

Digital Marketing in the age of Sustainability

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Abstract: *Sustainability, known as one of the pillars of digital transformation, combined with the growing recognition of importance of environmental, social and economic sustainability, creates the need for companies to integrate sustainable practices into their business*

strategies and into the company's culture and philosophy. This scientific review article explores digital marketing opportunities and challenges in the sustainability era, as a set of strategies that promote sustainable actions and products for a company, this article analyzes the impact of sustainable practices on business strategies and addresses Green IT it also has some examples of good practices of companies that use green marketing.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Sustainability, Sustainable Practices, Green IT, Green Marketing, Companies with Good Practices.*

Introduction

In the era of sustainability, where environmental, social, and economic concerns are gaining increasing prominence, companies are recognizing the need to integrate sustainable practices into their digital marketing (DM) operations. In this context, DM plays a crucial role in enabling organizations to reach a wider, targeted audience and promote effective sustainable initiatives. With the advent of digital technologies, companies have a variety of tools and platforms at their disposal to communicate, interact, and influence consumers in a sustainable manner. This scientific review article explores the theme of digital marketing in the era of sustainability, examining the opportunities and challenges that arise in this context. It addresses strategies and practices that companies can adopt to align digital marketing with the principles of sustainability, benefiting both the environment and the brand's reputation and business success.

1. Digital Marketing in the Era of Sustainability

Digital marketing in the era of sustainability is an approach aimed at aligning online marketing practices with the principles and objectives of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. In this context, companies seek to utilize digital tools and strategies to promote sustainable initiatives, reduce their environmental impact, engage consumers in responsible actions, and build a brand image aligned with sustainable values.

There are several ways in which digital marketing can contribute to sustainability:

Communication and Awareness: digital marketing offers an effective platform to disseminate messages and information about relevant environmental, social, and economic issues.

Promotion of Sustainable Products and Services: digital marketing allows companies to showcase sustainable products and services, emphasizing their environmental or social benefits.

Engagement and Public Involvement: digital platforms provide unique opportunities to engage consumers and encourage their participation in sustainable initiatives.

Sustainable Partnerships and Collaborations: digital marketing facilitates connections between companies and organizations that share sustainable objectives [1][2].

However, digital marketing also presents many challenges. It is important to ensure that marketing actions are authentic and transparent, avoiding greenwashing, which refers to deceptive marketing practices that pretend to be sustainable [4][5].

1.1. Information Technology

Information Technology plays a crucial role in sustainable digital marketing, providing tools and resources that enable the implementation of sustainable strategies. This technology allows for the collection and analysis of data related to consumer behavior, preferences, and interactions with marketing initiatives. This information can be used to develop more targeted and personalized campaigns, reducing waste and maximizing their impact. Automation of processes through technological tools can optimize the execution of digital marketing campaigns by automating tasks such as email sending, scheduling social media posts, and analyzing data [15].

Automation not only increases efficiency but also reduces resource consumption, such as paper and energy. Information Technology facilitates the creation and dissemination of sustainability-related content, including blogs, videos, infographics, and other formats that educate and raise awareness among the public about environmental and social issues [15].

Information Technology also enables the sharing of this content through different digital channels, reaching a wider audience. Social media platforms play a significant role in sustainable digital marketing, allowing companies to directly engage with consumers, share relevant information, and encourage participation in sustainable initiatives. Social media platforms can also be used to promote responsible practices, share success stories, and encourage behavioral change [7] [15].

1.2. Green IT

Green IT refers to the adoption of sustainable practices in the Information

Technology sector. When applied to Digital Marketing, Green IT aims to minimize the environmental impact of digital activities and promote sustainability and efficient energy use. These objectives can be achieved through optimizing server usage, utilizing cloud services, resource virtualization, and choosing energy-efficient equipment and devices to reduce energy consumption in digital operations and help decrease carbon footprint and associated costs. By selecting website hosting servers that use renewable energy and sustainable practices in data centers, digital marketing companies can contribute to reducing environmental impact. This conscious choice supports the transition to clean energy sources and minimizes dependence on fossil fuels. Green IT also involves raising awareness among professionals and consumers about the importance of sustainability. Companies can use digital channels such as blogs, social media, and emails to share information, promote environmental initiatives, and thus encourage responsible behaviors [8][9].

1.3. Sustainability and Digital Marketing

Sustainability and digital marketing are increasingly interconnected. Companies recognize the importance of integrating sustainable practices into online marketing strategies, aiming not only for commercial success but also for sustainability-driven innovation and contribution to a greener future in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, a common vision for humanity.

Within the scope of digital marketing, companies can utilize various tools and channels to raise awareness about environmental, social, and economic issues, educating the public and engaging them in sustainable initiatives [3]. Some

tools that companies frequently use to promote sustainability are:

Educational Content: companies create informative and educational content about sustainability issues, sharing relevant information with their target audience. This communication can be done through blogs, articles, videos, and other content formats.

Social Media: social media is a powerful tool for promoting sustainability. Companies can share news, tips, success stories, and sustainable initiatives through their social media channels. Additionally, social media can be used to encourage audience engagement through challenges and polls related to sustainability.

Digital Influencers: collaborating with digital influencers who have a wide reach and impact on the audience is a popular trend. Companies can work with influencers to promote sustainable products or services, thereby amplifying the reach of sustainability messages [1][2].

1.4. Good Practices from Companies utilizing Green Marketing

Here are some examples of companies that use green marketing as part of their business strategies:

Patagonia: Patagonia is an outdoor clothing company known for its sustainable approach. They promote green marketing through practices such as using recycled materials in their products, supporting environmental organizations, and encouraging consumers to repair and extend the lifespan of their clothing.

Tesla: Tesla is a leading company in the electric vehicle industry. Tesla's mission is to accelerate the global transition to sustainable energy through

green marketing. They communicate the environmental benefits of their electric vehicles and solar panels, promoting the adoption of clean energy solutions.

IKEA: IKEA is a furniture and home goods retailer that stands out for its sustainable practices. They use materials from renewable sources, encourage product recycling, and implement energy efficiency initiatives in their stores. Additionally, IKEA raises awareness about sustainability through marketing campaigns.

R-Coat: R-Coat is a Portuguese company that produces clothing and accessories such as coats, hats, and backpacks. This company transforms broken umbrellas into handcrafted coats and accessories, collected by individuals called "Umbrella Heroes." Anyone can become an Umbrella Hero by depositing a broken umbrella at an R-Coat collection point, reducing their ecological footprint. Currently, there are about 30 collection points in Portugal. All pieces are made by seamstresses working in a small studio in Lisbon and Sintra.

Conclusion

Digital marketing in the era of sustainability plays a crucial role in promoting responsible business practices and raising awareness of environmental, social, and economic issues. Sustainable digital marketing means promoting a brand's sustainable and ethical products or services and eco-friendly practices in a way that is profitable for the company, our planet and people, in the long term. As companies strive to integrate sustainability into their business strategies, digital marketing emerges as a powerful tool to reach a wider audience and promote effective sustainable initiatives. By adopting green marketing practices, companies can communicate their sustainability efforts, highlight eco-friendly products and services, and engage consumers in

environmental causes. The use of digital channels allows for direct and instant communication, creating opportunities to educate, inform, and inspire sustainable action.

Information technology plays a fundamental role in sustainable digital marketing by enabling energy efficiency, reducing resource waste, and promoting responsible use of digital resources. Choosing sustainable hosting servers and implementing proper recycling of electronic equipment optimize energy usage and contribute to a circular economy.

The integration of digital marketing with sustainability not only strengthens brand image but also meets the demands of conscious consumers who value companies committed to responsible practices. By adopting a sustainable approach in digital marketing, companies can not only achieve business success but also contribute to a greener future and a circular economy, reducing their ecological footprint.

In summary, digital marketing in the era of sustainability represents an opportunity for companies to stand out, add value to society, and drive positive changes towards development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. It is crucial that this responsible approach is embedded in the cultural philosophy of companies through the adoption of sustainable practices in their digital marketing strategies and collaborative efforts, ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being.

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