to changing environments by prioritizing customer satisfaction, exceeding shareholder expectations, and aligning stakeholder interests for sustained competitiveness. Understanding the significance of this change, digital marketing has become a potent instrument for putting various online marketing techniques into practice in order to engage consumers locally and internationally. The impact of digital marketing on integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies was investigated in a research study using a descriptive survey. The results showed that by increasing customer satisfaction, facilitating integration, enabling marketing automation, and raising brand exposure, digital marketing improves IMC. Key indications of the impact of online IMC were found to include metrics such as website interaction, frequency of return visits, sales volume, and profitability. Email marketing, social media marketing, chatbots, artificial intelligence, and search engine marketing are examples of frequently used digital marketing technologies. The study recommends organizations leverage artificial intelligence technologies to gather comprehensive customer information, covering needs, psychographics, demographics, and geography.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication, Marketing Performance, Marketing Tools, Marketing Strategy

Hodnocení marketingové komunikace

Abstrakt

V dnešním dynamickém podnikatelském prostředí se společnosti přizpůsobují měnícímu se prostředí tím, že upřednostňují spokojenost zákazníků, překračují očekávání akcionářů a sladují zájmy zainteresovaných stran pro udržitelnou konkurenceschopnost. Digitální marketing, který chápe význam této změny, se stal účinným nástrojem pro zavádění různých technik online marketingu do praxe s cílem zaujmout spotřebitele na místní i mezinárodní úrovni. Vliv digitálního marketingu na strategie integrované marketingové komunikace (IMC) byl zkoumán ve výzkumné studii pomocí deskriptivního dotazníkového šetření. Výsledky ukázaly, že zvýšením spokojenosti zákazníků, usnadněním integrace, umožněním automatizace marketingu a zviditelněním značky zlepšuje digitální marketing IMC. Bylo zjištěno, že mezi klíčové ukazatele dopadu online IMC patří metriky, jako je interakce s webovými stránkami, frekvence opakovaných návštěv, objem prodeje a ziskovost. E-mailový marketing, marketing na sociálních sítích, chatboti, umělá inteligence a marketing ve vyhledávačích jsou příklady často používaných technologií digitálního marketingu. Studie doporučuje organizacím využívat technologie umělé inteligence ke shromažďování komplexních informací o zákaznících, které pokrývají potřeby, psychografii, demografické údaje a geografii.

Klíčová slova: Digitální marketing, integrovaná marketingová komunikace, marketingová výkonnost, marketingové nástroje, marketingová strategie

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1. Introduction

Digital marketing, often referred to as e-marketing, encompasses all digital marketing activities designed to connect with customers as opposed to traditional methods. It involves promoting company products through digital or electronic platforms, including social media, mobile devices, digital television, and radio channels, as well as digital banners on various websites. Internet marketing utilizes digital platforms to deliver promotional messages to consumers and encompasses strategies such as email marketing, social media marketing, mobile phone marketing, search engine marketing, and banner advertising. (Chaffey & Mayer, 2013)

Integrated marketing communication is defined as a company's effort to integrate, combine, synthesize, and align different elements of the marketing mix, aiming for each communication platform to complement the others for optimal performance. It involves harmonizing various promotional tools to ensure consistency and unity in messaging. IMC is a strategic business approach that encompasses planning, development, execution, measurement, evaluation, and coordination of persuasive brand communication programs with consumers, customers, prospective customers, suppliers, and all other stakeholders. (Schultz et al., 2019)

Several factors have contributed to the rise of integrated marketing communication, including a shift in company marketing expenditure allocation from traditional promotional methods to more enticing avenues such as trade-oriented sales promotion, lower-cost and more targeted tools like event marketing and direct mail, sponsor ads, and extensive utilization of the internet for advertising purposes. IMC's importance lies in its potential to offer numerous advantages over traditional, disjointed approaches for both clients and customers. (Moorman & Lehmann, 2019)

However, proper utilization of digital marketing for strategic and effective integrated marketing communication requires a thorough understanding of the performance of the various promotional tools within the digital platform. This research aims to provide insights into the effect of digital marketing on achieving effective integrated marketing communication in the context of the Czech Republic. (Moorman & Lehmann, 2019)

Despite the numerous advantages of digital communication, many companies have been slow to adopt it as a clear marketing strategy for reaching targeted audiences, maximizing profits, and minimizing costs. This reluctance can be attributed to a lack of understanding of the benefits and principles of digital integrated marketing communication. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the effect of digital marketing on integrated marketing communication, especially in a world where the global economy is driven by information technology and businesses must compete fiercely. (Schultz et al., 2019)

This study will examine digital marketing and its role in enhancing integrated marketing communication within companies. It seeks to answer the question: To what extent can digital marketing enhance the effect of a company's integrated marketing communication strategy in reaching the target audience? This inquiry is crucial as it will provide companies with valuable insights into the step-by-step process of implementing digital integrated marketing communication and its expected outcomes.

The study will be structured into six chapters. The first chapter will provide introduction and significance of the study as well as guiding research questions of the study. The second chapter will mention the objectives and methodology of the study. The third chapter will provide the literature review, where the author will review what has been done and identify what is yet to be done as regards with the topic. Chapter four will present and discuss the data analysis during the research. Chapter five will be focused on the key findings and recommendations based on the practical part. And lastly, chapter six will provide a conclusion for corporate leaders and marketing practitioners on the process of successfully integrating digital marketing in company IMC.

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing in the execution of the company's integrated marketing communication strategy from the perspective of practitioners. Furthermore, the secondary objectives are to assess the key indicators used in measuring the performance of digital marketing communication and to examine the trending digital marketing tools employed by company to engage with targeted audience and achieve enhanced outcomes.

In this thesis, the main objective was divided into five specific fields, introducing the practitioners' perception of the online market. The following research questions were formulated:

- RQ 1 – Digital Marketing.
- RQ 2 –Integrated Marketing Communication.
- RQ 3 –Digital Integrated Marketing Communication.
- RQ 4- Marketing Performance.
- RQ 5- Marketing Tools.

2.2 Methodology

In this research study, a positivist philosophical view is adopted due to the observable and measurable nature of the research subjects, which are digital marketing and integrated marketing communication (IMC). The choice of a positivist approach is further supported by the predictive nature of the research. The theoretical part will be processed as specification of basic definitions. With the usage of methods of deduction, induction and comparison of the theory and theoretical rules will be stated which leads to successful accomplishment of the aim of the thesis in general. The practical part will be based on the own empirical research using primary data collection, data process, analysis and evaluation. Final recommendations will be based on the results of the research. A descriptive research design is employed to collect the data, as it enables the recording, examination, and interpretation of measurable variables, making it suitable for this study. Data will be gathered

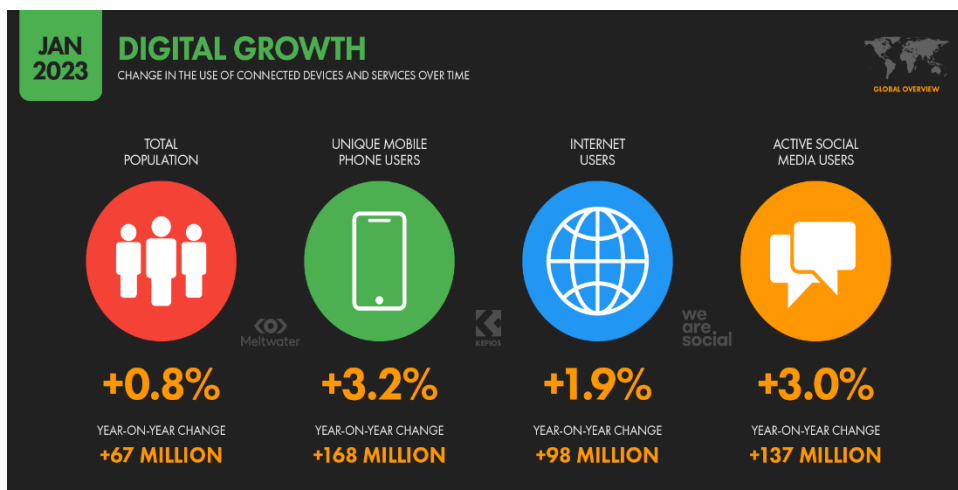
through a structured questionnaire administered to approximately 213 marketing practitioners in Prague, Czech Republic. Marketing practitioners are chosen for their relevant knowledge, and a descriptive survey method focusing on quantitative data is used. The questionnaire consists of six sections, including demographic analysis, digital marketing, integrated marketing communication, digital integrated marketing communication, marketing performance, and marketing tools questions related to the research topics, using a 5-point Likert scale as mentioned in the [appendix](#). Statistical analysis, such as mean, median, frequencies, and standard deviation, will be employed to analyse the data. Ethical principles are upheld, ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality to maintain the integrity of the study.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Digital marketing

The rapid and relentless advancements in information technology (ICT) have profoundly transformed the business landscape, making digital advertising an indispensable tool for companies striving to gain a competitive edge in virtually any industry. In an era where technological innovation occurs at breakneck speed, businesses must adapt to the evolving digital landscape to remain relevant and successful. This adaptation often involves a strategic shift toward digital advertising, where companies leverage digital platforms to connect with their target audiences. The ability to harness the power of the internet has become a crucial determinant of success in today's hyper-connected world. (Kotler, 2019)

Figure 1 - Digital Growth



Source: Global Overview Report (2023)

At its essence, marketing is an age-old practice that has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of both businesses and consumers. In its most basic form, marketing involves promoting a company's products and services to the broader public with the goal of attracting new customers and fostering unwavering brand loyalty. However, the methods and tools used in marketing have undergone a remarkable evolution over time. From the traditional print advertisements of yesteryears to today's data-driven digital marketing strategies, the essence of marketing remains constant: the art and science of engaging with customers to fulfil needs while achieving business objectives. (Aaker, 2020)

Marketing, in its truest sense, represents a dynamic process that encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at understanding and serving the needs of society. This process involves not only the development of products and services tailored to meet these needs but also the strategic effort to influence consumers' perceptions and preferences. It requires a deep understanding of consumer behaviour, market trends, and emerging technologies. In today's digital age, marketing professionals rely on sophisticated analytics, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to gain insights into consumer preferences and tailor their strategies accordingly. (Scott, 2021)

To effectively navigate the intricacies of modern marketing, businesses engage in a multifaceted approach that encompasses market research, product development, advertising, and branding. This approach involves keen evaluation of a company's products and services, as well as a meticulous analysis of the demographic, geographic, and psychographic attributes of their target audience. This data-driven approach enables companies to determine which products and services to offer to different individuals at various points in time. In essence, marketing has become a blend of art and science, where creativity meets data-driven decision-making to deliver personalized and compelling experiences to consumers. (Kotler & Keller, 2023)

Marketing serves as a collective medium through which individuals or groups exchange goods and services based on their needs and desires. This concept, often referred to as the "marketplace," has evolved significantly in the digital age. While traditional brick-and-mortar marketplaces still exist, the advent of e-commerce platforms and digital marketplaces has expanded the boundaries of where and how commerce takes place. In today's interconnected world, consumers can browse, compare, and purchase products and services from the comfort of their homes, ushering in an era of convenience and choice that was once unimaginable. (Fill, 2009)

The concept of the marketing mix, originally introduced by Neil Borden in 1953, remains a cornerstone of modern marketing strategy. This mix, commonly referred to as the four Ps - place, promotion, price, and product - represents a collection of diverse tools employed by companies to execute their marketing strategies. For instance, "place" no longer solely refers to physical locations but also encompasses digital marketplaces and distribution channels. "Promotion" extends beyond traditional advertising to include social media marketing, influencer partnerships, and content marketing. "Price" optimization now leverages dynamic pricing algorithms and competitor analysis. And "product" development increasingly involves digital innovation and customer co-creation. (Kotler et al., 2008)

Figure 2 - 4P's Framework

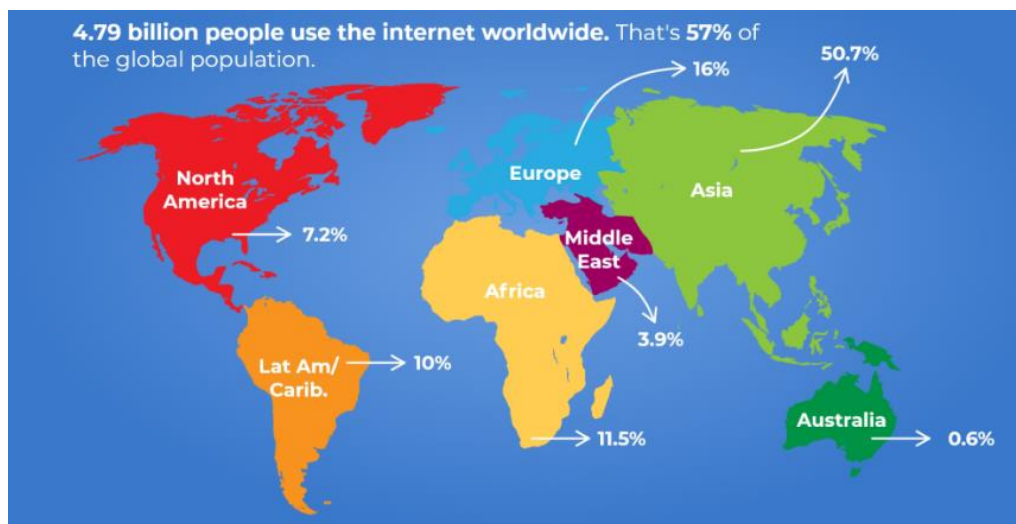


Source: Kotler et al., 2023

While traditional marketing mix strategies dominated marketing activities in the 1980s and 1990s, the advent of the internet has ushered in a new era of marketing: digital marketing. This transformative shift in marketing practices reflects the changing habits and preferences of consumers who are increasingly connected digital. Digital marketing, as the name suggests, encompasses all marketing activities conducted on the internet. It can be broadly defined as any promotional effort by a company that leverages digital platforms to convey messages to consumers or the public. (Ritson, 2023)

Digital marketing takes various forms, each designed to engage consumers in a digital environment. Email marketing, for instance, leverages the ubiquity of email communication to reach customers directly. Display advertising, including various forms of banner ads, has become a common sight on websites, often tailored to users' preferences and behaviour. Search engine marketing ensures that businesses appear prominently in search engine results, increasing visibility and traffic. Mobile advertising capitalizes on the prevalence of smartphones, delivering marketing messages through apps and mobile websites. Social media advertising has emerged as a powerful tool for engaging consumers on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. (Percival, 2023)

Figure 3 - Global Internet Users

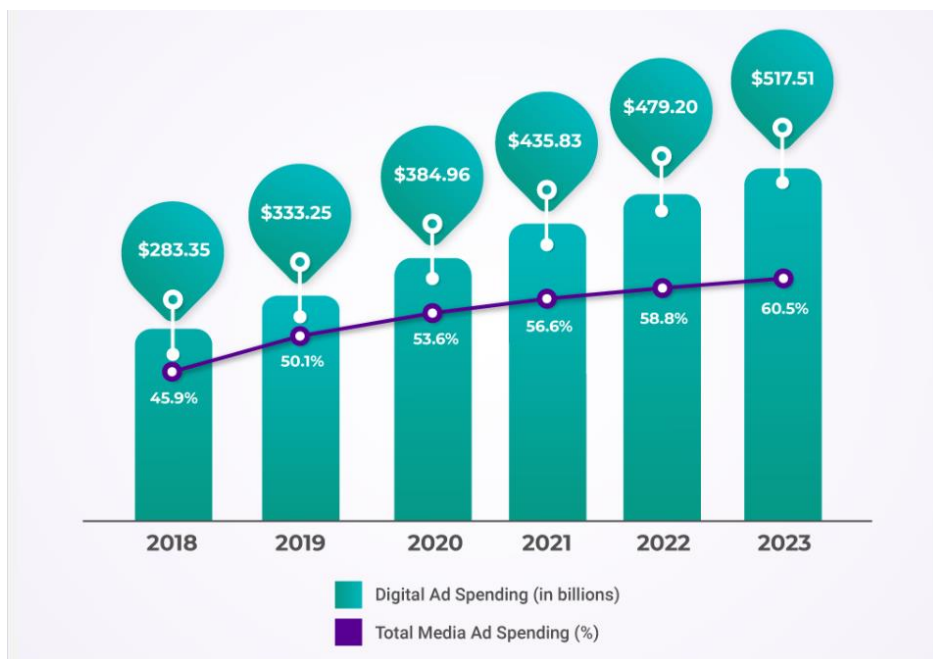


Source : World Internet Users Statistics – Jaze Networks

In the realm of digital marketing, two principal parties play essential roles: the publisher, who provides the advertising platform, and the advertiser, who promotes its products or services on that platform. This ecosystem has given rise to advertising networks, affiliate marketing programs, and influencer partnerships. The dynamic and interconnected nature of digital marketing has enabled businesses to target specific audiences with precision and measure the effect of their campaigns in real-time. (Schultz et al., 2023)

Digital marketing represents a departure from traditional methods of reaching customers, such as print media, television, and radio advertising. While these traditional channels still have their place in marketing strategies, digital marketing offers distinct advantages, including cost-effectiveness, precise targeting, and the ability to track and analyse consumer behaviour. In an era where consumers are inundated with information and choices, digital marketing provides a means for businesses to cut through the noise and engage with audiences in a more personalized and meaningful way. (Quelch & Aaker, 2023)

Figure 4 - Digital Advertising Spend



Source: www.softwaresuggest.com

The core objective of digital marketing is to promote a company's products and services through digital or electronic platforms. This encompasses a wide range of activities, including promotions on social media platforms, marketing through mobile phones, digital television, and radio advertising, as well as the placement of digital banners on various websites. These digital channels offer businesses the opportunity to deliver targeted messages to consumers with unprecedented precision. (Chaffey & Smith, 2022)

In essence, digital marketing represents a form of direct advertising that seeks to provide information about a company's products and services while simultaneously building connections with clients. It is not merely about broadcasting marketing messages but about engaging in a two-way dialogue with customers. The goal is to establish a strong brand image for a company's products and services, persuading consumers to become not just customers but devoted brand loyalists. (Kotler et al., 2009)

The origins of digital marketing can be traced back to the 1990s when information technology underwent a transformation, and the internet began to play an increasingly prominent role in facilitating business objectives. During this period, digital marketing was not primarily seen as an advertising medium but rather as a means of sharing emails, digital information, and organizing company profiles and customer data. The internet was primarily a tool for communication and information exchange. (Verhoef et al., 2022)

However, with the rise in internet usage and the growing number of people spending a significant portion of their time digital searching for information, marketing practitioners started to recognize the untapped potential of digital advertising. Advertising agencies began incorporating various banners and advertisements related to company products and services into their digital publications. This marked the beginning of a significant shift in advertising practices, as companies realized the unique advantages of reaching audiences in a digital environment. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, Amazon, and Ask, played a pivotal role in this transformation. They capitalized on the vast amount of internet traffic generated by users searching for information by offering advertising opportunities to companies. These search engines developed algorithms to display relevant ads to users based on their search queries, behaviour, and preferences. This marked the convergence of advertising and information-seeking, as companies sought to connect with potential customers now of their digital exploration. (Smith, 2018)

As time progressed, the advertising industry continued to evolve. In the early 2000s, consumers gained the power to easily unsubscribe from advertising messages, leading to more targeted and permission-based marketing practices. Invitational marketing, where consumers willingly opt to receive marketing messages, gained prominence. Additionally, recommendation systems emerged, suggesting enticing products and services based on a consumer's purchase history and preferences. These developments reflected a growing awareness of the need to respect consumers' preferences and privacy while delivering relevant and valuable marketing content. (Godin, 2019)

Another major shift occurred with the rise of blogging and the advent of relationship-based marketing. With the proliferation of blogs and social media platforms, individuals and small entrepreneurs gained the ability to publish diverse and engaging content that attracted a global audience. These content creators, often referred to as influencers, became key players in digital marketing, as companies recognized the value of authentic and relatable endorsements. (Evans, 2016)

Digital advertising, as a result, created significant opportunities for individuals to earn a living from the comfort of their homes. Through partnerships with advertising agencies and brands, influencers and content creators could monetize their digital presence and engage with audiences on a personal level. Simultaneously, companies leveraged these digital influencers to reach targeted demographics effectively. (Hoffman & Novak, 2018)

The rise of digital advertising not only empowered individuals but also transformed the advertising landscape for businesses. Compared to traditional offline advertising methods, digital advertising offered several advantages. It provided a cost-effective means of reaching a global audience, allowed for precise targeting based on user data and preferences, and offered real-time analytics to measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. As a result, businesses of all sizes could compete on a level playing field, and marketing budgets could be optimized for maximum effect. (Ryan, 2020)

Digital advertising encompasses various categories and strategies, each tailored to achieve specific goals and engage audiences effectively. These categories include display advertising, which involves the placement of visual ads on websites and apps; search engine marketing (SEM), which ensures that businesses appear prominently in search engine results; social media advertising, where companies leverage the popularity of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to connect with users; email marketing, which utilizes email communication for targeted promotions; and mobile advertising, which leverages the ubiquity of smartphones to deliver marketing messages. (Wood, 2019)

The evolution of marketing from its traditional roots to the digital age has been a remarkable journey marked by innovation and adaptation. The ever-changing landscape of technology and consumer behaviour continues to shape the marketing practices of today and tomorrow. As businesses navigate this dynamic environment, they must remain agile, data-driven, and customer-centric to successfully engage with audiences and drive meaningful results in the digital era. The chapters that follow will delve into the diverse facets of digital advertising, exploring each category in-depth and providing insights into the strategies and tactics that define modern digital marketing. (Kotler et al., 2018)

Digital Marketing Types

Display Advertising - This form of advertising represents the earliest foray into digital marketing and continues to be a cornerstone of the digital advertising landscape. It has found enduring popularity not only in blogs and non-advertising agency websites but across a diverse range of digital platforms. Display advertising is a versatile platform that incorporates a company's message through a variety of creative mediums such as text, images, animations, videos, logos, and other visually engaging elements, all aimed at capturing the attention of consumers. (Camerer & Loewenstein, 2020)

By employing targeting strategies that identify consumers or audiences with similar traits and needs, display advertising can create a deeper and more resonant connection with potential customers. This precision targeting relies heavily on the use of cookies, which gather unique information based on individuals' browsing history, making it easier to tailor advertisements to users who frequently visit specific websites. Display advertising can manifest in numerous forms, constantly evolving to match the dynamic digital landscape. (Ehrenberg et al., 2019)

Banner Advertising - Among the diverse array of display advertising formats, banner advertising stands out as one of the most influential and widely adopted. These banners adorn web pages in a rich tapestry of colours, sizes, and interactive formats. While images are the most prevalent, banner ads also encompass video, audio, animated buttons, logos, and more. Measuring the success of banner ads typically revolves around two key metrics: brand awareness and interaction levels, often quantified through the click-through rate (CTR). (Feuer & Freeman, 2023)

The higher the CTR, the more value the advertiser provides to the company. Notably, research suggests that the size of banner ads can influence conversion rates, with larger banners often yielding more favourable results. However, the precise effect of banner size on overall ad performance remains a subject of ongoing investigation. Researchers are also exploring the efficacy of banner placement throughout websites, as earlier studies yielded mixed results on the influence of size and location. (Fishkin & Sullivan, 2023)

Pop-Up Advertising - Pop-up ads, while occasionally viewed as intrusive, retain their status as one of the most effective tools in the display advertising toolkit. These ads introduce a new web page above or below the current one being viewed, momentarily diverting the user's attention. Pop-ups can manifest as overlays, appearing when visitors scroll to a certain level, or as interstitials, temporarily obscuring the content being accessed. Over time, user complaints about pop-up intrusiveness have led web browsers and antivirus software to incorporate code that selectively blocks certain pop-up ads. (Gupta & Gupta, 2020)

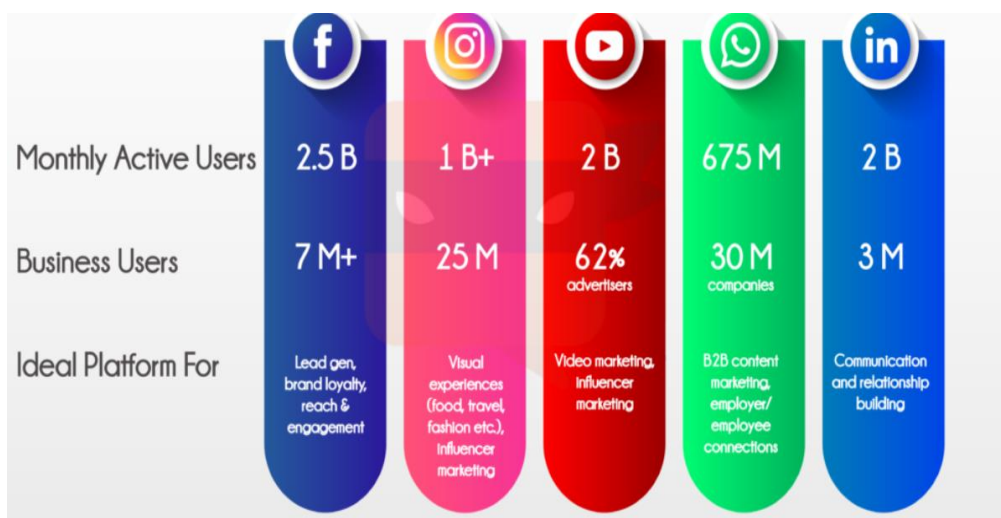
Despite this, pop-up advertising maintains its appeal for marketers. Other innovative display ad formats have emerged, including floating ads, which hover over web content for a limited duration before they can be closed, and trick ads, designed to strategically prompt accidental clicks. These formats have shown high conversion rates, but their effect on overall advertiser revenue remains a subject of scrutiny. Text ads, which rely on plain text or text phrases linked to advertiser content, offer ease of incorporation, and can be effectively utilized in email and text message marketing. (Huber & Wieser, 2021)

Search Engine Advertising - Search engine advertising is a prominent practice adopted by companies and search engine giants like Google, Yahoo, Yandex, and Ask. These platforms seamlessly integrate sponsored ads alongside organic search engine results, differentiating them for users. It stands as one of the most profitable advertising channels for businesses offering specialized services. For example, a user searching for "where to fix sunglasses" on Google will encounter both non-sponsored results listing office addresses and sponsored ads displayed either above or below. (Keller & Wansink, 2022)

The efficacy of search engine advertising hinges on effectively conveying the message within the search engine results. A company selling phones, for instance, is more likely to convert visitors if the message reads "buy Samsung Galaxy" rather than simply providing information about the Samsung Galaxy. The word "buy" serves as a clear call to action, guiding users toward a purchase decision. (Pelsmacker et al., 2010)

Social Media Advertising - Social media advertising has risen to prominence as one of the most popular and influential advertising platforms. Leading the charge is Facebook, which ranks second only to Google in advertising revenue. Social media advertising entails the promotion of company products and services through social media channels. Companies have the option to pay for sponsored ads on these platforms or to actively engage with their audience by regularly updating their social media profiles. (Quelch & Doole, 2019)

Figure 5 - Social Media Platforms



Source: Top-Performing-Social-Media-Platforms.png (digitaleggheads.com)

This approach presents a unique opportunity for companies to target specific demographics and engage with customers at a relatively low cost. To succeed in social media advertising, companies must possess a deep understanding of what resonates with social media users. Crafting engaging and enticing social media updates is paramount to attract the desired traffic and drive conversions. The landscape of social media advertising has evolved over recent years, and while continued growth is expected, success in this realm relies on staying attuned to evolving user preferences and trends. (Shankar et al., 2020)

E-mail Marketing - E-mail marketing has emerged as one of the most effective platforms for promoting company products and services. It involves sending tailored emails to subscribers based on their past browsing history and preferences. Companies such as Amazon, a major e-commerce player, have leveraged this tool to boost repeat purchases. Customized emails recommend products and services based on previous interactions, effectively reducing the perceived intrusiveness of email campaigns, and serving as gentle reminders to customers. (Gunelius, 2019)

When implementing email marketing campaigns, companies should consider their role in educating customers about products and services, striving for comprehensive and informative content. Effective email marketing should spotlight key strategic offers, fostering a deeper connection with the audience. The personalization in email marketing has become increasingly vital. Tailoring content to individual preferences and behaviour not only boosts open and click-through rates but also strengthens customer loyalty. (Bly, 2020)

Blogging - Blogging has evolved into a powerhouse marketing tool for companies seeking to promote their products digital. Marketing and SEO experts advocate for the inclusion of blogs within company websites, providing a platform to discuss products and engage with audiences. This strategy leverages the indexing power of search engines like Google, which, when people search for information related to keywords associated with a company's products, can index the organization's URL in search results, effectively promoting the company's products. (Pulizzi, 2022)

Organizational blogs facilitate direct interaction with customers, offering insights into their buying behaviours and providing in-depth information about products and services. Empowered by comment sections, blogs encourage consumer feedback, motivating companies to maintain the highest product and service standards. Freelancers have also capitalized on blogging for advertising purposes, using their platforms to publish content and provide advertising space to reach a dedicated readership, establishing themselves as a significant source of digital income. (Moz, 2023)

Mobile Advertising - Mobile advertising encompasses all marketing efforts targeted at wireless devices, including smartphones and tablets. Leading the mobile advertising charge are companies like Google Apps, Apple Apps, and Galaxy Apps, with Google remaining the top earner in this sector. Mobile ads can take various forms, from static images to rich display advertisements. The global surge in mobile device usage has elevated mobile advertising to a paramount position in the advertising landscape. (Wroblewski, 2021)

App developers have capitalized on this trend, generating substantial revenue through app advertisements. Success in mobile app advertising pivots on delivering a concise and compelling message about a company's products and services, as the mobile platform demands clarity and brevity to effectively engage users. As mobile technology continues to evolve, companies must remain adaptive, leveraging mobile advertising to maximize their reach in this rapidly expanding digital frontier. (Murphy, 2020)

3.2 Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has been the subject of various definitions, each offering distinct insights into this multifaceted marketing approach. One of the foremost definitions of IMC is provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's). According to this industry authority, IMC represents a strategic approach to marketing communications planning that acknowledges the enhanced value of a comprehensive strategy. (Schultz, 2021)

Figure 6 - IMC Elements



Source - IMS Report, 2021

This strategy considers the strategic roles of various communication disciplines, including general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations. By merging these diverse disciplines, the goal is to achieve clarity, consistency, and the maximum effect in communication. This definition paints IMC as a holistic marketing plan that goes beyond the basic four promotional tools, extending to incorporate various other marketing instruments. (Tuten, 2020)

The emphasis here is on creating a consistent and unified marketing communication plan that actively drives the company's products and services. What truly sets this definition apart is its perspective on IMC not just as a toolkit but as a comprehensive marketing strategy. It underscores the synergy between these marketing elements and how they work in concert to achieve desired outcomes. However, it's worth noting that this definition does have certain gaps, such as the absence of clear mention regarding measurability, creativity, cost-efficiency, and consumer orientation, leaving room for a more comprehensive perspective. (Fill, 2019)

Another perspective defines IMC as the process of effectively managing all sources of information about a product or service that a customer or prospect encounters. This process aims to influence consumer behaviour positively and to foster customer loyalty. This definition places a strong emphasis on the dissemination of information to customers and prospects and its role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. However, it does not encompass the entirety of the IMC concept and fails to address the crucial aspect of measurability. (Belch et al., 2021)

To accommodate a broader spectrum of marketing promotional tools, another definition characterizes IMC as the process of strategically controlling or influencing all messages. This approach encourages purposeful dialogue aimed at creating and nurturing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders. In this definition, stakeholders within the business ecosystem are included, recognizing the diverse interest groups within the company. (Kitchen & Schultz, 2020)

IMC is portrayed as a strategic business process that facilitates the planning, development, execution, and evaluation of a coordinated, measurable, and persuasive brand communication strategy. While this definition provides a comprehensive perspective, it does not explicitly classify IMC as both a concept and a process, even though it addresses most other aspects found in previous definitions of IMC. A more concise yet detailed definition of IMC is as follows that IMC is the concept and process of strategically managing an audience-focused, channel-centered, and result-driven brand communication program over time. (Smith & Zook, 2021)

This succinct definition highlights four key elements. Firstly, IMC is both a concept and a process, underlining its dual nature. Secondly, IMC should be audience-focused, targeting a specific audience with a consistent message across all platforms. Thirdly, IMC should be channel-centred, with a clear differentiation of various mediums for reaching the target audience. Lastly, IMC should be result-driven, aiming to change consumer buying behaviour and being measurable based on changes in company sales. (Chaffey & Smith, 2022)

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) represents a holistic management strategy and meta-discipline. It centres on optimizing the organization-wide value chain to engage stakeholders effectively. This encompasses the planning and execution of all marketing-related activities of the company, whether in the digital or traditional realm, in a consistent manner. The goal is to influence consumer buying behaviour regarding the company's products and services, ensuring a cohesive and effectful communication strategy across all customer touch points. (Fill, 2019)

IMC Tools

Integrated marketing employs a comprehensive set of tools, including advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and direct marketing, whether in the digital or offline realm. The success of a company's marketing efforts hinges on its ability to seamlessly integrate these tools, as this synergy can yield the most favourable outcomes. Effective integration involves strategically coordinating these marketing elements to create a unified and compelling brand message across various platforms and channels. Marketing communication serves as a vital conduit for businesses to connect with their target audience. (Kotler et al., 2023)

This communication encompasses four core objectives: differentiation from competitors, reminding consumers about the product, informing them of the product's existence, and persuading them to take specific actions, such as making purchases or requesting services. To achieve these objectives successfully, companies often employ a mix of these communication tools, tailoring their strategies to the unique needs and preferences of their target demographics. Effective marketing communication strategies also involve crafting compelling narratives and stories that resonate with consumers, creating emotional connections that drive brand loyalty. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2022)

It ensures that consumers receive consistent and coherent messages, reinforcing the brand's image and value proposition. There exist five fundamental tools in integrated marketing, whether in the digital or offline channels. A company's ability to seamlessly integrate these tools together leads to achieving optimal results. Marketing communication serves four primary purposes: distinguishing a company's products from those of competitors, reminding the targeted audience about the product, informing the target audience about the product's existence, and persuading the audience to take specific actions, such as purchasing products or ordering services. (Belch & Belch, 2021)

Advertising - Advertising, in any form of paid, non-personal promotion, involves presentations intended to influence consumer purchasing behaviour regarding the advertised products or services. This method is noted for its low cost per exposure but high overall cost. Consumers often perceive companies that advertise their products as offering quality products and services. Advertising is most effective when the target audience is dispersed across various geographical locations. Consistent and repeated advertising appeals to consumers, as it conveys a sense of unique value. (Smith & Zook, 2019)

Figure 7 - Advertisement Example



Source - Coca Cola Website, 2022

Advertising can take various forms, including print media (e.g., newspapers), TV, radio, billboards, and even public wall painting, as seen in some companies in the Czech Republic. This allows companies to consistently deliver their message to the target audience. Advertising is a powerful tool for shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. Beyond the traditional mediums mentioned earlier, the digital landscape has opened new avenues for advertising, including social media advertising, influencer marketing, and programmatic advertising. (Fill & Fill, 2022)

These channels allow businesses to target specific demographics and track ad performance with unprecedented precision. Moreover, the rise of mobile advertising has transformed the way consumers interact with brands, making it essential for businesses to optimize their advertising for mobile devices. As consumers increasingly rely on their smartphones for information and shopping, mobile-friendly advertising campaigns are key to staying competitive. (Kotler et al., 2023)

Personal Selling - Personal selling is another widely used promotional tool for reaching a company's target audience. It involves person-to-person promotion aimed at informing, persuading, and influencing consumer buying behaviour. Personal selling is carried out by a company's sales force with the goal of making sales and building customer relationships. It is essentially a form of word-of-mouth marketing and is particularly effective at building buyer preferences, convincing consumers, and inducing them to purchase a company's products or services. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2022)

Personal selling can take various forms, such as office-to-office sales, door-to-door sales, public rallies, fund-raising dinners, or even street-to-street sales. It relies on oral presentations to engage one or more prospective buyers, fostering immediate interaction, personal relationships between sales representatives and customers, and emotional connections with the product. Personal selling remains a valuable strategy for building relationships with customers. (Belch & Belch, 2021)

In addition to the traditional methods mentioned, businesses have embraced video conferencing tools and virtual sales presentations to adapt to remote work and digital customer interactions. These virtual interactions allow sales representatives to reach a global audience and provide personalized product demonstrations and consultations. Furthermore, data analytics and customer relationship management (CRM) systems have empowered sales teams to tailor their pitches based on individual customer preferences and behaviours, enhancing the effectiveness of personal selling efforts. (Smith & Zook, 2019)

Sales Promotions - Sales promotion is a strategy employed by companies to boost short-term sales. It involves the use of short-term incentives to attract consumers to purchase a company's products. These incentives can come in various forms, including coupons, contests, premiums, and more. Sales promotions may also include trade fairs or auction bids. Essentially, there are two primary categories of sales promotion: consumer-oriented and trade-oriented. Consumer-oriented promotions aim to entice consumers to buy more of a product, while trade-oriented promotions target distribution channels to increase their purchases. (Fill & Fill, 2022)

Some authors have criticized this classification, adding a third category known as employee sales promotion, which encourages employees to excel and sell more of the company's products. Companies engage in sales promotion to raise awareness of new products and services, elicit quicker responses, attract customers to switch brands, stabilize demand fluctuations, enhance customer loyalty, and generate stronger responses from buyers. The key benefits of sales promotions include rapid response, the incorporation of incentives to capture customer interest, and the call to immediate action regarding products or services. (Kotler et al., 2023)

Sales promotion continues to be a go-to strategy for companies looking to boost short-term sales and foster brand loyalty. Beyond the classic methods like coupons and contests, loyalty programs and referral systems have gained popularity in recent years. These programs incentivize repeat purchases and encourage satisfied customers to refer friends and family, expanding a company's customer base. Additionally, e-commerce platforms have made it easier than ever to implement dynamic pricing and flash sales, creating a sense of urgency that drives sales and keeps customers engaged. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2022)

Public Relations - Public relations stands out as one of the most effective promotional tools available. It is an indirect promotional method designed to positively influence the public's perception of a company. The public relations involve deliberate, planned, and sustained efforts by a company to establish a favourable image and maintain mutual understanding with the public. Effective public relations don't happen by accident; they are a calculated plan to shape public opinion about the company and maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders, including consumers, the community, government, suppliers, and employees. (Belch & Belch, 2021)

The objectives of public relations include minimizing negative publicity, enhancing the company's profile, and fostering stronger, more effective, and consistent customer-supplier relationships. Public relations are not only about maintaining a positive image but also about crisis management and reputation repair. In the digital age, companies must be vigilant in monitoring digital conversations and addressing any negative sentiment promptly. Social media listening tools and digital reputation management strategies help companies navigate the complex landscape of public perception. Furthermore, sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have become integral to the PR. (Smith & Zook, 2019)

Direct Marketing - Direct marketing encompasses any company's efforts to elicit immediate responses and gauge the effect of promotions on products. It entails direct communication with specific individuals or groups, designed to prompt immediate actions, such as placing orders, requesting more information, taking specific actions, or exploring more of the company's products or services. Content and SEO marketers often employ this strategy, sending direct emails to prospective clients, providing details about their services, and encouraging them to make orders to enjoy the company's offerings. (Fill & Fill, 2022)

Direct marketing has evolved significantly with the proliferation of digital channels. Email marketing automation, for example, allows businesses to send personalized and timely messages to their subscribers, nurturing leads and driving conversions. Furthermore, the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning has enabled predictive marketing, where companies can anticipate customer needs and send relevant offers and recommendations. Social media platforms have also introduced features like chatbots and in-app shopping, enabling direct communication with customers and seamless purchasing experiences. (Kotler et al., 2023)

IMC Plan

Figure 8 - IMC Plan Process



Source - Schultz & Schultz., 2004

Identifying the Targeted Audience - The foundation of any effective Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy lies in its ability to precisely pinpoint the target audience it aims to engage. When devising an IMC plan, it is imperative that the company not only defines its objectives but also clearly identifies the specific audience it intends to reach. This audience can encompass a diverse range of individuals and groups, including prospective customers, existing patrons, influential figures, distinct demographics, or even the broader public. (Rehman et al., 2022)

By having a well-defined target audience in mind, the company can tailor its messaging to suit the unique characteristics and preferences of these segments. Moreover, this clarity enables the company to make informed decisions about what to say, how to convey the message, where to disseminate it, and to whom it should be directed. Furthermore, a deep understanding of the target audience's demographic attributes, such as age, educational background, income level, gender, and geographical location, is paramount. (Schultz et al., 2018)

These demographic insights serve as the bedrock upon which the communication strategies are built. It allows the company to determine the most effective means of reaching and resonating with the intended audience. Since different audience segments may hold varying perceptions of the company's products or services, a tailored approach becomes essential. Any attempt to integrate the promotional mix must be mindful of addressing the specific needs and preferences of the targeted audience. What captures the attention and interest of one group may not have the same effect on another, emphasizing the pivotal role of a well-defined target audience in the IMC design process. (Jobber et al., 2020)

Defining IMC Objectives and Goals - In addition to audience identification, the IMC strategy's success hinges on the clear articulation of its objectives and goals. These objectives serve as the guiding star for the entire organization, aligning efforts towards a common purpose. IMC objectives typically fall into one of three broad categories: increasing brand awareness, driving up sales revenue, or nurturing and strengthening customer relationships. Each of these objectives demands a distinct approach and set of tactics. Consequently, it is incumbent upon the company to make precise determinations regarding its IMC goals. (Kotler & Keller, 2020)

Once these objectives are solidified, they must be effectively communicated throughout the organization to ensure that every team member is aligned with the overarching strategy. The development of set of objectives facilitates the measurement, evaluation, and control of the IMC plan's progress. It becomes possible to gauge the extent to which the campaign has met its intended outcomes. Are brand awareness levels rising as expected? Is there a noticeable uptick in sales revenue? Are customer relationships evolving in the desired manner? Answering these questions becomes more straightforward when the objectives are crystal clear and well-communicated. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018)

Crafting a Clear Message - Moving forward in the IMC process, the next critical step is the creation of a compelling and coherent message. The message represents the heart of the communication effort, the bridge that connects the company to its target audience. Companies often employ various creative mediums and strategies to craft messages that resonate. In some instances, companies may even tap into the creativity of brand loyalists, hosting competitions to select the most appealing message and rewarding the winning creators. (Ogilvy, 2019)

Regardless of the approach, a well-crafted message should possess the power to grab the audience's attention, pique their interest, ignite desire, and ultimately spur them to action. While it may not always lead to immediate action, a skilfully designed message is likely to provoke at least one of these responses. Several factors must be considered in message design. The choice of appeal is a central consideration, encompassing rational, emotional, and moral appeals. Rational appeal seeks to appeal to the self-interest of consumers by highlighting the practical benefits and features of the product or service. (Kotler et al., 2022)

Emotional appeal, on the other hand, aims to evoke positive emotions and sentiments surrounding the company's offerings, tapping into feelings like love, joy, or compassion to attract and retain customers. Meanwhile, moral appeal is designed to resonate with individuals' sense of what is ethically right for society, touching on topics such as environmental responsibility or social equality. The structure of the message is another crucial aspect to consider, including whether to adopt a conclusion-oriented approach, employ one-sided or two-sided messaging, and decide the sequencing. (Watson et al., 2021)

Selecting Communication Channels - Effective communication depends on the careful selection of communication channels that resonate with the target audience. Not all channels are equally suitable for reaching every demographic. Thus, it is essential to assess which channels are most familiar and accessible to the company's customers and how effective these channels are in achieving the desired objectives. Personal communication channels involve direct interactions between two or more individuals, whether through phone calls, emails, or other interpersonal mediums. (Schultz et al., 2021)

Non-personal communication channels encompass various media, such as print, broadcast, electronic media, and billboards, often involving paid advertising. The choice of communication channels should align with the preferences and habits of the target audience, ensuring that the message reaches them in a format they are most likely to engage with effectively. By selecting the right channels, the company maximizes its chances of connecting with the audience on a meaningful level. (Jain, 2023)

Ensuring Message Consistency - Consistency is the bedrock of a successful IMC strategy. Regardless of the chosen channels, it is crucial to ensure that the messages remain clear, cohesive, and convey the same meaning across all touchpoints. Every message should be aligned with the overarching objectives and company strategy. This cohesion extends to a well-synchronized campaign message delivered across different digital channels, whether through email marketing, social media advertising, search engine optimization efforts, or sales promotions. (Duncan, 2020)

The consistency in messaging aims at achieving specific objectives, such as increasing sales, building brand awareness, or nurturing customer loyalty. Moreover, it is essential that all members of the marketing team, regardless of their specific projects or responsibilities, collaborate harmoniously towards the achievement of the overall objectives and goals. Even if the company employs multiple advertising platforms, the messaging should remain uniform and consistent, reinforcing the brand's identity and value proposition across all interactions. (Ionescu & Iacobuță, 2022)

Evaluation of the Integrated Communication - The culmination of the IMC process lies in the evaluation phase, where the effectiveness of the campaign is rigorously assessed. To ascertain the success of the promotion, companies must establish robust metrics that allow for real-time data collection throughout the campaign's duration. This data provides valuable insights into the performance of various elements, such as coupons, promo codes, and other campaign components across different channels. (Salzer & Alpert, 2019)

Moreover, maintaining open channels for feedback across various platforms is crucial for refining and optimizing the strategy as the campaign progresses. This continuous feedback loop allows the company to adapt to changing circumstances and fine-tune its approach to better achieve its objectives. By consistently monitoring the campaign's performance and gathering insights, the company can make data-driven decisions and ensure that its IMC efforts are aligned with its broader business goals. (Mishra & Kumar, 2021)

3.3 Digital Marketing & IMC

Digital Advertising - The business environment is continually evolving, driven by factors such as technological advancements, economic shifts, and changing consumer behaviours. As a result, businesses must adapt and employ a wide array of tools to effectively manage their operations. In the realm of marketing, the landscape of marketing communication is dynamic and constantly evolving to keep pace with these changes. This evolution encompasses the emergence of new tools, theories, and techniques. The advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the way companies engage with their audiences, allowing for real-time interactions and personalized campaigns. (Bala & Verma, 2018)

Additionally, the use of data analytics has become integral, enabling marketers to gain valuable insights into consumer preferences and behaviours, further enhancing the effectiveness of their communication strategies. Technological changes play a pivotal role in shaping the marketing communication landscape. The rise of mobile devices and the prevalence of smartphones have led to the development of mobile marketing strategies. Mobile applications, SMS marketing, and location-based services have become essential components of marketing communication, allowing companies to reach consumers wherever they are, and tailor messages based on geographic location. (Kumar & Venkatesan, 2023)

Furthermore, the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has opened new possibilities in marketing automation, chatbots, and predictive analytics, streamlining marketing efforts and enhancing customer experiences. Cultural dynamics also exert a profound influence on how marketers communicate their messages. In an increasingly globalized world, understanding and respecting cultural nuances is paramount. Companies engaging in international marketing must adapt their communication strategies to resonate with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Huang et al., 2022)

The colours, symbols, and imagery that hold positive connotations in one culture may have entirely different meanings in another. Cross-cultural competence is thus a key asset for successful international marketing campaigns. In the landscape of marketing communication, the internet has emerged as a game-changing platform. Much like traditional offline advertising, which utilizes broadcast or print media for promotions, companies seeking to reach their target audiences must consider the internet as a platform analogous to television, newspapers, radio, and outdoor advertising. (Wang & Kwong, 2020)

E-mail Marketing - Text-based email marketing closely resembles the traditional mailing of promotional materials to company customers offline. Email marketing offers several advantages over traditional postal mail. Firstly, it permits companies to send messages to customers at no additional cost, in contrast to direct mailings, which incur postage fees. Secondly, emails enable rapid responses from customers, as companies often include links within emails that lead customers directly back to their websites, facilitating transactions or registrations. (Kumar & Yadav, 2022)

Email addresses are readily obtainable when customers visit websites for transactions or from company brokers. Today, email remains a powerful marketing tool, employed by tech giants like Amazon. For example, Amazon uses email to recommend products to customers based on their past shopping experiences. Many companies extensively employ email to gather customer feedback and improve their services. (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2021)

Banner Ads - Multimedia advertising, especially banner ads, and buttons, has been one of the most prevalent forms of digital advertising. It serves to create awareness about products or services and is sometimes used for direct marketing purposes. Banner ads and buttons typically occupy designated spaces on websites, like the placement of advertisements in traditional print media, with embedded links directing users to the advertiser's website for transactions or other desired actions. (Bughin et al., 2020)

While banner advertising was once highly popular, its performance has declined, prompting marketers to employ selective targeting as a design strategy. The more creative and strategically placed the ads are, the more effectively they reach their intended audience. An essential feature of digital advertising is its immediate effect; unlike print media advertising, it generates both awareness and immediate customer action through the links attached to the banners. (Kotler et al., 2020)

Sponsorship - Another potent tool for digital advertising is sponsorship, which has gained popularity over time, partly due to the diminishing effectiveness of banner ads. With sponsorship, advertisers pay for a specific webpage or section of a webpage, either providing the content themselves or having the site create and approve the content. This concept resembles the practice in print media where a dedicated page is reserved for a website. A distinct advantage of digital sponsorship over traditional print media is its longevity; digital

content remains visible as long as it remains relevant, ensuring continued exposure to audiences. (Brien & Shultz, 2019)

Digital advertising offers several advantages over traditional print and broadcast media, such as television. One significant advantage lies in the ability to align advertisements with the specific interests of the target audience at any given moment. Unlike television programs, where advertisements may not align with viewers' preferences, digital marketing allows for precise targeting. The internet also facilitates seamless integration between information seeking and transaction completion. Internet users can instantly respond to an advertisement and make purchases on the sponsor's website, bridging the gap that offline multimedia often entails. (Kotler et al., 2022)

Additionally, digital advertising creates multiple communication channels where users can engage with messages and with one another, fostering a sense of community. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are poised to redefine marketing communication. VR allows consumers to immerse themselves in branded experiences, such as virtual store visits or product demonstrations. AR, on the other hand, overlays digital information onto the physical world, offering interactive and engaging advertising. (McDonnell, 2021)

Digital Public Relation - Public relations is an integral component of a company's marketing strategy, aimed at raising awareness about its products and services among a diverse range of stakeholders. Its primary function is to manage and nurture the external relationships between the company and its various stakeholders. It serves to convey a positive message and build goodwill for the company across its major stakeholders, which include employees, the media, financial institutions, shareholders, the local community, suppliers, and government entities, among others. (Guth & Marsh, 2023)

The goal is to cultivate a favourable perception of the company among its stakeholders. In this digital age, almost all content on a company's website, aside from explicit advertising and sales promotions, can be considered a form of public relations. For instance, company brochures are readily available on the website, providing consumers with comprehensive information about specific products. Similarly, press releases are

disseminated to the media, while annual reports are accessible to investors digital, eliminating the need for physical visits. (Gravel, 2019)

As television viewership and print newspaper readership continue to decline, it has become imperative for companies to invest in information technology to foster more personalized connections with their numerous stakeholders. Effective communication in the twenty-first century is characterized by open dialogues, borderless interactions, inclusivity, and continuous engagement, all of which serve as the foundation for delivering value and building robust, digital personal relationships with stakeholders. (Qualman, 2020)

Modern companies engage in conversations with both internal employees and external customers to ascertain their needs and preferences, aiming to align company strategies with customer expectations. Given the global reach of the internet, it is crucial for companies to craft messages that transcend cultural boundaries. To echo the age-old adage, "charity begins at home," a company's goodwill message should begin with its employees. By first instilling a sense of purpose and enthusiasm among its workforce, the company can more effectively convey its message to other stakeholders, fostering stronger connections throughout its entire ecosystem. (Theaker, 2021)

Digital Personal Selling - The internet has evolved into a potent tool for e-commerce companies engaged in personal selling. This transformation, however, has posed challenges, particularly for those operating in the business-to-business (B2B) sector. Nevertheless, a significant number of B2B enterprises perceive the internet as an opportunity to expand their reach and establish a robust digital presence. Some companies have even reduced their workforce due to decreased in-person interactions resulting from the emergence of digital personal selling. (Ahearne & Rapp, 2020)

The internet has emerged as a vital information source for participants in the business-to-business market, especially those in the supply chain industry. Visitors to a company's website can engage with the content, thereby becoming potential leads. Subsequently, an individual salesperson can be assigned to follow up with these visitors, converting them into viable sales prospects. Many B2B companies, such as advertising agencies and other business support service providers, diligently nurture leads until they are convinced to engage with the company. (Kotler et al., 2021)

One of the distinct advantages of this approach is cost reduction, as sales representatives are no longer required to travel for face-to-face interactions with clients regarding the company's products or services. Moreover, an increasing number of companies offer free trial versions of their products or services digital. Once consumers are satisfied with the product, they are more likely to place an order, and a dedicated salesperson is assigned for further assistance. (Sheth & Sharma, 2018)

In a well-structured integrated marketing communication plan, a digital presence seamlessly complements personal selling efforts, allowing sales representatives to reach a broader audience with information about the company's products and services. It's worth noting that while some researchers have pointed out that the internet may not be the ideal platform for direct personal selling, it excels in providing valuable support to offline personal selling activities. (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2023)

Digital Sales Promotion - The internet has emerged as a potent tool harnessed by numerous e-commerce companies for personal selling, simultaneously posing a challenge to players engaged in business-to-business (B2B) markets. However, within the realm of B2B, the internet is perceived by most companies as an invaluable opportunity to expand their reach and bolster their digital presence. In fact, certain enterprises have considerably reduced their workforce in response to the limitations faced in traditional personal selling, catalysed by the rise of digital avenues. (Rangarajan et al., 2020)

For professionals operating in the supply chain industry and related sectors within B2B markets, the internet has evolved into an indispensable wellspring of information. Visitors to company websites can initiate interactions, thereby providing potential leads that can be swiftly assigned to individual sales representatives for subsequent follow-up, ultimately transforming these visitors into promising sales prospects. Notably, many B2B entities, such as advertising agencies and business support service providers, diligently pursue prospective clients until they are persuaded to engage with the company's offerings. (Homburg et al., 2020)

One significant advantage of this approach is the substantial cost reduction achieved, as sales representatives can seamlessly engage with clients without the need for physical travel to discuss the company's products or services. Numerous companies have adopted the practice of offering free trial versions of their products or services digital, thereby enabling

consumers to experience their offerings first-hand. Subsequently, once a consumer is satisfied with the product or service, a dedicated salesperson can be assigned for further follow-up. (Valdivieso, 2020)

Within well-crafted integrated marketing communication strategies, maintaining a strong digital presence complements personal selling efforts, enabling sales representatives to reach a broader audience with the company's products and services. It is worth noting that while some researchers have observed that the internet may not be an ideal fit for direct personal selling, it undoubtedly plays a pivotal supportive role in enhancing offline personal selling activities. (Rangaswamy et al., 2020)

Digital Marketing Effect

In the context of integrated marketing communication, the effect of digital marketing refers to the ability of a company to assess the effectiveness of its digital marketing efforts over time. Various criteria have been identified in the literature to gauge the success of digital marketing campaigns. These criteria encompass metrics such as the number of unique website visitors, the bounce rate (number of pages viewed per visit), visitor retention rates, the duration of individual visitor sessions, visitor engagement behaviours (such as copying and reading content), and the volume of comments on posts, the influx of customer emails, and more. (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2020)

When visitors find their needs met on a website, they are more likely to return, fostering a deeper and lasting relationship. The longer visitors spend on a website, the stronger the connection that evolves over time. Additionally, the effect of an advertisement or promotional campaign on a company's products or services is positively correlated with the quantity of website traffic it attracts. Evaluating visitor behaviour on a website is crucial in determining whether the desired objectives of an advertisement or promotion have been met. (Smith & Zook, 2018)

This includes assessing whether visitors are engaging with the content in the intended manner. Another vital measure of digital advertising or promotional activities is their effect on company sales and revenue. Ultimately, a business's primary goal is profitability, and any promotional effort that contributes to this goal is deemed successful. Two fundamental approaches are employed to measure the success of digital promotional activities. Firstly, the behaviour of digital visitors is scrutinized to ascertain if they are fulfilling the desired

actions as intended by the company in the promotional campaign. (Verhoef et al., 2020) For instance, if the company expected visitors to register for a course but they do not, the company may need to reevaluate the course content, enrolment costs, and other factors that might deter visitors from registering. The second measurement approach proposed by the author involves tracking the frequency of return visits to the website by visitors. Return visits indicate that visitors find the website informative and valuable, which provides an opportunity for the company to leverage this positive impression. Additionally, the effect of a promotion should be assessed through indicators such as increased sales, improved company profitability, as well as metrics like time spent on the website, average page views, and bounce rates, among others. (Kumar & Petersen, 2021)

Furthermore, the success of a promotional tool should also be evaluated based on its ability to convert site visitors into customers or clients and facilitate post-purchase interactions. The company's capability to convert website traffic into meaningful sales and post-purchase engagements is a pivotal indicator of the effectiveness of promotional tools. Therefore, it is essential for companies to analyse the performance trends of each promotional tool and identify which one generates the highest leads, sales, and improved customer relationships. (Payne & Frow, 2020)

Digital Marketing Tools

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, the realm of information technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented rate. This transformation is not limited to just one sector but touches all aspects of the lives. Innovative technologies are emerging almost daily, shaping the way consumers interact with products and services. This continuous change has a direct effect on consumer behaviour, making it essential for businesses to remain vigilant and adapt swiftly to stay ahead. (Haleem et al., 2022)

The digital marketing landscape is incredibly dynamic. What resonates with consumers today might not be as effective tomorrow. Consequently, companies must invest substantial effort in staying attuned to these digital marketing trends, ensuring that their promotional strategies align with the shifting preferences of their target audience. In this section, the study will explore some of the most prevalent and effectful digital marketing tools that companies can employ to bolster their digital presence and maintain a competitive edge in this ever-evolving environment. (Haleem et al., 2023)

Digital marketing is not just cost-effective; it also possesses the unique ability to reach, engage, and influence a broader and more diverse audience compared to traditional offline marketing methods. While many factors contribute to this efficiency, one technological advancement stands out as a game-changer: artificial intelligence (AI). AI's role in marketing cannot be overstated. Beyond merely automating repetitive tasks, AI can collect and analyse vast amounts of customer data from sources like comments, blogs, and social media. (Kumar et al., 2019)

This data is then leveraged to gain profound insights into consumer behaviour, enabling companies to tailor their marketing strategies with unparalleled precision. Furthermore, AI can be deployed to address customer inquiries and complaints promptly and effectively, mimicking human interactions and providing a seamless experience. This capability makes AI a cornerstone technology in the realm of digital marketing. The integration of artificial intelligence into marketing strategies is not just a futuristic concept; it's already making significant waves in the industry. (Kumar, 2022)

One noteworthy AI application gaining popularity today is chatbots. These AI-driven conversational agents are transforming the way companies handle customer service. They offer real-time, round-the-clock support, ensuring that customers receive assistance whenever they need it. This not only enhances customer satisfaction but also streamlines operations by reducing the reliance on human agents across multiple time zones. Consequently, chatbots represent a substantial cost-saving opportunity for companies looking to optimize their marketing budgets. (Lee & Qiufan, 2019)

As businesses increasingly adopt chatbots, they are not only minimizing costs but also ensuring that their customer interactions are efficient, personalized, and available at any time. This not only satisfies current customer expectations but also positions companies for success in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Chatbots, in addition to their role in customer service, offer an additional advantage in the realm of digital marketing – precise ad targeting. These AI-driven entities can analyse vast datasets of user behaviour, enabling businesses to tailor their advertising efforts with incredible accuracy. (Kotler et al., 2020)

By understanding consumer preferences, browsing habits, and demographics, companies can ensure that their advertisements reach the right audience at the right time. This targeted approach not only optimizes marketing expenditure but also enhances the effectiveness of campaigns. As a result, businesses can expect higher conversion rates and a stronger return on investment. This capability aligns perfectly with the modern marketing landscape, where consumers increasingly demand personalized experiences and relevant content. (Mari, 2019)

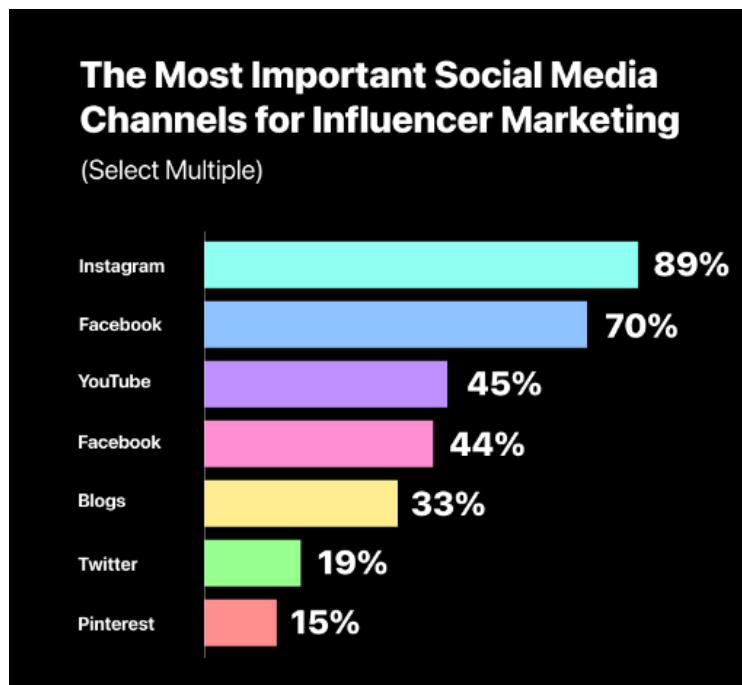
Digital Videos - Another emerging tool in the realm of digital marketing is content video marketing. Digital video consumption has been steadily increasing year after year, and this trend is expected to continue. The surge in video consumption is predicted to account for a significant portion of digital traffic. Incorporating video content into email marketing campaigns is likely to result in substantially higher click-through rates. Furthermore, surveys have consistently shown that customers are more inclined to purchase a company's products and services after viewing videos that showcase offerings. (Mendez & Walkingshaw, 2022)

Soon, it is expected to exert a substantial influence on the field of digital marketing and integrated marketing, rivalling even the effect of artificial intelligence. Companies are capitalizing on this trend by utilizing videos to narrate compelling stories about their products and services. With the presence of social media giants like Facebook and Instagram, launching video-based marketing campaigns has become more accessible for businesses. Customers and website visitors find it easier to engage with and understand a company's products and services when presented through video content. Consequently, many companies are shifting a significant portion of their content marketing efforts toward content video marketing. (Iyer et al., 2020)

Social Media Influencers - This represents yet another emerging trend in digital marketing that numerous companies are utilizing to connect with a broad and specific target audience. According to a recent survey conducted by the marketing agency, majority of the interviewed marketers expressed a preference for incorporating influencer marketing into all aspects of their company's marketing endeavours. Furthermore, high number of the surveyed respondents anticipate an increase in their budget allocation for influencer marketing. (Russell, 2019)

Influencer marketing is akin to product reviews for consumers who are contemplating a purchase on an e-commerce platform; it plays a pivotal role in assisting consumers in making informed decisions about a product. Consumers are more inclined to purchase a product if it has been recommended by someone they trust. Influencers can take various forms, including celebrities or popular social media personalities, among others. Individuals with a substantial following can endorse a company's products, garnering significant attention and interest. People often emulate the lifestyles of celebrities, and when they endorse a product, it tends to experience a surge in sales. (Lee et al., 2019)

Figure 10 - Influencer Marketing Data



Source - Big Commerce Report, 2020

Micro Marketing - The concept of micro-moments has become a valuable lesson for many prominent bloggers, garnering them significant traffic and a devoted following over the years. Google defines micro-moments as those instances when individuals seek to acquire knowledge, explore a topic, or search for something using their mobile devices. Marketing experts emphasize that a company's ability to convey its message effectively, using concise and clear language, can be a decisive factor in attracting more consumers. (Solomon & Ryan, 2017)

This is particularly important because consumers today are often juggling numerous demands on their time and prefer succinct, information-rich statements over lengthy explanations. Given that consumers in the United States spend a considerable portion of their day using their mobile phones and frequently visit social media platforms, companies have an opportunity to tailor their product and service messages to be both concise and easily understandable. This approach can help them connect more effectively with their target audience in this era of constant connectivity. (Jeffery, 2018)

Data Analytics - The prominence of big data extends beyond the marketing industry; it has evolved into a pivotal resource utilized by companies to gain a competitive edge across various sectors. The capacity for data accumulation is virtually boundless, and when harnessed alongside artificial intelligence, it yields profound insights into customer behaviours, shedding light on what truly matters to consumers. Regardless of a company's scale, whether it operates on a small or large level, the strategic integration of big data can open endless possibilities in the landscape of digital marketing. (Kumar & Chawla, 2018)

In addition to big data's significance, there are several noteworthy marketing trends worth exploring. For instance, the use of social media messenger apps presents a substantial opportunity, as these platforms host over one billion global users. Sharing captivating messages or videos on these platforms can be a potent strategy for engaging a vast audience. Furthermore, visual search technology has emerged as a tool employed by marketers to promote their products, among various other innovative techniques. (Ogilvy, 2022)

4. Practical Part

This study presents and discuss the findings from the data collected from the field survey. The main objective of this research is to determine the extent digital marketing effects integrated marketing communication. The specific objectives of this study aimed to achieve empirically include: to determine the extent digital marketing can be effective in achieving company marketing strategy, to examine the extent integrated marketing communication can be effective in achieving company marketing strategy, to ascertain the effect of digital marketing in achieving effective and efficient integrated marketing communication in the company, to examine the key indicators used in measuring digital marketing communication performance and to examine the trending digital marketing tools employed by company to reach more targeted audience and accomplish more result.

To achieve the above result the study began with extensive literature review that provided insight and guidance in deriving the questionnaire used in collecting the data. The 225 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, of that only 213 of them were correctly filled and retrieved by the author and used for the analysis representing 94% response rate. The tools employed in discussing the findings of the empirical work are descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentage distribution.

4.1 Demographic Analysis

The table presented below displays the distribution of respondents' ages. In the survey, individuals aged 26 to 40 years constitute the majority, comprising 120 respondents, which represents 56 percent of the total participants.

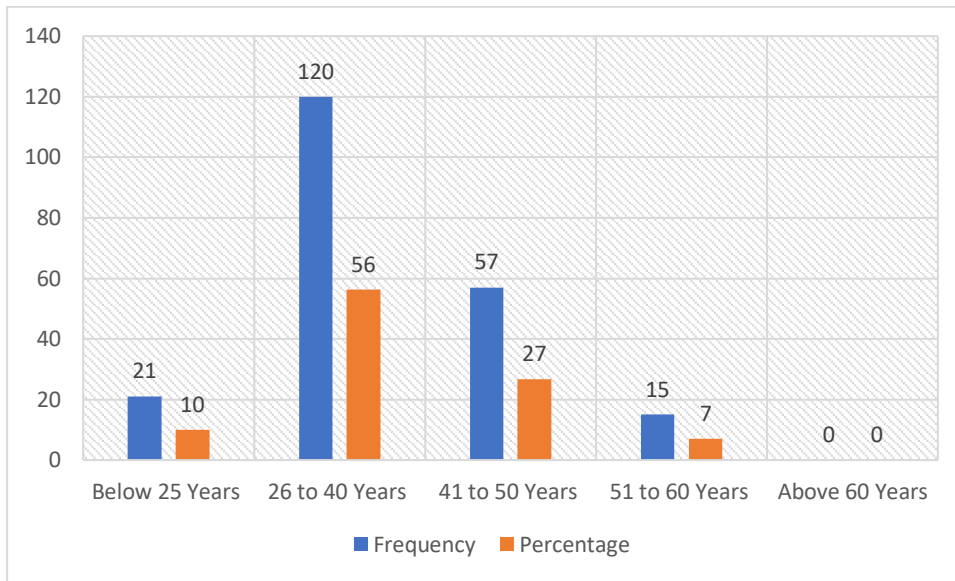
The survey also revealed that 21 individuals, which is around 10 percent were under 30 years old, 57 individuals, which is around 27 percent fell within the 41 to 50 years age group, and 15 individuals, which is around 7 percent were in the 51 to 60 age categories. Notably, there were no respondents above the age of 60. Consequently, it is evident that the survey predominantly comprises young or middle-aged professionals in the field of marketing. Existing literature generally regards age as a relatively passive factor in employment within sales and marketing departments in companies. As a result, there has been limited research into the extent to which age influences employment within marketing and sales departments.

Table 1 - Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25 Years	21	10
26 to 40 Years	120	56
41 to 50 Years	57	27
51 to 60 Years	15	7
Above 60 Years	0	0
Total	213	100

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 1 - Age Group



Source - own result (2023)

In the data presented in the table below, it is noteworthy that out of the 213 marketing experts who participated in the survey, 78 of them, constituting 37 percent of the total respondents, were female. The remaining participants were male, accounting for 63 percent of the total respondents. While it's not uncommon to find a significant female presence in marketing departments, it's worth mentioning that the research revealed an interesting observation.

The literature suggests that marketing departments typically have a balanced gender distribution. However, the interviews conducted with three marketing executives during this research yielded the intriguing finding that all three of them were male. This observation was consistent across the three companies under examination: SAP, AMAZON Czech Republic, and Colora Paint. Given this context, the fact that the marketing leadership and executive positions in these companies were all occupied by males might not be as surprising.

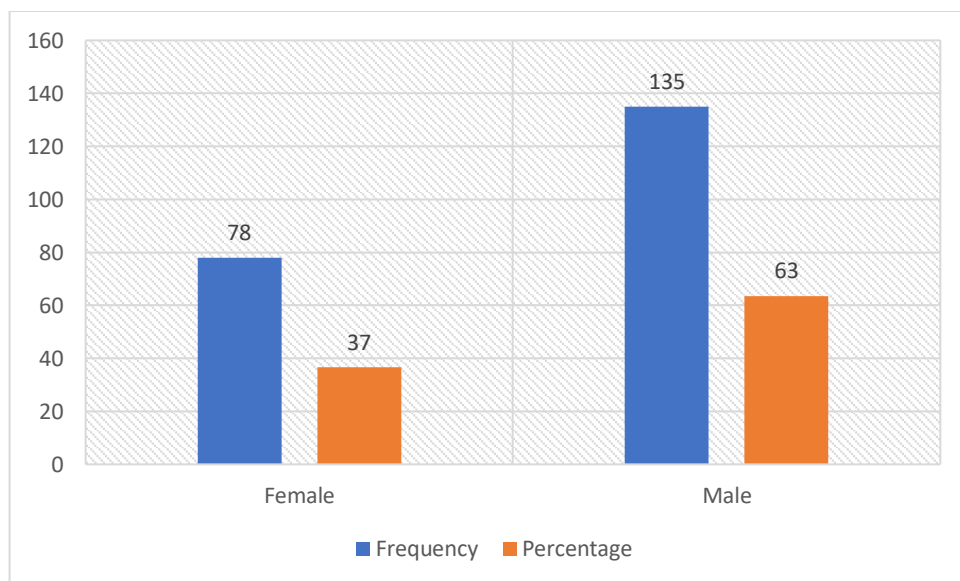
Previous research has indicated a prevailing gender imbalance in the workforce, with men occupying a majority share of 61 percent, leaving women with 39 percent. This ratio, while notably lower in Western countries, underscores the disparity. Forbes' surveys have also highlighted a scarcity of women in CEO positions, with only a small percentage of these roles being held by females, while the majority are occupied by male CEOs.

Table 2 - Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	78	37
Male	135	63
Total	213	100

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 2 - Gender



Source - own result (2023)

According to the data presented in the table below, only three participants possess a diploma, while the highest educational qualification for six participants is a professional certification. In the context of the Czech Republic, professional certification is typically pursued by individuals with lower qualifications, aiming to enhance their prospects for advancing in the management hierarchy. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that most of the respondents, comprising 126 individuals, which is around 59 percent, hold a bachelor's degree as their highest educational credential. During the survey, 78 respondents, which is around 37 percent indicated that they possess a master's degree as their highest qualification. Interestingly, none of the respondents reported holding a Ph.D. degree.

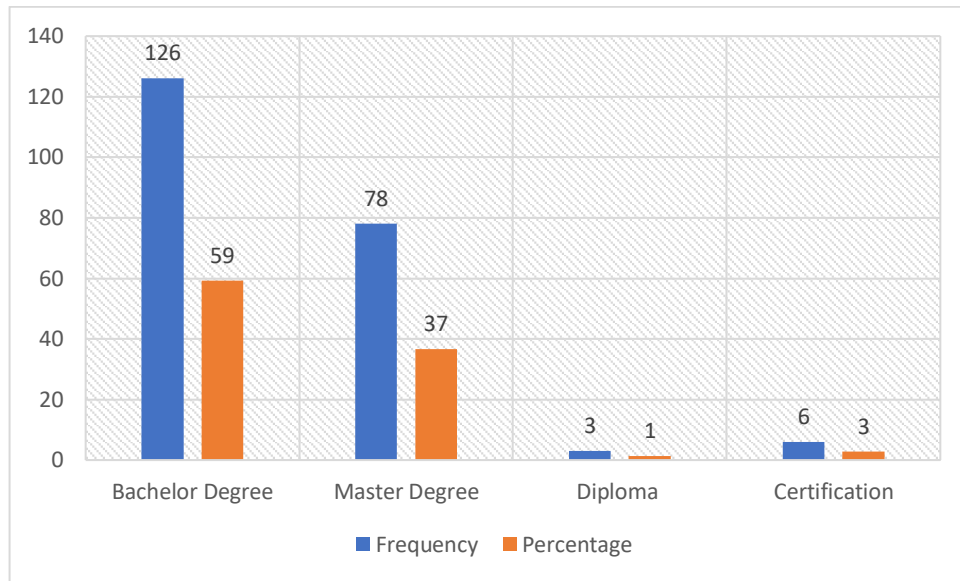
It's also noteworthy that 37 percent of the participants have already earned an MBA in marketing or an MSc in marketing, which suggests that these respondents possess a substantial level of knowledge about digital marketing and its role in effective integrated marketing communication. The existing literature does not extensively address the effect of educational qualifications on marketing activities.

Table 3 - Education Qualification

Education Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	126	59
Master's degree	78	37
Diploma	3	1
Certification	6	3
Total	213	100

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 3 - Education Qualification



Source - own result (2023)

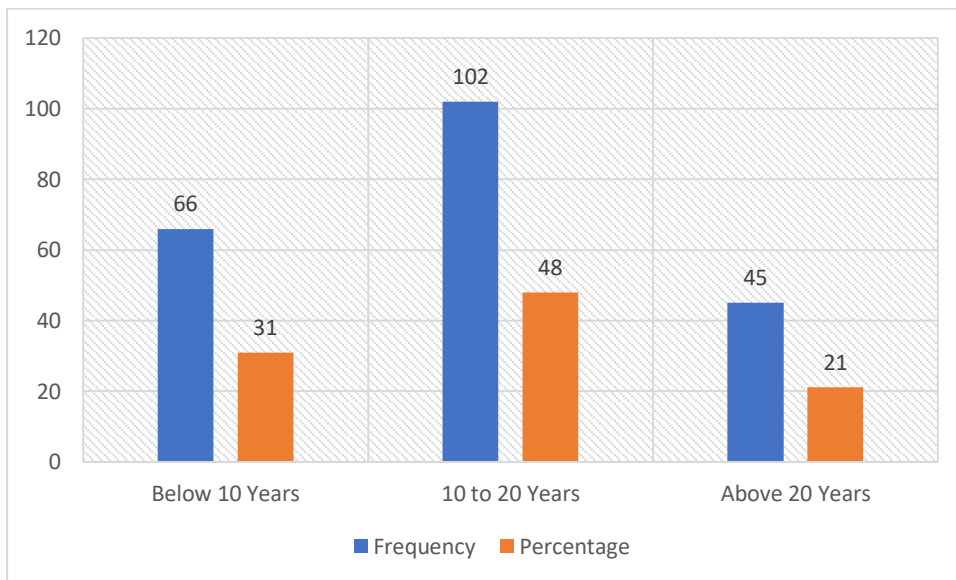
According to the data provided in the table below, 66 participants, constituting 31 percent of the total respondents, possess less than 10 years of experience in the field of marketing. Meanwhile, 102 respondents, making up 48 percent of the total, have accumulated between 10 and 20 years of experience. Furthermore, approximately 21 percent, or 45 respondents, boast more than 20 years of experience within the marketing realm. This suggests that the respondents have a substantial knowledge base concerning the marketing strategies employed by the company to achieve its marketing goals. Previous researchers have underlined the significant role that marketing experience plays in the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication.

Table 4 - Digital Marketing Experience

Digital Marketing Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10 Years	66	31
10 to 20 Years	102	48
Above 20 Years	45	21
Total	213	100

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 4 - Digital Marketing Experience



Source - own result (2023)

4.2 Digital Marketing

This analysis focuses on the outcomes aimed at fulfilling the primary research objective: evaluating the role of digital marketing in the realization of a company's marketing strategy. The table presents a summary of the research findings, which align with the earlier discussion where the author established a benchmark mean of 3.5 for each item. This benchmark signifies that any item with a mean value greater than 3.5 is considered effective in achieving the company's marketing strategy and objectives.

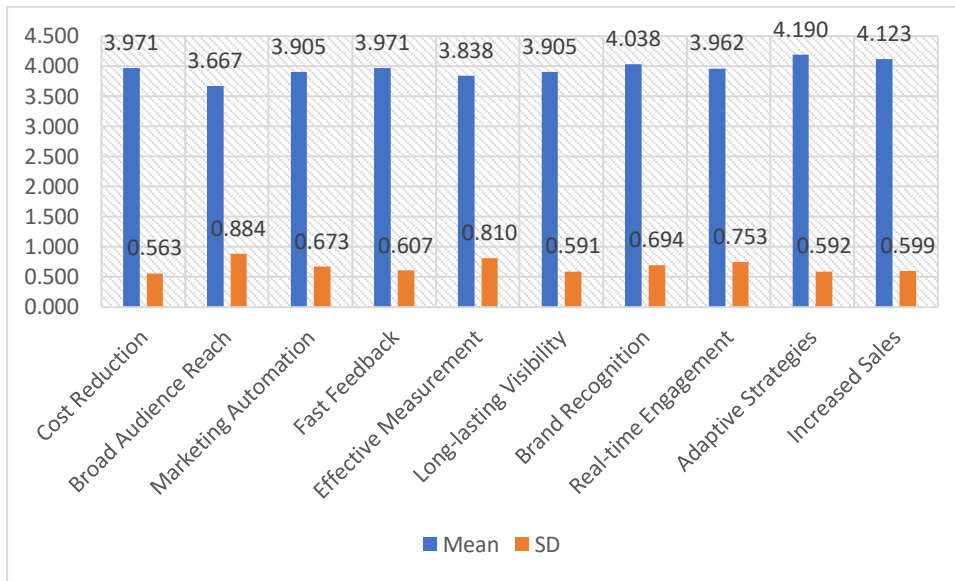
According to the table, all the items or variables have demonstrated their effectiveness in contributing to the company's marketing objectives. For instance, all the item means surpass the 3.5 benchmark. This indicates that digital marketing offers benefits such as cost-effective advertising, a broader reach to the target audience, automation of marketing processes through technology, a platform for faster consumer feedback through comments and emails, and ease of measuring its effect on website visitors, as well as the number of shares and comments, among other aspects.

Table 6 - Digital Marketing

Digitl Marketing	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Cost Reduction	3.971	0.563	-0.466	0.690
Broad Audience Reach	3.667	0.884	-0.767	0.623
Marketing Automation	3.905	0.673	-0.392	1.019
Fast Feedback	3.971	0.607	-0.489	0.497
Effective Measurement	3.838	0.810	-0.889	0.999
Long-lasting Visibility	3.905	0.591	-0.073	0.374
Brand Recognition	4.038	0.694	-0.844	0.889
Real-time Engagement	3.962	0.753	-0.635	0.319
Adaptive Strategies	4.190	0.592	-0.873	0.900
Increased Sales	4.123	0.599	-0.723	1.148

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 6 - Digital Marketing



Source - own result (2023)

Among the advantages is the capacity to offer extended exposure to the intended audience when a webpage is available in a digital format, in contrast to print media. This approach also equips the marketing department with versatile and varied options, among other benefits. The analysis of skewness indicates that all items display a negative skew, and the low standard error suggests a normal distribution. This observation becomes more apparent when the study divides the skewness value by the corresponding error value. It becomes evident that only this item, due to its capacity for prolonged exposure, adheres to a normal distribution, whereas all other values exceed an absolute value of 2.05.

Specifically, the findings illustrate that 66 percent and 26 percent of the participants express agreement and strong agreement regarding the cost-saving aspect of digital marketing. Furthermore, 49 percent and 24 percent of the respondents concur and strongly concur that digital marketing enhances a company's ability to target a broader audience. Similarly, 114 and 63 of the participants concur and strongly concur that digital marketing supports automation in marketing activities through the utilization of artificial intelligence technologies. Finally, 61 percent and 30 percent equally express agreement and strong agreement regarding the promptness of feedback provided by digital marketing in comparison to offline marketing activities.

The survey results indicate that a significant proportion of respondents agree with the potential benefits of digital marketing. Specifically, 48 percent and 31 percent of participants expressed agreement and strong agreement, respectively, regarding digital marketing's ability to offer immediate measurement of marketing activities in alignment with their marketing objectives.

Additionally, the analysis explored the capacity of companies to engage with customers during ongoing promotional efforts. The data unveiled that 44 percent and 38 percent of respondents acknowledged their agreement and strong agreement with the company's ability to communicate and interact with customers effectively in this context. Lastly, a noteworthy 49 percent and 47 percent of respondents demonstrated their agreement and strong agreement with the notion that digital marketing equips companies with a high degree of flexibility and diverse promotional tools to reach their target audience.

It is worth noting that previous studies have reported similar findings regarding the role of digital marketing in supporting companies' marketing strategies. For example, earlier research has highlighted the importance of digital marketing in providing faster feedback, real-time customer engagement, expanded audience reach, and increased sales. These factors have elevated the significance of digital marketing in the marketing landscape. Furthermore, other studies have underscored digital marketing's role in expediting the achievement of marketing objectives, including reaching broader audiences, more rapid responsiveness to customer needs, accelerated sales closure, and a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour.

4.3 Integrated Marketing Communication

This analysis addresses the results pertaining to the attainment of the second research objective, which focuses on the role of integrated marketing communication (IMC) in fulfilling a company's marketing strategy. The data presented in the table provides a concise overview of the research findings. As mentioned earlier, the author established a benchmark mean of 3.5 for each item. The table, displayed below, clearly demonstrates that all the items were effective in the incorporation of integrated marketing communication into the company's marketing strategy.

This effectiveness is evident in the mean values of various variables such as IMC's capacity to combine diverse marketing tools, its ability to align marketing activities with the company's goals, its contribution to enhancing the company's marketing capabilities, its role in bolstering the company's competitive advantage by boosting customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, as well as its ability to reach a broader audience, among other aspects. These mean values all exceed the established benchmark mean of 3.5.

Moreover, it is worth noting that all the variables/items displayed a leftward skew in their distribution, and they appeared to follow a normal distribution pattern. This observation is substantiated by the fact that when the Skewness values were divided by their corresponding errors, the resulting values exceeded the tabulated value of 2.05, which is indicative of a normal distribution at a five percent significance level.

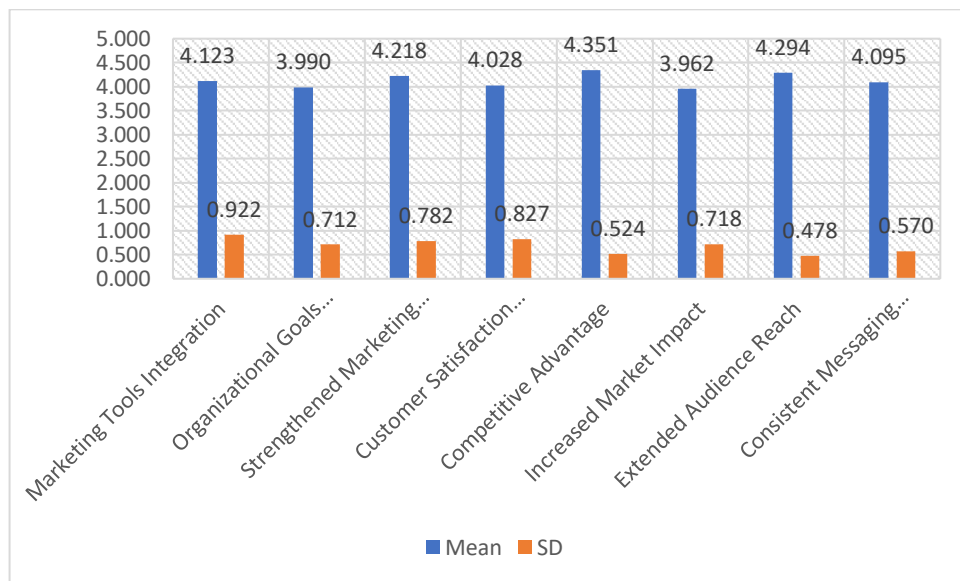
A closer examination of the various items in the survey revealed that a significant percentage of the respondents, namely 25% and 59%, either agreed or strongly agreed that IMC assists the company in effectively amalgamating a variety of marketing tools to achieve superior results. Similarly, it was found that 54% and 35% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that IMC facilitates the alignment of the company's marketing objectives with the overarching company goals.

Table 7 - Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Marketing Tools Integration	4.123	0.922	-1.339	1.253
Organizational Goals Alignment	3.990	0.712	-0.923	0.646
Strengthened Marketing Abilities	4.218	0.782	-1.528	0.935
Customer Satisfaction Connection	4.028	0.827	-0.849	0.652
Competitive Advantage	4.351	0.524	-0.799	0.390
Increased Market Effect	3.962	0.718	-0.667	0.759
Extended Audience Reach	4.294	0.478	-0.082	0.787
Consistent Messaging Delivery	4.095	0.570	-0.228	0.309

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 7 - Integrated Marketing Communication



Source - own result (2023)

The 31 percent and 59 percent of the surveyed population equally indicated that integrated marketing communication enhances a company's marketing capabilities by simultaneously utilizing various promotional tools while maintaining a consistent message. The research findings also revealed that 32 percent and 48 percent of the respondents expressed agreement and strong agreement with the notion that IMC facilitates and enables companies to meet customer satisfaction more effectively, addressing their needs in real-time, and automating the supply chain. Additionally, 37 percent and 61 percent of the respondents endorsed the idea that integrated marketing contributes significantly to a company's competitive advantage.

This study aligns with previous research that has emphasized the significance of IMC as a strategy to enhance a company's marketing approach. Earlier studies have argued that the benefits of integrated marketing communication include the opportunity to seamlessly integrate diverse marketing tools, the ability to align marketing communication with organizational goals, increased flexibility in marketing capabilities, and enhanced market effectiveness. Furthermore, other authors have expanded on these advantages, asserting that IMC aids companies in reaching a broader audience, delivering consistent and uniform messages, and effectively integrating a variety of marketing tools, among other benefits.

4.4 Digital Integrated Marketing Communication

This analysis will explore the effectiveness of digital marketing within the context of integrated marketing communication. Understanding the roles of digital marketing and integrated marketing communication in a company's marketing strategy, it becomes essential to examine the effect of digital marketing on the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication. This assessment is based on insights drawn from the data collected during the field survey. As previously mentioned, the author established a benchmark mean of 3.5 for each item.

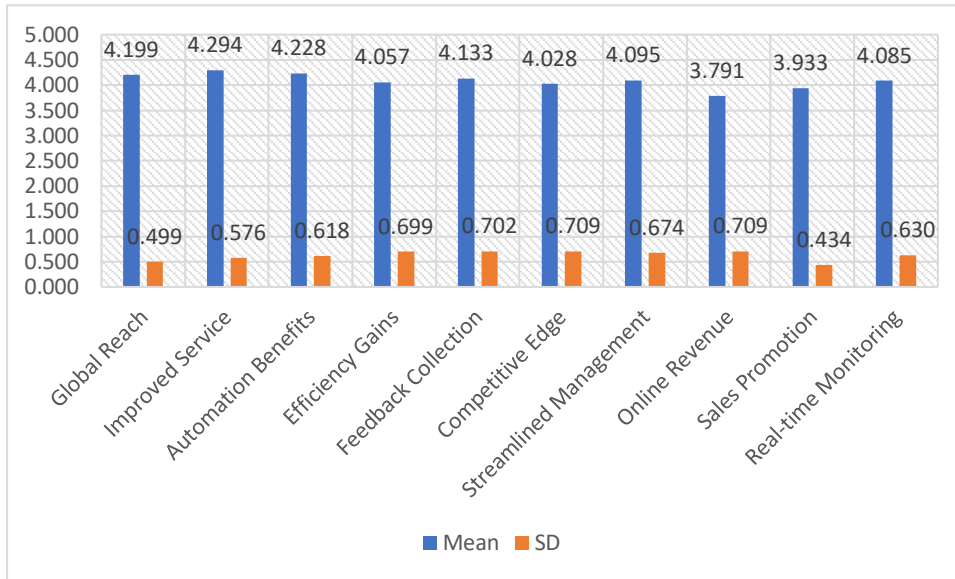
The data presented in the table below reveals that the mean values for all the items/variables exceed the established benchmark mean of 3.5. This indicates that respondents concur that Digital Marketing enhances the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication by enabling marketing efforts to reach a global audience more swiftly, offering real-time tracking of IMC activities, facilitating IMC activities to drive increased sales and revenue, and yielding prompt and diverse consumer feedback. Additionally, it conserves valuable time and resources in marketing activities, enhances customer service, fosters stronger relationships with the supply chain, and streamlines the management and integration of various marketing activities.

Table 8 - Digital Integrated Marketing Communication

Digitl Integrated Marketing Communcation	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Global Reach	4.199	0.499	0.014	0.886
Improved Service	4.294	0.576	-0.831	0.484
Automation Benefits	4.228	0.618	-1.042	1.090
Efficiency Gains	4.057	0.699	-0.448	1.092
Feedback Collection	4.133	0.702	-0.639	1.058
Competitive Edge	4.028	0.709	-0.402	0.857
Streamlined Management	4.095	0.674	-0.503	0.858
Digital Revenue	3.791	0.709	-0.180	1.069
Sales Promotion	3.933	0.434	0.534	0.662
Real-time Monitoring	4.085	0.630	-0.390	0.631

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 8 - Digital Integrated Marketing Communication



Source - own result (2023)

The detailed examination of the survey responses has unveiled various insights. Notably, 55 percent and 44 percent of the survey participants express agreement and strong agreement regarding the enhancing effect of digital marketing on the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach. They emphasize how it provides a platform to effectively reach both a global and targeted audience. Similarly, 37 percent and 58 percent of the respondents concur and strongly concur that IMC in the digital realm leads to improved customer satisfaction. Additionally, a significant 39 percent of the respondents, along with 44 percent, agree and strongly agree that integrating digital marketing activities amplifies its effectiveness, conserving valuable company resources such as time and energy when compared to offline implementation.

Furthermore, an impressive 34 percent and 51 percent of the respondents equally express agreement and strong agreement that the digital integration of all marketing communication efforts yields rapid, dependable customer feedback that can be tracked and measured in real time. It is important to note that 41 percent and 45 percent of the participants agree and strongly agree that managing and integrating an effective digital Integrated Marketing Communication is easier compared to the offline alternative. Finally, 48 percent and 41 percent of the respondents concur and strongly concur that digital tools and the internet offer opportunities to assess the performance of the integrated marketing communication plan in real time.

These research findings align with the perspectives of various scholars in the field. For instance, several studies support the notion that the digital integration of marketing communication presents several distinct advantages. These advantages include the ability to reach a broader audience, real-time performance measurement for IMC, increased flexibility and diversification for the company's marketing department, and the potential to generate direct revenue in the digital sphere, among other benefits.

4.5 Marketing Performance

In this study, the author will explore the feasibility of accurately assessing digital marketing initiatives, drawing insights from the results of a field survey. The table provided below offers a summary of the statistical data derived from the field survey, shedding light on the capacity to gauge the effectiveness of digital marketing endeavours. As previously mentioned, the author established a benchmark mean of 3.5 for each of the parameters.

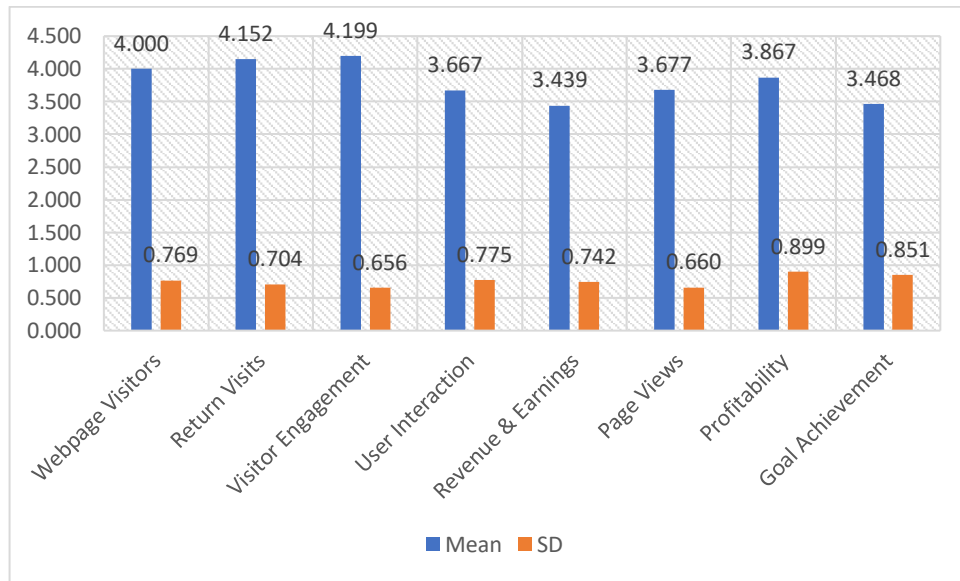
The data presented in the table below presents light on the measurability of the effect of digital marketing activities. The results indicate that the primary methods for assessing the effectiveness of such activities include the analysis of visitor behaviour on the website, the count of unique visitors such as distinct from the total number of visitors, the frequency of repeat visits, and the achievement of predetermined objectives. Notably, these indicators exhibit mean values surpassing the benchmark mean value of 3.5. Additionally, other metrics encompass interaction levels on web pages, the growth in sales income attributed to promotional efforts, enhancements in a company's profitability index, and the number of pages visited per session i.e., the bounce rate.

Table 9 - Marketing Performance

Marketing Performance	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Webpage Visitors	4.000	0.769	-0.863	1.002
Return Visits	4.152	0.704	-1.294	0.359
Visitor Engagement	4.199	0.656	-0.749	0.742
User Interaction	3.667	0.775	-0.209	1.164
Revenue & Earnings	3.539	0.742	-0.127	0.799
Page Views	3.677	0.660	-0.332	0.473
Profitability	3.867	0.899	-0.829	0.980
Goal Achievement	3.568	0.851	-0.554	0.317

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 9 - Marketing Performance



Source - own result (2023)

The standard deviation falling below one signifies a normal distribution of data, while the skewness values reveal a leftward skew for all the mentioned variables. This outcome implies that marketing professionals can readily monitor the performance of their promotional initiatives using one or a combination of the metrics. As previously discussed in the literature, the suitability of these factors for measuring the effect of digital marketing also hinges on the specific objectives underlying the marketing activities. Earlier studies have argued that there are two primary ways to gauge the effectiveness of digital promotions, with the first being an evaluation of the actions taken by digital or website visitors, i.e., whether they align with the intended goals of the promotional activities.

For a company, it becomes relatively straightforward to ascertain the success of a promotion by scrutinizing visitor behaviour on the site. Consider a scenario where a marketing campaign aims to encourage customer engagement in viral marketing, thereby elevating brand awareness. If, despite a significant influx of unique visitors and repeated visits, these visitors fail to engage with the promotional content by sharing it on their social media platforms or expressing their opinions about the product or service, the primary objective of creating viral content for enhanced brand awareness across various digital platforms is compromised.

The findings align with prior research indicating that a substantial measure of the effectiveness of digital marketing activities lies in the company's sales performance and the income generated because of these marketing efforts. Several authors have echoed this perspective in their empirical studies, emphasizing that the effectiveness of a promotion should be assessed based on factors such as sales, company profitability, and a combination of additional metrics, including the time spent on the website, the average number of pages visited, and the bounce rate.

4.6 Marketing Tools

This analysis presents data and delves into the findings of a field survey regarding the prevalent digital marketing tools that companies utilize to enhance their digital marketing efforts. In line with the usual practice, any mean value exceeding 3.5 is deemed significant. Therefore, these promotional tools are considered among the most effective resources employed by companies in their digital marketing endeavours.

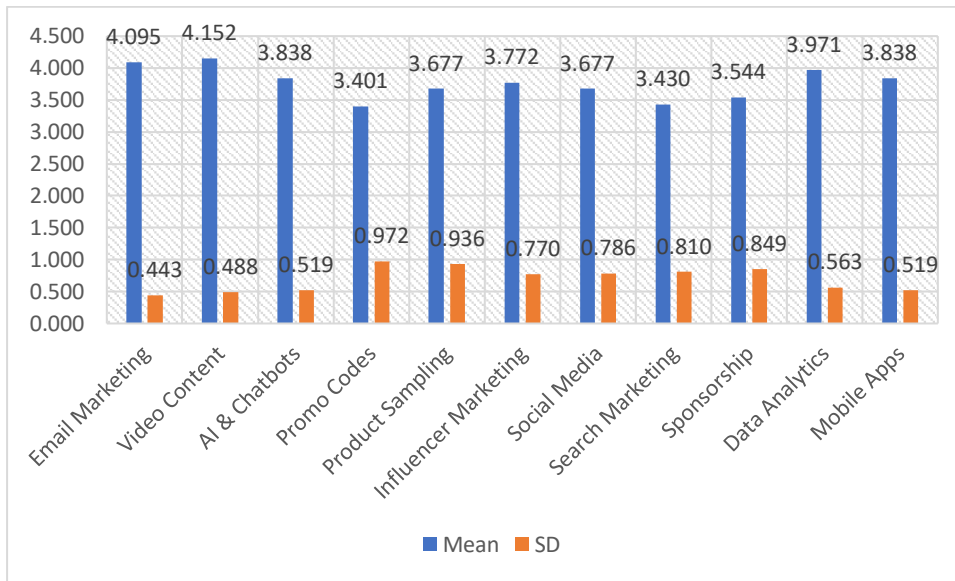
The table below displays the outcomes derived from the field survey, illustrating that e-mail marketing stands out as the dominant digital marketing tool used in the digital realm to efficiently connect with a broader target audience at a reduced cost. According to the survey results, all respondents unanimously concur that e-mail marketing is indeed a trending digital marketing tool employed by companies. Specifically, 70 percent of the respondents agree, while the remaining 30 percent strongly support the notion that e-mail marketing is a prominent marketing tool embraced by companies to reach a more targeted audience. Previous studies have also highlighted how e-mail marketing has evolved into an effective tool for e-commerce websites.

Table 10 - Marketing Tools

Marketing Tools	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Email Marketing	4.095	0.443	0.798	1.276
Video Content	4.152	0.488	0.228	1.239
AI & Chatbots	3.838	0.519	0.029	0.759
Promo Codes	3.401	0.972	-0.204	1.002
Product Sampling	3.677	0.936	-0.893	0.442
Influencer Marketing	3.772	0.770	-0.266	0.622
Social Media	3.677	0.786	-0.807	0.634
Search Marketing	3.430	0.810	-0.121	0.303
Sponsorship	3.544	0.849	-0.171	0.607
Data Analytics	3.971	0.563	-0.065	0.803
Mobile Apps	3.838	0.519	0.029	0.271

Source - own result (2023)

Graph 10 - Marketing Tools



Source - own result (2023)

The scholarly authors have observed a shift in the role of email, recognizing it not merely as a means of customer communication but as a potent marketing tool. Email is now employed to suggest products and services to customers based on their previous interactions. Additionally, the survey identified another rising marketing tool with an average rating of approximately 4.6, which is video marketing.

The notable percentage of survey respondents, 61% and 38%, either agree or strongly agree that video marketing has become a prominent tool for companies to connect with a broader audience, engage customers more effectively, and obtain faster feedback compared to other methods. These findings are in line with recent statistics from Forbes, which indicate that video content has been claiming an increasingly significant share of internet traffic. Academic studies also show that video consumption will comprise around 80% of total digital traffic in the coming years. This trend aligns with Alexa's ranking of YouTube as the second most popular digital platform after Google's search engine.

The study also highlights the effect of artificial intelligence and chatbots on digital integrated marketing. Roughly 70% of the respondents agree that artificial intelligence is an emerging marketing tool in the digital landscape. With the implementation of artificial intelligence and chatbots, companies can engage with their customers around the clock, nurturing better interpersonal relationships and driving increased sales.

Furthermore, it is projected that around 80% of customer interactions with companies will be facilitated digitally through artificial intelligence. This shift will result in cost savings for businesses as they leverage technology in their marketing endeavours. Two additional noteworthy digital marketing platforms are social media marketing and mobile app marketing.

Approximately 55% and 20% of respondents acknowledge the significance of social media advertising as a trending marketing tool for reaching a targeted audience. Similarly, about 70% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that mobile app advertising is a highly effective means of reaching the intended audience with maximum effect. Notably, multinational firms like AMAZON Czech Republic and SAP Czech Republic have successfully leveraged these platforms in their advertising efforts in the Czech Republic.

AMAZON Czech Republic's rapid dominance in the within-city transportation industry in popular cities is significantly attributed to their social media marketing strategy, while SAP, though not as active in mobile app advertising as AMAZON Czech Republic, consistently engages in social media advertising on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

5. Results and Discussion

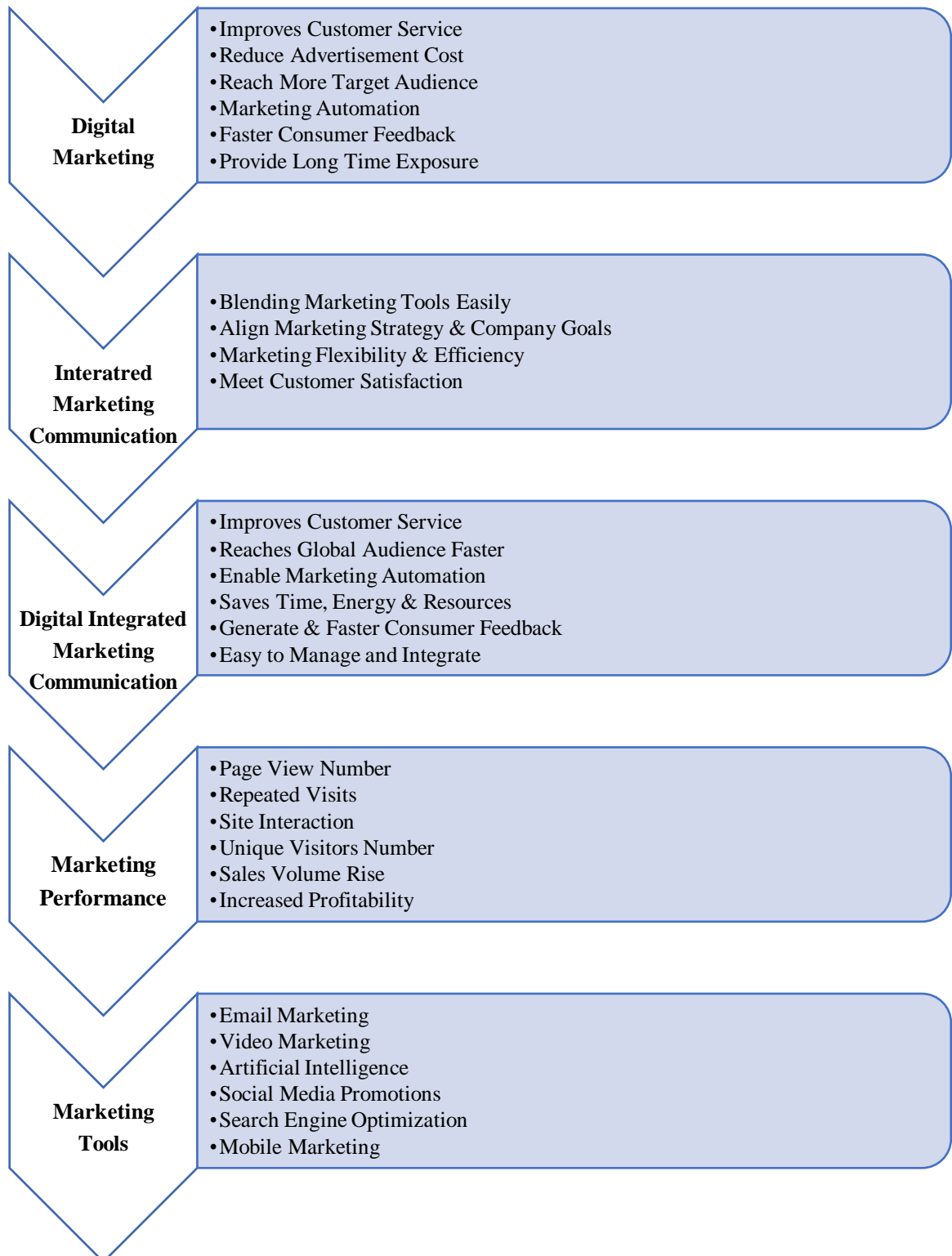
5.1 Key Findings

This research study aimed to investigate the effect of digital marketing on a company's integrated marketing communication efforts. The study was conducted in Prague, Czech Republic, where few organizations, namely SAP Czech Republic, AMAZON Czech Republic, and Colora Paint, were selected as case studies for the research along with other major organizations. The choice of these companies was based on a set of criteria outlined in the methodology chapter of the study, including their marketing strategies.

The research revolved around five specific objectives, which were derived from the research questions, and the findings from these objectives are summarized in the figure below. In particular, the empirical findings revealed that digital marketing and the internet play a significant role in realizing the organization's marketing strategy by increasing brand awareness. This results from exposing the company's products and services to a targeted global audience for an extended period. As long as the web page remains relevant and in existence, the company's products and services are continuously displayed to the public.

The advantages of using the Internet for the company's marketing strategy are evident in the cost savings compared to offline promotional activities across various platforms. Unlike offline promotions, several digital marketing methods are cost-free, such as email marketing and viral marketing, where the company's customers or content readers share the company's products and services on different social media platforms. This generates more traffic and leads to increased sales as the content spreads across the internet. Additionally, digital marketing effects are easier to measure compared to offline marketing effects. Digital marketing also enables the automation of marketing activities through artificial intelligence and other technologies that track customer information in real-time as they navigate the company's website.

Figure 11 - Key Findings



Source - own result (2023)

It was also observed that the company employs integrated marketing communication as a marketing strategy to ensure a consistent and cohesive marketing message across various platforms. This approach aligns the organization's marketing strategy with its overall company strategy and objectives. Additionally, integrated marketing communication allows the organization to seamlessly combine different marketing tools to effectively reach its target audience while maintaining a consistent message throughout.

Integrated marketing communication contributes to customer satisfaction by reaching different customers through various platforms, meeting their diverse informational needs about the company, product usage, and service effects, among other factors. One advantage of digital marketing is its ability to easily measure the effect of marketing activities. The survey revealed that one of the primary means of assessing the effectiveness of digital marketing is achieving the intended objectives.

For instance, if a marketing campaign aims to increase customer interaction on a webpage but only generates high traffic with little interaction, the marketing goal is not achieved. Other metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing include the number of web pages a visitor accesses during a visit, visitor activities, repeat visits, and the count of unique visitors. The number of unique visitors is a crucial metric as it provides insight into whether the traffic primarily consists of new visitors or existing customers. Another significant aspect of the study is the identification of trending digital marketing tools that leverage technology to reach a more targeted audience, accomplish more tasks, and save significant resources.

Among the list of trending digital marketing tools, video content marketing stands out as one of the most vital and popular methods for digital advertising. It offers customers and potential clients brief, engaging descriptions of the company's products, their usage, and associated benefits. Many companies have transitioned from providing textual descriptions of their products to using video content, as an increasing number of internet users prefer watching videos over reading text. Companies that can present their products and services in concise video clips can expect to see a substantial increase in conversions.

Similarly, the company employs cutting-edge tools like artificial intelligence and chatbots as part of its marketing strategy, aiming to enhance its performance, maintain a strong customer base, and remain focused. Through artificial intelligence, the company can access an unlimited wealth of data concerning consumer buying behaviour, preferences, and dislikes, enabling it to concentrate its marketing efforts where they are most needed. Additionally, with chatbots, the company can offer continuous customer interaction, guiding them through its wide range of products and services, while also addressing any queries or concerns.

Another potent marketing tool that remains largely untapped by many companies is email marketing. Some companies have harnessed the potential benefits of email marketing, as observed with e-commerce giant Amazon. Amazon efficiently employs email marketing by using AI technology to gather extensive customer data, including demographics, location, and behavior, which it leverages to suggest tailored products and services to its customers via email. Remarkably, Amazon's approach sets it apart from its e-commerce counterparts, as its emails are perceived as beneficial rather than bothersome by its customers.

Surprisingly, many companies have yet to fully exploit the potential of email marketing. Embedding video clips in emails is predicted to significantly boost click-through rates by up to 80%. Social media advertising stands out as another prevailing digital marketing tool extensively utilized by numerous businesses in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, leading social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become the go-to platforms for advertising products and services. The outcomes of such endeavors have proven to be highly promising, as evident in the interactions with companies that have embraced social media advertising. Search engine advertising has also gained traction among various organizations, including AMAZON Czech Republic and Colora Paint, to connect with a broader target audience.

The distinct feature of search engine advertising lies in the fact that it targets individuals actively seeking the specific service, thereby enhancing the conversion rate of advertising. Mobile app advertising is equally influential in this regard. Notably, companies like AMAZON Czech Republic and SAP have effectively utilized video clips in Google's mobile app to boost brand awareness across various age groups and demographics. A key characteristic of mobile app advertising is its ability to reach individuals from diverse lifestyles, if they use apps that incorporate advertisements.

In the broader context, the primary research objectives revolved around assessing the effect of digital marketing within the framework of integrated marketing communication. The focal point here is to gauge how digital marketing has facilitated a more effective platform for implementing integrated marketing strategies. Survey results have unveiled that digital marketing in the integrated marketing communication framework significantly enhances customer satisfaction, as it ensures that customers' needs are met through multiple channels with immediate feedback from both ends. With digital tools, integrated marketing efforts aiming to deliver a consistent and uniform message to a wide audience can be achieved instantly.

Companies can now embark on campaigns with a uniform message across the board. With digital technology, this message can swiftly traverse the globe, reaching different regions and locations instantaneously. The integration of automation technologies in digital marketing ensures that the company's message remains consistent across various marketing platforms, consequently building trust among consumers over time and increasing brand loyalty and sales. Digital marketing is an indispensable component of integrated marketing communication strategy, as it equips companies with the ability to seamlessly manage different marketing platforms and integrate various components using automated technology. This breakthrough in digital marketing allows companies to address customer demands while focusing on delivering unique value to their customers.

5.2 Major Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the author puts forth the following recommendations:

1. The company should formulate a clear, consistent, competitive, credible, and reliable message that permeates all aspects of its marketing endeavours. Mere advertising and promoting products and services, as common as they may be, fall short. What truly fosters brand loyalty is a message that remains unwavering, distinctive, enticing, and trustworthy.

2. Recognizing the growing digital presence of customers, the company ought to integrate its marketing communication strategy into the digital sphere, in addition to its offline efforts. Striking a balance between digital and offline components within the integrated marketing communication strategy will yield more favourable outcomes.

3. The company should harness various artificial intelligence technologies to amass comprehensive information about customer preferences, behaviours, and demographic data. This data will guide the selection of the most effective marketing strategies and channels for the key customer segments, enabling a more targeted allocation of marketing resources.

4. Prior to embarking on any integrated marketing communication strategy, whether digital or offline, the company should establish clear objectives, identify the target audience, and put in place performance assessment criteria. This step is crucial in facilitating the measurement of marketing activity performance.

5. To gain a deeper understanding of customer behavior and needs, the company should make increased investments in artificial intelligence technologies. This knowledge will enable the utilization of cost-effective marketing tools, such as email marketing and public relations content, to reach a wider audience of current and potential customers.

6. It is essential to assess whether consumer sales promotion or retail sales promotion is the more suitable approach when employing this promotional tool. In certain situations, retail sales promotion proves to be more effective, especially when dealing with closely related products or services.

6. Conclusion

The business landscape is constantly evolving, and as a result, companies must adapt their strategies to maintain a competitive edge over time. The pursuit of gaining a competitive advantage has led to a growing necessity to unify the various components of a company's marketing communication efforts. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) emerges as the solution, empowering companies to deliver a consistent message while simultaneously reaching a more precise target audience.

Moreover, the shift in global demographics towards increased daily digital engagement and the expanding accessibility of the internet introduces another imperative for corporate leaders to consider. The question arises: to what extent can Digital Marketing effectively contribute to a company's integrated marketing communication strategy? Through a comprehensive review of the literature and empirical research findings, it becomes evident that the internet plays a pivotal role in the achievement of IMC goals. With the internet's integration, the performance of an IMC strategy or plan can be conveniently measured in real-time, affording companies significant flexibility and cost-effectiveness in managing their marketing activities.

Additionally, the Internet facilitates the establishment of robust personal relationships with a wide array of stakeholders, including suppliers and employees. It has revolutionized the company's supply chain by enabling seamless information sharing across various entities. Consequently, businesses that successfully incorporate digital marketing into their communication plans will maintain a highly competitive edge in their respective industries, as they can swiftly reach a diverse customer base of all age groups, surpassing the efficacy of traditional marketing tools discussed in this research.

While this study offers valuable insights, there are areas that remained unexplored due to the research's scope and available resources. First, this study focused solely on companies in Prague, Czech Republic, and involved only a limited number of firms. Future research endeavors could encompass a broader geographical scope and expand the sample size to gather a more diverse range of opinions. Furthermore, future research could differentiate findings across various industries, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and the service sector, allowing for an exploration of whether the effect of digital marketing on IMC strategy varies across different sectors.

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Appendix

Hello, my name is Ravi and I'm a student at Czech University. I am conducting research on Marketing Communication in the Digital era and your response will be helpful in developing strong insights. The data will be only used for academic purposes & follow the consent agreement as per GDPR. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration!

Consent

- Yes
- No

Age

- (A) Below 25 Years
- (B) 26 to 40 Years
- (C) 41 to 50 Years
- (D) 51 to 60 Years
- (E) Above 60 Years

Gender

- (A) Male
- (B) Female

Education

- (A) Bachelor's degree
- (B) Master's degree
- (C) Diploma
- (D) Certification
- (E) Doctorate

Company Size

- (A) Less than 10
- (B) 10 to 25
- (C) 26 to 50
- (D) 51 to 100
- (E) More than 100

Position

- (A) Executive
- (B) Assistant
- (C) Practitioner
- (D) Trainee

Experience in Digital Marketing

- (A) Below 10 Years
- (B) 10 to 20 Years
- (C) Above 20 Years

Based on your experience in Digital Marketing, rate the following statements

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Reduces advertising expenses.

Expands reach to a broader audience.

Enables marketing automation.

Accelerates the receipt of consumer feedback.

Simplifies the measurement of its effectiveness.

Offers prolonged visibility.

Enhances brand recognition.

Allows real-time customer engagement.

Adaptable and versatile marketing strategies.

Boosts company sales.

Based on your experience in Integrated Marketing Communication, rate the following statements

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Potential to amalgamate a range of marketing instruments.

Capability to harmonize marketing communication with organizational objectives.

Empowers companies with enhanced marketing prowess.

Linkage of marketing endeavours to customer contentment.

Augments the competitive edge of a company.

Enhances the market influence.

Broadens the audience reach across diverse platforms.

Ensures the delivery of a consistent and uniform message.

Based on your experience in Digital Integrated Marketing Communication, rate the following statements

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Expands its reach to a global audience.

Enhances customer service levels.

Enables the automation of IMC tasks.

Offers time, cost, and energy savings.

Gather diverse consumer feedback.

Serves as competitive advantage tools.

Simplifies the management process.

Yields direct digital revenue.

Effective sales promotion strategy.

Provides real-time performance monitoring.

Based on your experience in Marketing Performance, rate the following statements

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Quantity of distinct visitors to the designated webpage

Frequency of return visits

Visitor engagement patterns on the website

Extent of user interaction with the webpage

Revenue and earnings generated.

Number of pages viewed per visit.

Enhancement in company profitability

Attainment of established objectives

Based on your experience in Marketing Tools, rate the following statements

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Email-based Promotion

Digital video content

Artificial intelligence and chatbots

Promo codes and coupons

Product sampling and trial versions

Social media influencers

Social media marketing

Search engine marketing

Sponsorship based marketing.

Data analytics and insights

Mobile applications marketing