



SAVONIA

Advancing the Application of Digital Marketing in Irish SMEs

Case company: English Language Ireland

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Abstract <p>SMEs form by far the majority of the business community in the Republic of Ireland and they are very diverse and encompass many different sectors and activities. Marketing related expenditure is considered to be significantly costly for most Irish SMEs and it is one of the reasons why SMEs refrain from heavily investing in marketing. With the increasing popularity of digital marketing, it seems to be an efficient cost-cutting solution for SMEs to spread their businesses and to reach out to audiences across boundaries. However, due to the lack of understanding, professional development and expertise in Internet marketing, most Irish SMEs nowadays have not been able to maximise the potential of integrated digital marketing.</p> <p>Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to achieve the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insights into the concept of digital marketing, especially the most commonly used channels of digital marketing, aiming to facilitate Irish SMEs to understand the concept to its full potential. • On the basis of the quantitative research, suggestions in relation to improving the current practice of applying digital marketing in Irish SMEs and in the case company will be initiated. <p>The survey questionnaire was designed using Webropol programme and was ready to deliver by the end of January 2014 with the purpose to obtain information about the application of digital marketing in Irish SMEs in Ireland. There were a total of 177 respondents to the questionnaire.</p> <p>The survey results have not just only revealed some great achievements of Irish SMEs and the case company in engaging digital marketing into their business operation, but also indicated their downsides which need to be significantly re-considered in order to perfect the process of establishing digital marketing strategy.</p>			
Keywords Digital marketing, Irish SMEs, digital marketing, email marketing, SEO, social media marketing, content marketing, promotional videos, mobile marketing.			

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 Objectives of the thesis	12
1.2 The case company – English Language Ireland.....	13
1.3 Structure of the thesis	14
 2 CONCEPT OF DIGITAL MARKETING	 15
2.1 Implications to marketing from digital revolution.....	15
2.1.1 Globalisation of markets and competition	15
2.1.2 Changes in the traditional sale funnel concept	16
2.1.3 The new 4Ps.....	17
2.1.4 The new online consumers.....	20
2.1.5 Digital information consumption.....	21
2.1.6 Changes in Irish consumer behaviour	24
 2.2 Key forms of digital marketing	 25
2.2.1 The significance of digital marketing	25
2.2.2 Key forms of digital marketing.....	27
Email marketing	27
Social media marketing	32
Online advertising	38
Mobile marketing	43
Search Engine Optimiser (SEO)	49
Content marketing	52
 3 EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN IRISH SMEs.....	 57
3.1 Research implementation and data collecting method	57
3.1.1 Population identification and sample size calculation	58
3.1.2 Questionnaire structure and data collection method.....	59

3.2	Survey result analysis	59
3.2.1	Background of survey respondents	60
3.2.2	Familiarity level of digital marketing concept	61
3.2.3	Social media marketing	68
3.2.4	Marketing expenditures on digital activities	73
3.2.5	Workshops and training	76
3.3	Digital marketing practice at English Language Ireland on the basis of its survey responses	78
4	CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN IRISH SMEs AND IN THE CASE COMPANY	82
4.1	Conclusions on the survey results	82
4.2	Suggestions on the application of digital marketing in Irish SMEs and in the case company	84
4.2.1	Going mobile to gain more online prospects	84
4.2.2	Having promotional videos as part of promotional materials	86
	REFERENCES	91
	APPENDICE	96
	Appendix 1 Questionnaire form.....	96
	Appendix 2 English Language Ireland’s survey responses.....	105
	Appendix 3 Info – graphic picture of Search Engine Optimisation	114

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	Meaning
SMEs	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
SBA	Small Business Act
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
ELI	English Language Ireland
TV	Television
DVRs	Digital Video Recorders
APIs	Application Programming Interfaces
RSS	Rich Site Summary
XML	Extensible Markup Language
The UK	The United Kingdom
ESPs	Email Service Providers
PPC	Pay – Per – Click
SMS	Short Message Service
The US	The United States of American
QR Codes	Quick – Response Barcodes
Apps	Applications
MOS	Mobile Operating Systems
SEO	Search Engine Optimiser
DVR	Digital Video Remote
B2B	Business to Business
EU	European Union

LIST OF FIGURES, IMAGES AND TABLES

FIGURE 1. Structure of the thesis	14
FIGURE 2. Internet activities in 2007 and 2013	22
FIGURE 3. Internet activities by age group in 2013	23
FIGURE 4. Profile of Ireland online	24
FIGURE 5. Typical forms of digital marketing.....	27
FIGURE 6. 7 steps to create a productive email campaign	28
FIGURE 7. Components to build up successful social media marketing campaign.....	34
FIGURE 8. Classification of mobile marketing applications.....	44
FIGURE 9. Email versus Text message marketing opening rates.....	46
FIGURE 10. Email versus SMS costs	46
FIGURE 11. Current positions in the company held by the respondents	60
FIGURE 12. Business sectors by participating SMEs	61
FIGURE 13. Traditional marketing methods currently used by participating companies.....	62
FIGURE 14. The familiarity level with digital marketing concept in the participating companies.....	63
FIGURE 15. Rating common reasons for using digital marketing according to the important scales.	64
FIGURE 16. The existence of a defined digital marketing strategy in the company at present.	65
FIGURE 17. The effectiveness on sales of typical digital marketing activities.....	66
FIGURE 18. Reasons that hinder organisations from being familiar with the digital marketing concept.	67
FIGURE 19. Social networks being currently used by companies.....	68
FIGURE 20. Respondent's points of view about reasons to use social media.	69
FIGURE 21. The length of time using social media in a business context	70
FIGURE 22. Respondent's ideas about paid advertising campaign on Facebook. .71	
FIGURE 23. Respondents' evaluations on Facebook Ads campaigns.....	72
FIGURE 24. The percentage of marketing budget spent on digital marketing activities in 2013.....	73

FIGURE 25. Estimated marketing expenditures spent on currently used digital marketing activities.....	74
FIGURE 26. Possible changes in digital marketing expenditures in 2014.....	75
FIGURE 27. Digital marketing activities which will be focussed and invested further in 2014.	75
FIGURE 28. Frequency of attending workshops/courses related to digital marketing held by Irish marketing consultancies.....	76
FIGURE 29. Workshops/courses formats preferred by respondents.....	77
FIGURE 30. Irish marketing consultancies that the respondents usually attend their workshops and training programmes	77
IMAGE 1. Price comparison for Apple Ipad Air at pricegrabber.com.....	18
IMAGE 2. Online exchange of customer feedback about Waldorf Astoria Resort...	20
IMAGE 3. Email sign-up form at bodybuilding.com	29
IMAGE 4. Unsubscribe link and physical address enclosed in promotional email from The Secret Escapes	30
IMAGE 5. Part of marketing email from The Secret Escapes.....	31
IMAGE 6. A sample of flash deal campaign on Facebook by Bling Jewellers	35
IMAGE 7. Flash deal campaign at The Faceshop	36
IMAGE 8. Prioritising online presence using the social marketing radar	38
IMAGE 9. Sponsored Ads on Facebook page.....	39
IMAGE 10. Example of online ads banners.....	41
IMAGE 11. PPC Ads on Google site	42
IMAGE 12. SMS promotional text from Jacks Grill.....	45
IMAGE 13. Mobile websites on iPhone	47
IMAGE 14. QR Code example on Heinz ketchup bottles	48
IMAGE 15. Mobile app of AIB bank for personal banking	49
IMAGE 16. Example of SEO	50
IMAGE 17. Illustration for meta tags.....	51
IMAGE 18. 7 steps for successful content marketing	54
IMAGE 19. ELI's poster in front of the administration office	78
IMAGE 20. ELI's Ads on Carlow Tourism brochure 2013.....	79
IMAGE 21. ELI Facebook page.....	80

IMAGE 22. ELI’s profile on LinkedIn.....81

IMAGE 23. Illustrations of ELI’s mobile website85

IMAGE 24. An illustration of a QR code attached to one of ELI’s brochure.....86

IMAGE 25. Currently used promotional video on ELI’s official website88

IMAGE 26. An illustration for where to place a tailor-made promotional video on ELI’s website89

IMAGE 27. An illustration for promotional video placed on related digital - versioned programme brochure89

TABLE 1. SMEs in Ireland in basic figures58

1 INTRODUCTION

It is the fact that digital technologies have been playing a vital role in most sectors of economic activity. Due to high levels of connectivity across continents, the Internet has been linked to the wheel and the airplane in terms of its capacity to transform the future development of business and society. Research on major trends in the dispersion of Internet technologies found that approximately 90 per cent of UK businesses have access to the Internet and the percentage is approaching 100 per cent in SMEs (Digital marketing and media 2012, 670). The situation was found to be very similar in France, Germany, and the Republic of Ireland.

The research also interestingly concluded that the key measure of information and communication technologies adoption is no longer just about connectivity and access to the Internet but rather the degree to which digital technology is being used to deliver real value for businesses. Increasingly, business adoption of technologies focuses on an expanding range of digital devices and platforms. Consequently, adoption of digital technologies has profound implications for marketing planning and implementation.

SMEs form by far the majority of the business community in Ireland. There are approximately 20 SMEs per 1000 inhabitants in the country, approximately 154,489 SMEs according to the 2009-2012 figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database (SBA Fact Sheet 2012)) and is very diverse and encompasses many different sectors and activities. In the November Medium Term Fiscal Statement, Small and Medium sized businesses make up over 99 percent of businesses in Ireland and account for almost 70 percent of people employed in the State (SBA Fact Sheet 2012).

Being aware of the significance of national economic contribution from SMEs in all business sectors, the SMEs Consultation Board was found, which includes 10 sub-organisations has been introduced to support Irish SMEs' developments in

terms of offering guidelines regarding different business aspects, financial and human resource advice, business law/regulation consultancy, just to name a few. Marketing related expenditures are considered to be significantly costly for most Irish SMEs and it is one of the reasons why SMEs refrain from heavily investing in marketing. Indeed, only a small proportion of SMEs goes ahead and employs marketing managers while the remaining percentage manages to teach themselves.

It goes without saying that the world is rapidly moving from analogue to digital. People are collecting more digital content on a daily basis – on cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc. Yet not all companies worldwide have recognised this massive change in their marketing strategies which need to adapt well sooner or later. With the increasing popularity in digital marketing, it seems to be an efficient cost-cutting solution for SMEs to spread their businesses and to reach out to audiences across boundaries. However, due to the lack of understanding, professional development and expertise referring to digital marketing concept, most Irish SMEs nowadays have not been able to maximise the potential of integrated digital marketing (Wade 2012).

1.1 Objectives of the thesis

The thesis is conducted with the purpose to address the following concern: *“How far have the Irish SMEs been applying digital marketing into their business operations in order to sharpen the company’s competitive edge in today’s era of technology?”*

More specifically, the aim of the thesis is to achieve the two following goals:

- Provide insights into the concept of digital marketing, especially the most commonly used channels of digital marketing, aiming to facilitate Irish SMEs to understand the concept to its full potential.

- On the basis of the quantitative research, suggestions in relation to improving the current practice of applying digital marketing in Irish SMEs and in the case company will be initiated.

1.2 The case company - English Language Ireland (ELI)

English Language Ireland is a family-run English Language School based in Carlow, Ireland. The company was found in 2000 by an Irish couple, Ruth and Terry Coffey, both have a lifetime's knowledge and experience in education and care. Ruth is a fully qualified Montessori and TEFL teacher. Terry holds a Master's degree in Training and Human Resource Management and is visiting lecturer to several Irish Colleges of Higher Education. (English Language Ireland 2010)

Mission Statement

"English Language Ireland provides all students with a quality Irish educational experience and its focus is on helping each student reach their full potential. We value our host families, teachers and centre providers as partners and stakeholders in the process of excellence. We will manage our business to the highest international standards" (English Language Ireland 2010)

English Language Ireland is one of the Irish-owned SMEs that are striving to keep up with the 21st century's business trend by developing an effective integrated digital marketing strategy of their own.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis report's structure will consist of four sections beginning with the introduction in which the objectives and structure of the thesis will be mentioned. The second chapter of the thesis includes detailed theoretical information about different aspects of digital marketing.

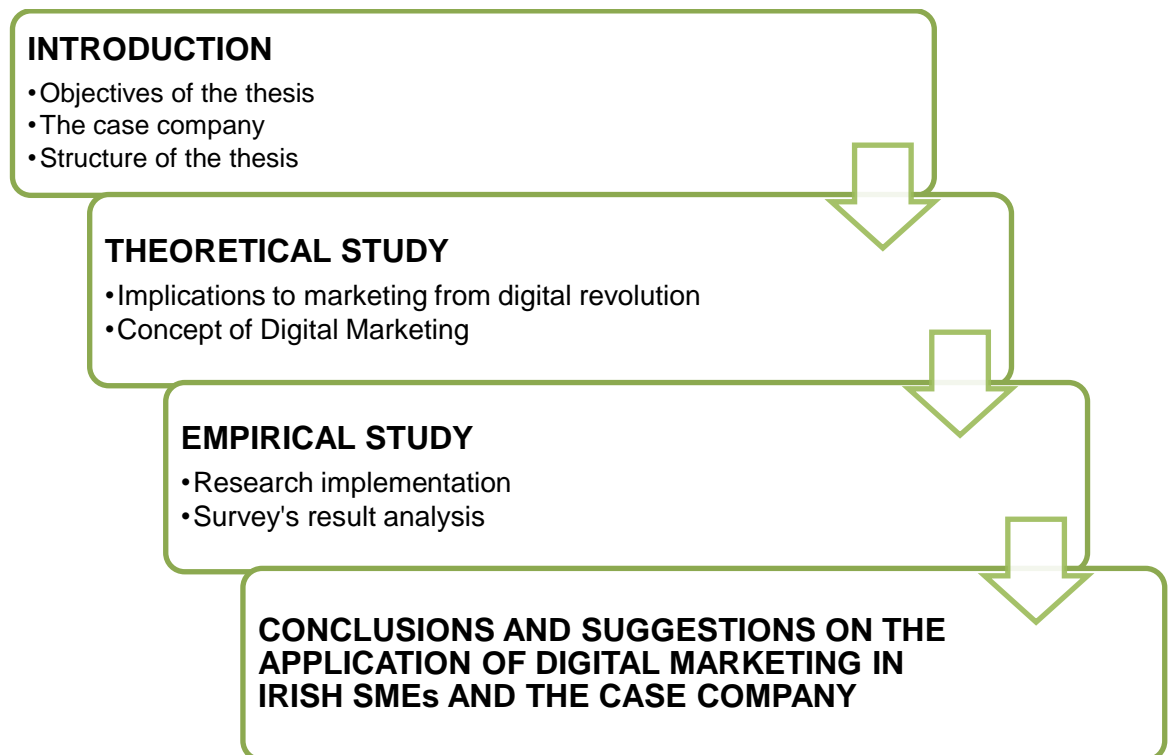


FIGURE 1. Structure of the thesis

The third section of the thesis, empirical study, provides detailed information about the research approach, where the selected research method for the survey is commented on details. The results of the research will also be revealed in this section. Suggestions on the application of digital marketing in Irish SMEs and in the case company withdrawn from the survey results can be traced in the last chapter of the thesis report.

2 CONCEPT OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

2.1 Implications to marketing from the digital revolution

The Internet entered into commercial life since the 1990s. During the same period network technology was also undergoing significant change, switching from analogue to digital forms, and mobile phone networks plus handsets were rapidly developing both in terms of sophistication and number of users. By 2000 further changes had occurred in the world of digital communication infrastructure. There were suddenly more mobile phone subscribers than landline phone users, Internet traffic exceeded voice traffic on fixed-line telephone networks at night, and wireless technologies began to be developed. Mobile phones have increased facilities for receiving multimedia content, and digital and online television have become available. (Parkins 2010, 15)

2.1.1 Globalisation of markets and competition

According to research, the global connectivity of the Internet opens up new avenues for business in a manner that traditional commerce conduits cannot match and it has also been suggested that a company based anywhere in the world can launch a website to compete on a global basis, as long as its products are easily transportable or downloadable. Many established brands are successfully taking advantage of these online opportunities to expand globally (e.g. Tesco, Zara). However, they inevitably face stiff competition from virtual merchants - global online players like Amazon, Netflix that have cannibalised the supply chain by going straight from manufacturer to the end consumer. (Chaffey & Chadwick 2012, 40)

Retailers and consumer brands are likely to face growing pressure from a variety of completely new businesses, keen to get their share of the electronic market. If one thing has become very clear, from the first 15 years of Internet retailing, it is that there is always the opportunity for the innovative and dynamic company that has read the market well and has an effective business model to make a strong

impact, and in so doing, grow very big and powerful, very quickly as in the case of Google, Facebook and eBay (Chaffey & Chadwick 2012, 40-42). The experiences of these organisations demonstrate that the Internet can be a very fertile environment for global expansion if organisations have good ideas, supported by an appropriate set of core competences and capabilities.

2.1.2 Changes in the traditional sale funnel concept

For decades, the sales funnel concept determined marketing behaviour. This concept starts with grabbing a consumer's attention, to pique his interest or create a perceived demand; then, overcome his objections to create desire, and lastly provide that final incentive to compel action. The thought behind the concept was the more people the marketers could force into the top of the funnel, the more buyers would eventually fall out of the bottom. In other words, marketers "pushed" consumers towards their brands. Thus, mass consumer advertising, TV commercials with general awareness-generating campaigns were the norm for years (Field 2013, 20).

Fast forward to the new millennium and the flaws in this model has gradually revealed. First, television watching has changed with the proliferation of cable stations, and the growing penetration of households with a DVRs means consumers can and do skip TV commercials. Second, according to Forrester Research's 2012 report, *The State of Consumers and Technology*, 84 percent of Americans go online daily – and that number is increasing as more and more consumers own smartphones. Also in the report, smartphone penetration has hit 123 million Americans, with over half of those owners using browsers on their phones to access the worldwide web (Field 2013, 23).

In the traditional sales funnel concept, the marketer controlled the message. If the consumers needed more information, they could request a brochure, read a review in a national magazine about customer reports or come to the retail outlet and talk to a salesperson. However, consumers nowadays do their own research online or through their social media connections. By forcing clients through the sales funnel, marketers are actually corralling qualified prospects for their

competitors to intercept through well-planned and executed online strategies (Field 2013, 31)

2.1.3 The new four Ps

The 4Ps is commonly known as a basic framework of how to effectively market a product. Product, pricing, promotion and placement, each of these Ps elements, can and should be used in conjunction with one another to create the most effective marketing mix, resulting in sales and profit growth. However more than half of traditional marketing has gone digital (The State of Digital Marketing for SMBs 2013, 2), what have these four Ps been changed in the digital marketing era?

Products

Technology allows for mass customisation of products, it has been seen in an increasing trend these days that companies facilitate customers to design the product themselves online before they make an order. A typical example for this is Vistaprint (www.vistaprint.com) and Converse (www.converse.com), both companies allow their customers to create their own printing products (e.g. business cards, marketing materials, souvenirs, etc.) and trainers on the basis of pre-set options that will later on be tailored according to the customer's requirements.

Part of the digital technology, the Internet has paved the way to the existence of digital products, in which it allows for virus software and digital music to be distributed online. In other words, the Internet becomes a visible distribution medium for these products. (Schenker 2013)

Prices

With customers able to access pricing information from a number of suppliers with relative ease, the Internet is growing a market of near perfect competition (Porter 2001). The availability of search engines and of price comparison websites, such as www.pricerunner.co.uk and www.nextag.com, allows customers to compare product prices across a number of retailers (Image 1)

The screenshot shows the Pricegrabber website interface for an Apple iPad Air 9.7" 16 GB Wi-Fi Silver Tablet. The page displays a price range of \$399.00 - \$558.03 and a price history chart. A table lists various retailers with their prices and 'See It' buttons. A sidebar on the right promotes a Windows driver update.

Store	Store Rating	Details	BasePrice	Tax & Shipping	BottomLinePrice™	Action
BEST BUY	See all-time ratings 293 Reviews		\$479.99	Enter ZIP code to see Tax and Shipping	Enter ZIP code to see BottomLinePrice	SEE IT
TARGET	See all-time ratings 23 Reviews		\$499.00			SEE IT
newegg.com	★★★★★ 28763 Reviews		\$499.00			SEE IT
DH	★★★★★ 58932 Reviews		Best Price \$478.99			SEE IT
Apple Store	See all-time ratings 15 Reviews		\$499.00			SEE IT

IMAGE 1. Price comparison for Apple Ipad Air at pricegrabber.com (pricegrabber.com 2014)

This new trend has put smaller players in the market under greater price pressure. The only lifebuoy for these businesses is to consider differentiating on value, which is a combination of service and price, where a customer might be willing to pay extra for a better experience. (Schenker 2013)

Method of payment for online purchase is also significantly affected by digital revolution, making online trading transaction easier than ever before. Most of online stores nowadays accept a wide range of credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Visa Electron, etc. PayPal is another convenient online method of payment which is now also available in a majority of online shops including EBay. With PayPal, its users can send and receive money in 24 currencies from anybody with an e-mail address in 190 countries and regions,

allowing them to accelerate the pace of international online transactions. (Delancy 2009).

Places or Distribution

The undeniable fact is that the Internet has given “wings” to companies to access to a global marketplace. Product distribution is no longer limited by location. With express delivery and shipping channels, products, both physical and digital can benefit from a borderless marketplace.

Technology such as APIs, RSS and XML allow information and services to be informed and exchanged worldwide. Take APIs as an example. Essentially, the system gives instructions for communicating with another programme or database, and thus allows different companies to build different frontend systems that all communicate with the same database. For instance, the API for a hotel reservations database, Starfish Luxury Travel Distribution (www.starfishinteractive.com), facilitates a wide range of websites to offer instant online bookings for hotels in the inventory. Partners with booking engines include www.spaworld.tv and www.mrandmrsmith.com. (Stokes 2013, 26)

Promotion

The Internet, as an information middleman, naturally lends itself to be used to promote products and services. Online promotion can be tracked, measured and targeted in a far more sophisticated way. Advertising, personal sales, promotions based marketing and public relations can all be conducted through the online medium. These tactics and applications are developed further into common forms of digital marketing, which will be discussed in more depth later on. (Stokes 2013, 26)

2.1.4 The new online consumers

Online consumers refer to those whose lives have been influenced by digital technologies. They include people who never buy anything online, who never play online games and who don't have a Facebook page. If they use email, or own a mobile phone, or access the web for any reason, they are online consumers because their information-sharing, opinion-formation and decision making processes are inherently influenced by the Internet (Parkin 2009, 115).

It is the fact that online consumers have changed to the way they are now taking control over how brands are perceived and positioned. They have the ability and the will to control the messages and the media with which they engage. They have developed a distrust communication from traditional marketers and prefer to use the opinions, experiences and advocacy of fellow customers to help them form their own judgements about companies and products. New online consumers expect more from the brands that they use and the companies behind the brands: transparency, honesty, generosity, eco-friendliness and engagement. Largely as a result of digital communication, purchasing decisions are more communal, collaborative and informed than they have ever been (Parkin 2009, 115-118)



IMAGE 2. Online exchange of customer feedback about Waldorf Astoria Resort (evens 2013)

Online exchanges like the example in Image 2 (page 20) has become more common across the globe, completely changing the marketing concept for how customers find, connect with and give feedbacks to companies about their products and services. Social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter are effectively creating “communities” of like-minded consumers linked by common interests and experiences. Similarly, technology allows this connection to occur in real time and on the go when smartphones and tablets allow the customers to search and share their thoughts, preferences and dislikes no matter where and when they are. (Field 2013, 37-39)

2.1.5 Digital information consumption

Perhaps the strongest case for incorporating a digital element into traditional marketing is that digital media forms are quickly overtaking traditional forms of information consumption. Indeed, findings from the survey about Internet access of households and Individual in the UK conducted in August 2013 showed that:

- 36 million adults (73 %) in Great Britain accessed the Internet every day, 20 million more than in 2006, when directly comparable records began.
- Access to the Internet using a mobile phone more than doubled between 2010 and 2013, from 24 % to 53 %.
- In 2013, 72 % of all adults bought goods or services online, up from 53% in 2008. (National statistics 2013)

The charts below provide a more comprehensive picture about the domination of digital information consumption nowadays and thus have concreted the necessity of understanding and applying digital marketing in the ordinary marketing concept. In 2013, with reports of decreased physical newspaper readership, there has been media interest in how people will access the news in the future. Over half of all adults (55 percent) used the Internet to read or download the news, newspapers or magazines in 2013, compared to only 20 percent of adults in 2007 (Figure 2, page 22).

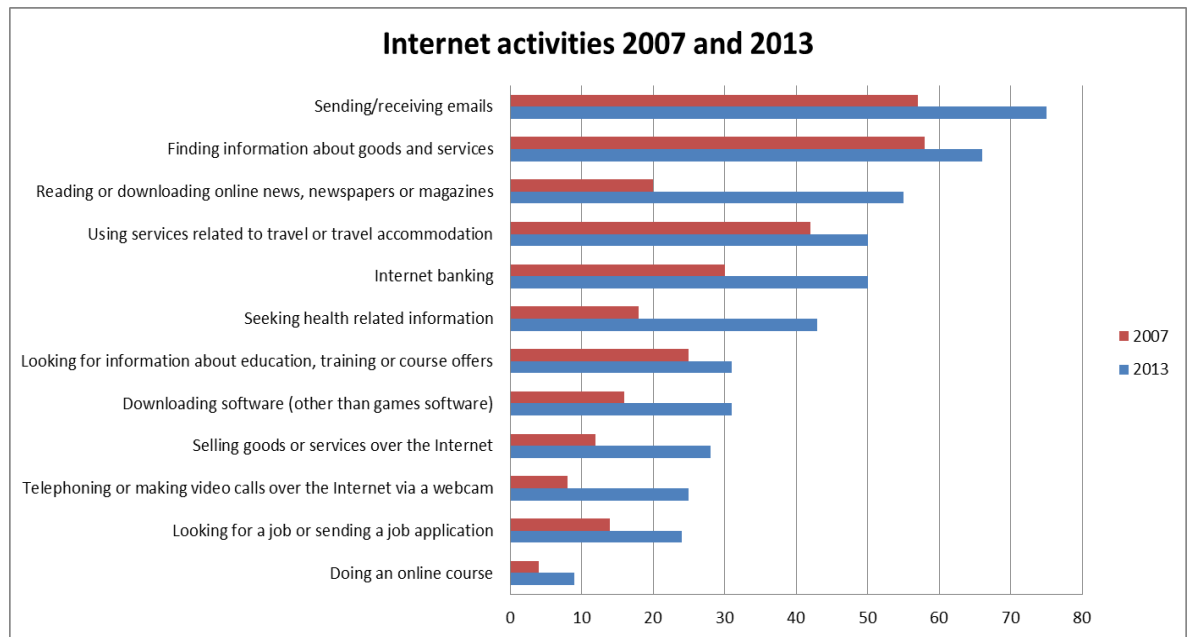


FIGURE 2: Internet activities in 2007 and 2013 (Internet access of households and individuals UK 08/2013)

Approximately 72 percent of adults aged from 25 to 34 years were most likely to read or download news online. Almost 50 percent of 55 to 64 year olds reported that they now access news online. Social networking has been one of the major success stories of the Internet age and its use continues to grow. In 2013, over half (53 %) of all adults participated in social networking. Almost all adults (93 %) aged 16 to 24 have used social networks, but it is important to note that its use is not solely confined to the youngest age groups, with one in every two adults (50 %) aged 45 to 54 year olds now reporting that they partake in social networking. (National statistics 2013, 45-47)

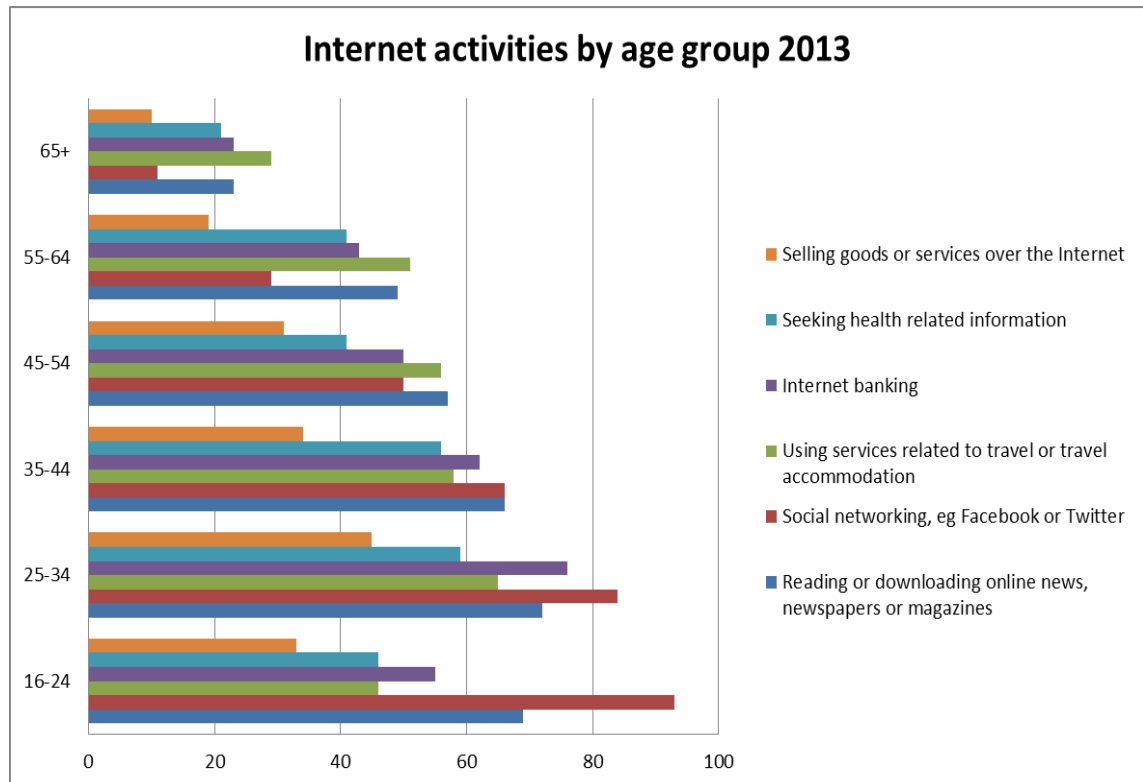


FIGURE 3. Internet activities by age group in 2013 (Internet access of households and individuals UK 2013)

There has been significant growth, in the last six years, in adults selling goods or services online. In 2007, only 1 in 10 adults (12 percent) used sites such as eBay to sell goods online (Figure 3). This had more than doubled by 2013, with 28 percent of adults selling goods over the Internet. Of those aged from 25 to 34 years, just 45 % reported that they had now sold goods or services online. Using services related to travel and travel related accommodation is one of only three activities favoured by those aged from 55 to 64 years to a greater degree than the youngest age group aged from 16 to 24 years; at 51 % and 46 % respectively. In total, one in every two adults (50 %) indicated that they used the Internet for this activity (National statistics 2013, 45-47).

2.1.6 Changes in Irish consumer behaviour

A new analysis from European Commission regarding the Internet usage in Ireland in 2012 has indicated a level of digital maturity among Irish people and either the elimination or narrowing of the gaps with other EU27 countries. (Digital Agenda Scoreboard 2012)

Almost 72 % the number of Irish households access the Internet at home, which is over the EU27 average (Figure 4). The proportion of people who are considered regular users, defined as accessing the internet at least once a week, is 64 %, slightly ahead of the EU27 average. Ireland also scores best in laptop use, with 32 % of Irish use a laptop to access the internet, compared with 19 % in the EU27. (Amas 2012)

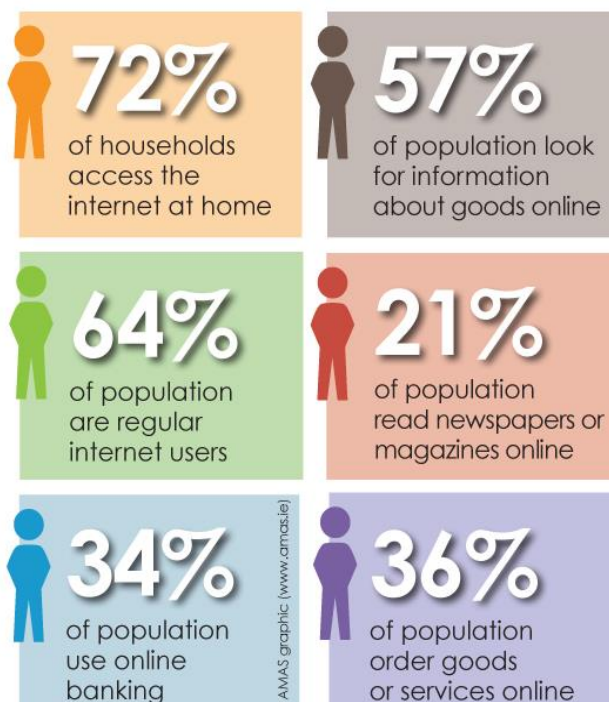


FIGURE 4. Profile of Ireland online (amas 2013)

Behind those statistics is a significant change in Irish consumer behaviours. Habits have particularly changed among young people, whose social lives are surrounded by social media, who are tuning out of traditional media channels in favour of sites such as YouTube and who increasingly purchase everything from concert tickets to clothes online.

Irish consumers are researching what they will buy online on their own. They exchange opinions and thoughts about the products or services with their peers over social media sites; they visit the company's website, download and study the product brochures themselves before heading to the final purchasing decisions. Yet the transaction can take place in a conventional store. Technology is the sector in which this type of behaviour is most applied, with 54% of consumers following this habit (Aileen 2010).

2.2 Key forms of digital marketing

The rise of digital technologies has transformed the digital marketing concept. Modern marketers are facing a constant proliferation of social media channels, the growing power of the connected customer, and an explosion of new digital tools. Therefore it is essential for the marketers to possess a certain understanding level of digital marketing paradigm.

This chapter will provide insights into the digital marketing concept, beginning with the significance of digital marketing over traditional marketing. The second part of the chapter will concentrate on exploiting key forms of digital marketing, which are being applied the most at present by organisations.

2.2.1 The significance of digital marketing

Dave Chaffey (2013) defines digital marketing as “the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through digital technologies such as the web, e-mail, databases, plus mobile or wireless & digital TV, etc. to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services that satisfy the goals of both parties.” If explained in plain English, digital marketing is all about how to get found online.

As being seen from figures given earlier, the amount of Internet users has plummeted significantly over the last few years, which turns on greater awareness of digital marketing among businesses. But what exactly can digital marketing offer

to companies over traditional marketing? First of all, it is infinitely more affordable than traditional offline marketing methods. An email or social media campaign, for example, can transmit a marketing message to consumers for the merest fraction of the cost of a TV ad or print campaign, and potentially reach a wider audience in unlimited geographic distance.

The second advantage of digital marketing is that it allows marketers to encourage their prospects, clients and followers to take action, visit the company's website, read about its products and services, evaluate them, buy them and provide feedback which is visible to the target market. Therefore, it will not long to enhance the prospects of a business. (Faulkner 2013)

Unlike traditional methods, digital marketing allows marketers to see in real time what is or is not working for their business online and thus they can adapt very quickly to improve the results (Chaffey 2013). Measuring traffic to a company's site, for instance, the marketers can use Google Analytics to measure specific goals they want to achieve for their website or blog and most packaged email marketing solutions provide good insight into how many people are opening, reading and converting from the company's emails.

When it comes to conducting a marketing research, if it is carried out digitally, the biggest advantage is the ease with which results can be tracked and monitored. Rather than carrying out costly traditional customer surveys, marketers can quickly view customer response rates and measure the success of the firm's marketing campaign in real time, enabling them to plan more effectively for the next one. (Stokes 2013, 7)

2.2.2 Most common forms of digital marketing

Digital marketing is described as the application of internet-connected devices such as computers, tablets, smartphones, and game consoles to engage consumers with online promotional tools. A range of marketing channels are available for forms of digital marketing as being illustrated in the Figure 5.



FIGURE 5. Typical forms of digital marketing (Stokes 2013, 31)

Email Marketing

Email has consistently been the largest application on the Internet. There are almost 2 billion email addresses worldwide and approximately 72 billion emails are sent every single day. Email marketing is one of the earliest forms of digital marketing that applies electronic means to deliver commercial messages to an intended audience. On average, for websites experiencing good growth in their visitor numbers, 1 in 5 visitors enters the website as a result of clicking the email attached in the email message. (Parkins 2009, 181-182).

In general, email marketing is considered incredibly cost-effective, highly targeted, customisable on a large scale and completely measurable, all of which turn it to be one of the most powerful digital marketing tactics these days. Email marketing is a tool for building relationships with both potential and existing customers. It should maximise the retention and value of these customers, ultimately leading to greater profitability for the organisation as a whole. A targeted, segmented email database means that a brand can direct messages at certain sectors of their customer base in order to achieve the best results. (Clark 2013)

A majority of organisations fail to project effective email campaigns as customers perceived over 65% of promotional emails, newsletters as spams (Chaffey 2013). The proper way to conduct an email campaign is to compel emails to customers and prospects who want to hear news from the company and have given the company permission to contact them. Moreover, according to Brian Clarks (2013), value exchange should be highlighted in any email marketing campaigns: the company's valuable information for its prospect's valued time. Customers need to acknowledge that they can count on the company, that it is not a soulless self-promoting spammer.

Godfrey Parkins (2009, 186-188) suggests the following 7 steps to effectively create an email marketing campaign (Figure 6). The first step is to ***decide on the campaign objectives***. Essentially the marketers should understand why they want to communicate with the prospects, which the target groups are, what they expect to hear from the company or what the so-called "Call to Action" is like. Having a well-defined objective and how the success of a campaign will be measured will form a strong foundation for a highly effective email campaign.



FIGURE 6. 7 steps to create a productive email campaign (Parkin 2009, 186-188)

Once the desired goals of the email campaign are identified, the next step is ***choosing the right Email Service Provider (ESP)***. It is one of the most important things to do in order to launch a successful email marketing campaign. Some marketing agencies such as Constant Contact, Mad Mimi or Mail Chimp offer a way to send bulk emails as well as create and manage email database, campaign management services as well as customisable email campaign's templates (Forno 2012). Many of these ESPs offer a free trial or freemium model depending on the email list's size.

Building up the email list is the third step in the process of building an effective email campaign. The email list may contain both new and existing customer's email addresses. All ESPs facilitate to add an "email sign up" form to the website which will automatically link to the company's email database.

When asking site visitors to submit their email address, it is essential to tell them what they can expect and what they will get from the company in return. In other words, value exchange should be well-defined at this point. The email sign-up form on Image 3 indicates a very clear value exchange between the bodybuilding.com and its customers by offering them weekly video updates designed to keep them fit and motivated within 12 weeks.

Jamie Eason's LiveFit Trainer - Email Sign Up



Sign up and receive additional support not available anywhere else! This includes my weekly video updates designed to keep you focused and motivated for all 12 weeks! They'll come directly to your e-mail account.

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address*:

Re-Type Your Email Address:

Birthdate: Year - Month - Day

Sex: ☒ Male ☐ Female

*By giving your email you are consenting to receive promotional emails from Bodybuilding.com.

IMAGE 3. Email sign-up form at bodybuilding.com (whatcounts 2014)

There are a wide range of laws and regulations that marketers have to abide by when sending promotional email messages. The main purpose of those laws is to protect customer's privacy, which allows them to cancel receiving promotional emails from the companies (Parkins 2009, 188). ***Being familiar with the regulations*** will help marketers avoid unwanted claims from customers regarding promotional email campaigns. In general, most companies follow these following rules:

- Include an unsubscribe link in all emails (Image 4).
- Unsubscribe a user within 10 working days of someone requesting to be unsubscribed. However, it is highly recommend do the action immediately.
- Marketing emails must include a physical address so as the company is known to physically exist and in some cases, customers may want to send letters giving comments about the company by post.



IMAGE 4. Unsubscribe link and physical address enclosed in promotional email from The Secret Escapes (google 2014)

The fifth phase in the process of building email marketing campaign regards to the ***customisation of email content and templates***. Most of the self-service ESPs (e.g. Constant Contact and Mad Mimi) will have a selection of email templates allow marketers to customise in accordance to the company's marketing policy (e.g. images, texts, etc.). Below are several vital points to be added in the checklist:

- Impressive subject line: the subject line of the promotional email should be able to catch the customer's attention from the moment they see the email's notification. It should draw their curiosity as well as expectation that they may

find the answers for their concerns if they read the email. In a nutshell, a strong subject line should reveal a reason for the customer to read the email.

- An attention grabbing headline: After the recipients open the email, a catchy headline will capture their attention again, which make them want to read the email further (Forno 2012).
- Benefits driven content which explain to the audience the benefits of what the company is offering, rather than just the features. Image 4 shows a promotional email from The Secret Escapes, which highlighted key features of the summer getaway in Wilton Court, England. It is advisory to keep the sentences in the email short and easy to read. Bullet points, highlighting and bolding specific words help communicate the important messages. A high “Call to Action” email should be quick to read and demonstrate clearly to move to next steps.



IMAGE 5. Part of marketing email from The Secret Escapes (view.email.secretescapes 2014)

After polishing the content of the marketing email, it is time to ***send the email*** to intended recipients. It is highly recommended to test the email before sending to the real audience, so possible technical errors can be fixed immediately. The last step in the process of setting a promotional email campaign is to ***measure its success***. Depending on the objectives of the campaign that results different metrics for success. Some success metrics may be like the number of orders, number of registrants to an event, site visit rate through links provided in the email, how many online brochure being downloaded, etc.

Social Media Marketing

In the past, potential customers primarily gained information about a company by interacting directly with a salesperson. As media gradually developed, mass adverts, events, direct mail, and emails have been the primary tools for engagement. Though many of these channels are still vital components to successful marketing strategies, social media should be part of them. Given the number of consumers posting, blogging, tweeting, liking and sharing, the question for marketers is no longer “Should I use social media?” but “How do I use social media to the fullest?” (Miller 2013)

Social media can mean different things to different people. According to Tuten and Solomon (2013), there are three separate elements to consider: **social, media and network**. The **social** element refers social media as the way digital natives live a social life. It is all about a culture of participations; a belief in democracy, the ability to freely interact with other entities, companies and organisations; open access to venues that allows users to share content from simple comments to reviews, ratings, photos, stories and much more. In other words, being part of a social media network means that individuals and companies share ideas, interact with one another, work, learn, enjoy group entertainment and conduct business transactions together. (Digital marketing and media 2012, 672).

The use of the **media** element deserves separate attention because it has further meanings in the social context. In the context the technology, media is used to create an environment which facilitates different forms of online activity:

- *Social community media* such as Facebook and LinkedIn, which allow online users to share ideas and interests and socialising.
- *Social publishing media* like YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr which enable signed-up members to publish and distribute editorial content, movies, audio, photos.
- *Social commerce media* named as TripAdvisor, Groupon and Facebook, which are designed for trading and building customer relationships.
- *Social entertainment media* like come2play, Zynga12 which enables online users to play game and entertain themselves across communities.

The final element, **network**, on one hand, can be defined by the underlying technology, making everything possible. For example, the network element of a member of the Facebook social community is the message boards and forums, which facilitate communication and conversations. On the other hand, networks are the inter-connections between the members of the community. The greater the number of members and interactions, the more interesting the network becomes to all involved. (Digital marketing and media 2012, 672).

The application of a variety of social media platforms into business promotions can bring the perfect balance to engaging with consumers and distributing content (Stokes 2013, 32). Social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Google+ offer a wide range of interaction with consumers interested in services, products or information provided by a business. These sites can be used to inform consumers about specials, offers, campaigns or contests. They can also be useful for directing traffic back to the main business website. What's more, social media can be beneficial in the way it provides feedback from customers to the business so that they get a real feel about what their customers really want or think about them. (Stokes 2013, 32)

Social channels are built for sharing and engagement, making them the perfect place to exploit valuable business relationships. Integrating social channels into every marketing campaign can transform a company-to-buyer marketing model to a peer-to-peer influence model. This not only builds trust and brand loyalty, but also positively impacts return on investments (Chaffey 2010).

Jon Miller, one of social media marketing gurus, has suggested three components for a successful social media marketing campaign, which are: Laying the groundwork, get your content shared from peer-to-peer and find the right social tools (Figure 7).

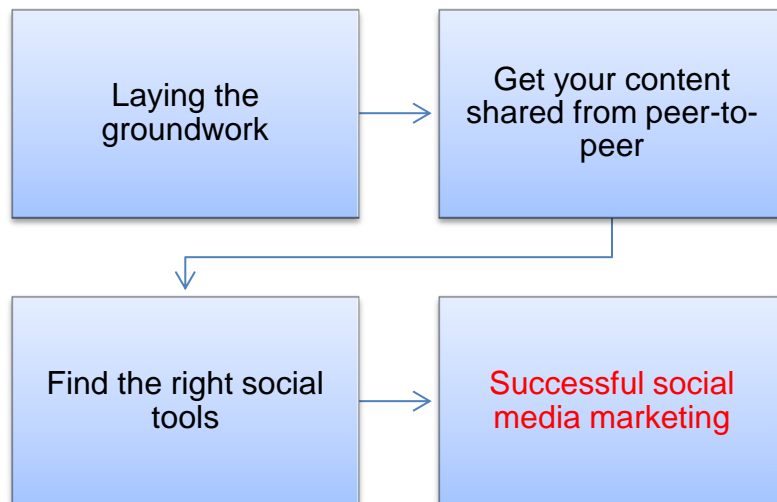


FIGURE 7. Components to build up successful social media marketing campaign. (Miller 2014)

- **Laying the groundwork:** It can be tempting to jump right in to all the social media sites and start posting immediately. However, before publishing the first nugget of social marketing content, it is essential to develop a thoughtful social media marketing plan. Like any business plan, the first thing is to form a set of goals and metrics to ensure that the investing time and energy is well spent. Building a social presence is not necessarily costly, but effective social programmes do require significant time and effort investments.

The next step in building up a social media marketing plan is to set up a team that is willing and able to dedicate adequate time to social media endeavours. A lot of marketers fall into the misconception that social media campaigns can be dealt with on an ad hoc basis which make their company's online personality end up to be erratic or disjointed. Therefore, it is highly advised to create a policy that guides those who are participating in the social marketing effort and be sure those guidelines are enforced. Once everyone is on board, it

is time to encourage them to create engaging contents. A good starting place is to ask team members to answer some of the most frequently asked questions they receive on the various social channels, which play as an excellent basement for high quality and customer-oriented posts, tweets, blogs, YouTube videos, etc. (Miller 2014).

- **Get your content shared from peer – to – peer:** Word – of - mouth is tremendously powerful and the "share" button on every single social media channel allows accessing to millions of different networks. One of the best ways to interact with target audience is by offering them content that they genuinely want to share with their networks. Peer recommendation is extremely valuable as people are influenced on a regular basis by those who they know and trust much more than a company or marketer (Miller 2014). Image 6 shows an example of sharing a deal and winning a prize on Facebook.

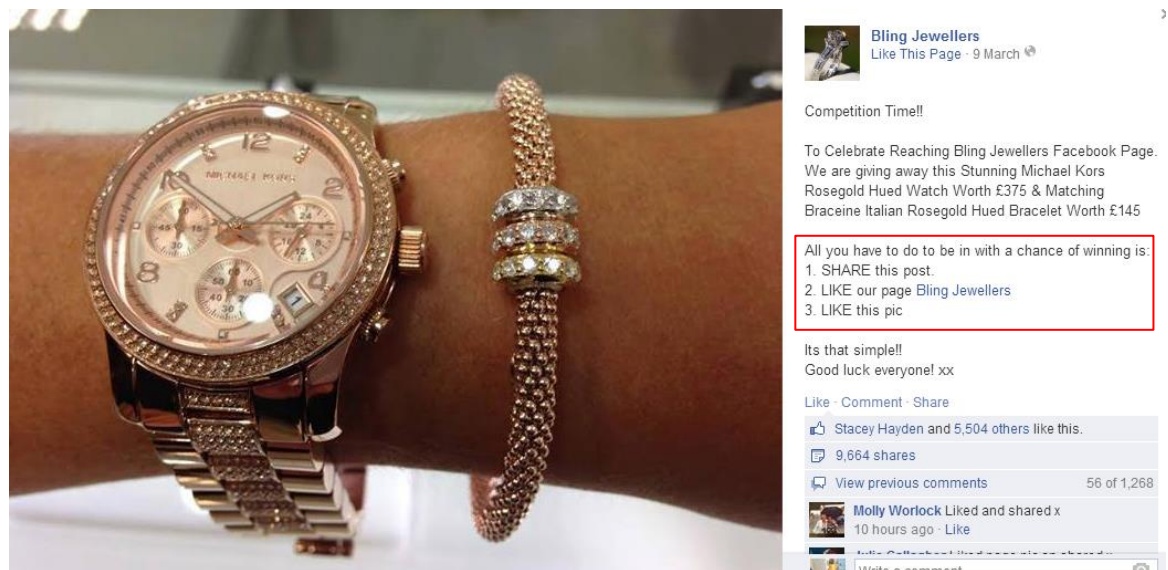


IMAGE 6. A sample of flash deal campaign on Facebook by Bling Jewellers (www.facebook.com 2014)

Three commonly used methods that encourage people to share marketing's posts are "Refer-a-friend", "Flash Deals" and "Social Sweepstakes". A "Refer-a-Friend" campaign usually promotes a compelling or second – to - none offers via email marketing and social networks, and grants access to special offers for both the referrers and those referred. This campaign allows the

marketers to collect important metrics, such as tracking who the biggest influencers are in a certain network community. (Miller 2014)



IMAGE 7. Flash deal campaign at The Faceshop (couponicious.sg 2013)

A "Flash Deal" campaign is similar to Groupon (i.e. a deal-of-the-day website featuring discounted gift cards or coupons usable at local or national enterprises. Groupon was found in November 2008 in Chicago, the US and by November 2010, it serves over 150 markets worldwide. Official website: www.groupon.com). Flash deals offer a limited amount of deals for a specific time period through the company's social platforms. Image 7 displays a flash deal campaign done by The Faceshop. When applying this campaign, it is a must to allow participants to track the deal's progress, so they will not miss the deal unexpectedly (Miller 2014). Finally, a "Social Sweepstakes" campaign allows entrants to spread the words on the company's behalf. Through the

sweepstakes entry, the company can gain important user data such as who is sharing and where they are sharing most.

Once highly shareable content have been created and an ideal type of campaign has been picked to promote sharing, the next step is to make sure the shares are measurable. Monitoring social share numbers is not only an effective way to tell what is working and what is not, it also allows seeing the return on investment by showing how far the company's social network reach is in relation to how much time and resources it has put in. Additionally, displaying share numbers and comments allows the online audience to see what other people think of the company's online content and thus keeps its social marketing transparent and countable. (Miller 2014)

- **Find the right social tools**

With the growth of social media networks, blogs, platforms and specialists communities, it seems to be overwhelming for the company to consider which the right social media form to choose is. The social marketing radar displayed in Image 8 (page 38) is designed to assist that thinking. It allows the marketers to review and prioritise social media and other sites. In other words, the radar aids the marketers to figure out which sites warrant or deserve most attention in different categories. Sites which are agreed to be more important should be positioned more towards the centre. (Chaffey 2010)

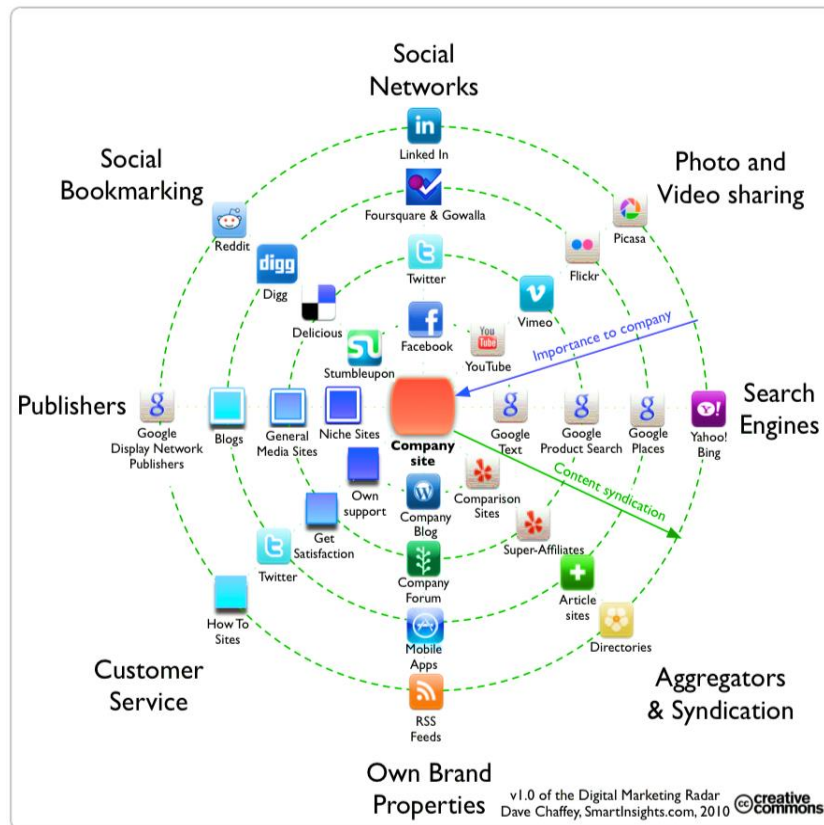


IMAGE 8: Prioritising online presence using the social marketing radar (smartinsights 2012)

To be concluded in this part, social marketing is not a simple undertaking; it requires the business users to be dedicated every single day in order to maintain a consistent, relevant, countable and engaging social marketing strategy. Once it is done properly, the company will possess a great new source of revenue that costs significantly less than traditional channels (Miller 2014).

Online Advertising

Dave Chaffey (2012) defines the online advertising as display ads which are “banner format or video ads placed on other sites with the aim of generating awareness of your site and generating click-throughs to the advertisers’ site or a microsite”.

Apart from the main objective of online advertising which is to increase sales by raising brand awareness online, it can also be more interactive and therefore less

disruptive than traditional advertising or non-interactive online advertising, as users can choose to engage with the advert or not. Online advertising can be optimised by targeting it to certain geographies and specific markets and contextualising it (Stokes 2013, 32)

There are several different types of online advertising available on the Internet, each with their own pros and cons. There is no “best” type of advertising; ultimately, the particular method used depends on the kind of site it is being run on, the needs of the advertiser, and the audience the advertising aims to reach. (Adjuggler 2013, 7-8). The most common types of online advertising will be discussing as below:

Sponsorships

This is one of traditional forms of online advertising. An advertiser basically sponsors an entire site, or at least a section of a site or a specific page on a site. The sponsorship is usually exclusive for a given length of time with this type of online advertising. Normally an advertiser will use sponsorships for branding or for promoting a new product or service. Since visitors to the site will see the same sponsorship advertising constantly, rather than in rotation with other ads, it is more likely to sink in and be established in their minds. (Adjuggler 2013, 7) (Image 9)



IMAGE 9. Sponsored Ads on Facebook page (stream-seo 2013)

Pros of the sponsorships

Sponsorship allows advertisers to know that whatever message they are getting across will be the only thing seen by the site's audience for however long the sponsorship runs. This kind of advertising is comparable in some ways to the sponsorship "branding" done on TV, where a segment of a football halftime show is sponsored by a particular company. Ideally, the advertiser hopes to not only get their message across, but also become linked with the site they are sponsoring in the minds of their audience. If the advertiser perceives the site's audience as being particularly desirable, the kind of credibility this advertising can bring is invaluable.

Cons of the sponsorships

This type of advertising can potentially not be worth the investment. It generally depends on the site and the needs of the campaign. If the advertiser sponsors a site that is not interested in what they are selling, the sponsorship can become a waste. Another weakness is that there no specific guarantee about how much specific traffic their advertising will actually get. (Adjuggler 2013, 7)

Banner Run

Banner ads are image-based advertisements that often appear in the side, top, and bottom sections of websites. They can range widely in terms of size, design, and function (Marrs 2012). With this method of advertising, the advertisers purchase a run of advertising, usually for a specific period of time. They will agree to pay a specific CPM (i.e. Cost per thousand, it is an online payment model where advertisers pay for every 1000 impressions of their advertisement. This is an ideal method of payment for advertisers who are primarily concerned with the number of times their ads are seen. The "M" in CPM is from the Roman numeral for 1000) (Adjuggler 2013) for a certain number of impressions (commonly in chunks of 100,000 to 1,000,000 impressions) over a specific period of time (commonly at least one month) (Image 10, page 41)



IMAGE 10. Example of online ads banners (brandwatch2012)

Pros of the banner run

The biggest strength of this method of advertising is in simplicity. The advertiser knows exactly how many impressions they are buying, how much they will be paying for it, how long it will be running, and where it will be running.

Cons of the banner run

For advertisers, it is very easy for their advertising to get ignored as a user might see one of the ads but do not bother to click on it; even if they remember it later on, the random nature of which ad is shown on any page view might make it difficult for them to see the ad again. (Adjuggler 2013)

Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC)

This type of advertising is commonly associated with contextual advertising and search engines such as Google. Generally, the advertiser pays out to the ads publisher for each click on an ad. PPC Ads usually appear as text links, and are shown either as part of a search results page, or on the content of a site.

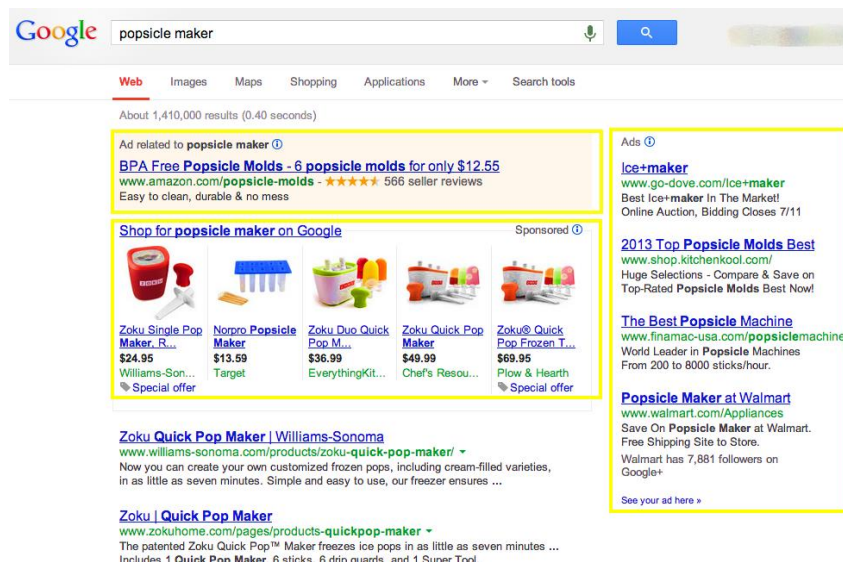


IMAGE 11. PPC Ads on Google site (wordstream 2012)

Google's PPC search ads are powered by Google's AdWords advertising platform, which allows advertisers to bid on keywords, craft ad text, set budgets, etc. In order to advertise on Google AdWords, users will need to create a Google AdWords Account. (Image 11)

Pros of the PPC

The biggest advantage of this advertising for the advertiser is that they only pay for actual clickthroughs. They don't have to worry about paying extra money for impressions that never count to anything.

Cons of the PPC

For advertisers, PPC advertising has the potential to be less effective and more expensive than other methods of advertising. For search-based PPC, the cost of a single click can be very expensive for the most popular keywords, and at some point the cost of the click might not be worth what they had to pay for it if not enough people actually purchase something after the click – throughs.

Mobile Marketing

As smartphones, tablets and other portable devices with the Internet access are becoming more and more popular and grabbing the increasing amount of attention, it seems to be logical for small businesses to have a closer look to mobile marketing strategies which will place them in front of their competitors.

According to marketing guru, Andreas Kaplan (2012, 131-132), mobile marketing is specifically described as "any marketing activity conducted through a ubiquitous network to which consumers are constantly connected using a personal mobile device". Within this definition, Kaplan uses two variables: (1) the degree of consumer knowledge and (2) the trigger of communication, to differentiate between four types of mobile marketing applications which are Strangers, Victims, Groupies, and Patrons (Figure 8, page 44). Being familiar with mobile marketing applications will help marketers minimise the failure probability of mobile campaigns as well as unwanted legal claims from unsatisfied customers.

		Trigger of Communication	
		Push	Pull
Degree of consumer knowledge	High	Victims AT&T sent SMS text messages 75 million customers suggesting they watch American Idol and vote for the candidates using AT&T phones.	Patrons Pop icon Britney Spears enabled fans to receive: For \$2.99 per month-Britney's diary: a weekly text message about her life during the concert tour.
	Low	Strangers Toyota teamed up with Fox Broadcasting to insert 10 seconds commercial into 26 short mobile movies, so-called "mobisodes", for the TV show <i>Prison Break</i> .	Groupies Calvin Klein used Quick Response Codes on Billboards in New York to pull up an exclusive 40 seconds commercial.

FIGURE 8. Classification of mobile marketing applications (Kaplan 2012, 131)

"Strangers" refer to the low knowledge/push group in the classification table, meaning that companies broadcast a general message to a significant amount of mobile users. Given that the company cannot know which customers have ultimately been reached by the message. In the second group (low knowledge/pull), customers opt to receive information but do not identify themselves when doing so. The company thus does not know which specific clients it is exactly dealing with, which Kaplan refers to what is so-called **"groupies"**. The third group (high knowledge/push) regards to the cohort **"Victims"**, where companies know their customers and can send them messages and information without asking permissions. In other words, the companies spam their customers intentionally.

The last group (high knowledge/pull) indicates situations where customers spontaneously give permission to be contacted and provide personal details to the companies. This is considered “green light” to the companies to commercially communicate with their customers without the risk of bothering their clients. Kaplan refers this final group as “*patrons*”.

Below are several types of mobile marketing that are mostly used by small and medium sized businesses:

SMS marketing (short message service)

It is also known as ‘texting’. While SMS is compatible with all phones worldwide, SMS campaigns can easily regard as spams. However with a little creativity, it may significantly grab target audience’s attention. Generally speaking, SMS is lightning fast, literally putting the intended message into subscribers’ pockets or purses seconds after it is sent. The average time for all mobile carriers and SMS services is less than 7 seconds from send to receive. Other online marketing strategies are also incredibly fast, but probably nothing compares to the swiftness of SMS. (Cusden 2013) (Image 12)



IMAGE 12. SMS promotional text from Jacks Grill (google 2013)

In comparison to email marketing, the chance that SMS is instantly open is staggeringly at a higher rate (Figure 9). Essentially, every SMS sent is opened and read, whereas only a fraction of emails sent are read. When a subscriber feels that buzz in their pocket or hears that their phone is signalling a text message, they always look. In some cases, text messages are automatically opened, where emails aren't (Cusden 2013)

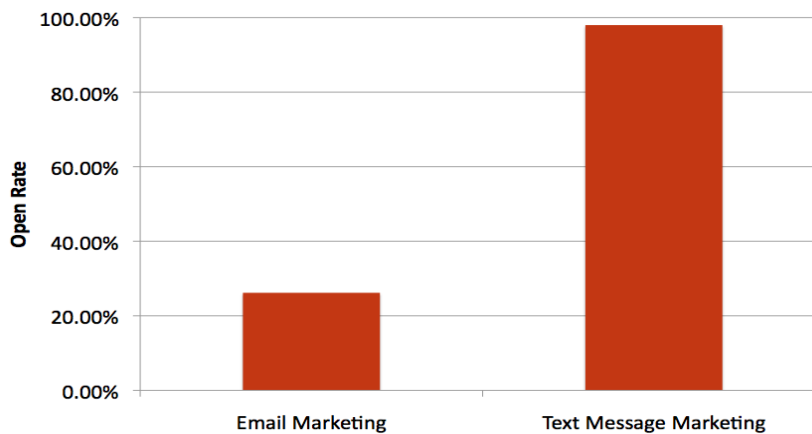


FIGURE 9. Email versus Text message marketing opening rates (tatango 2014)

Needless to say, the difference between SMS and email open rates has posed a significant impact on the cost, which includes both the cost per message sent and the cost per message opened. Figure 10 below reveals some statistics collected from Mailchimp's pay-as-you-go plan of 2,000 credits. The costs per sent message for SMS is double higher that for email marketing in oppose to the lower cost per open message for SMS than for email marketing. (Johnson 2010)

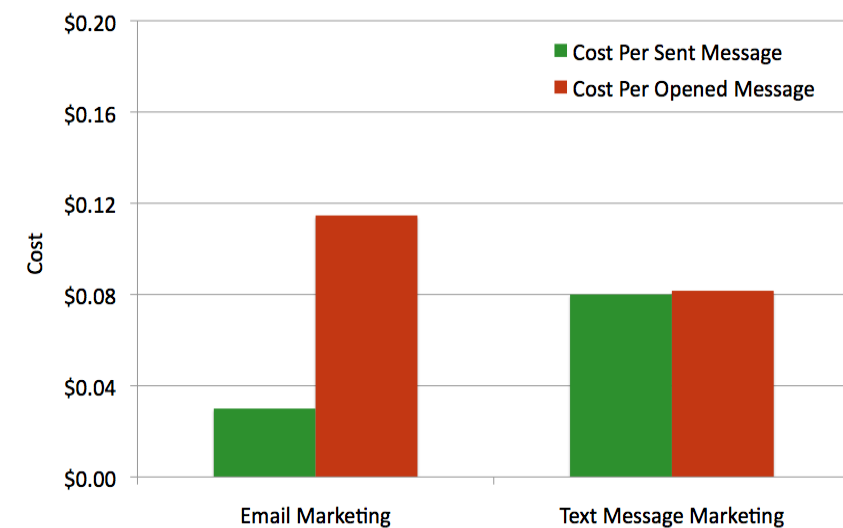


FIGURE 10. Email versus SMS costs (tatango 2014)

Mobile friendly website

A majority of SMEs already have well-developed online stores or websites. However, it is highly recommended that the company's website can be opened perfectly on any mobile devices. There are over 50 million people in the US going online with their phones and they are expecting to get websites that work on their phones. They want to save time on finding what they need and get back to their unfinished jobs. The mobile web experience is not about "browsing", it is about "finding" quickly, precisely and easily (Dushinski 2012) (Image 13)



IMAGE 13. Mobile websites on iPhone. (onvizi 2014)

QR Codes marketing (Quick-Response barcodes)

This type of mobile marketing allows customers to quickly acquire information about an interested product or service, by visiting a mobile version of the company's business page on a mobile phone that is enabled to scan the bar code.

The good thing about QR codes is they can be put virtually anywhere and lead people to anywhere online. There is no limit in creating the content for QR codes; a hair salon could put a QR code on its brochures or on the mirrors and it could lead its customers to a Facebook contest or voucher for discount on a certain beauty service. (Belosic 2013) (Image 14)



IMAGE 14. QR Code example on Heinz ketchup bottles (econsultancy 2013)

This type of mobile marketing is designed for smartphone users, which may immediately limited the target audience .Especially with the availability of several different MOS (Mobile Operating Systems) and the costs for designing a mobile application which can work for any MOS might be expensive. (Dushinski 2012)

Despite its costly price, mobile apps seem to be worth the investment for the benefits it brings to the business itself. Indeed, mobile apps allow the company to connect the company with on-the-go customers and thus facilitate to generate new or repeated sales. A good example is the newly-launched mobile app from AIB bank for personal banking. The app goes well with Apple mobile devices and has sleek design. It only take a few second for app to load, the content provided in the app is simple but informative. The app is ideal for those who need to check their balance on the go or completing a bank transaction at the glance (Image 15, page 49).



IMAGE15. Mobile app of AIB bank for personal banking (aib 2013)

To some extent, mobile apps are better than mobile websites as they run faster with a few second whereas some mobile websites could take a couple of minutes to load in an area with weak reception. A user-friendly mobile app will also increase customer's satisfaction about a certain service provided by the company as their problems can sold at any time no matter where they are, as long as they have their mobile devices connected with the Internet. (Belosic 2013)

Search Engine Optimiser (SEO)

SEO regards the practice of optimising a website in order to rank higher on the search engine result's pages. The concept involves working with the parameters set by search engines to make sure that the search engines index it when people enter a search term which is relevant for a product or service. (Stoke 2013)

SEO plays an important role in acquisition, as it ensures the organisation's website or promotional campaign to appear in the search results, allowing the company to reach the target customers. A site that is optimised for the search engines is also a site which is transparent and well-designed. These two elements ensure a satisfactory user experience, meaning that SEO plays a role in retention, too. (Stokes 2013) (Image 16)

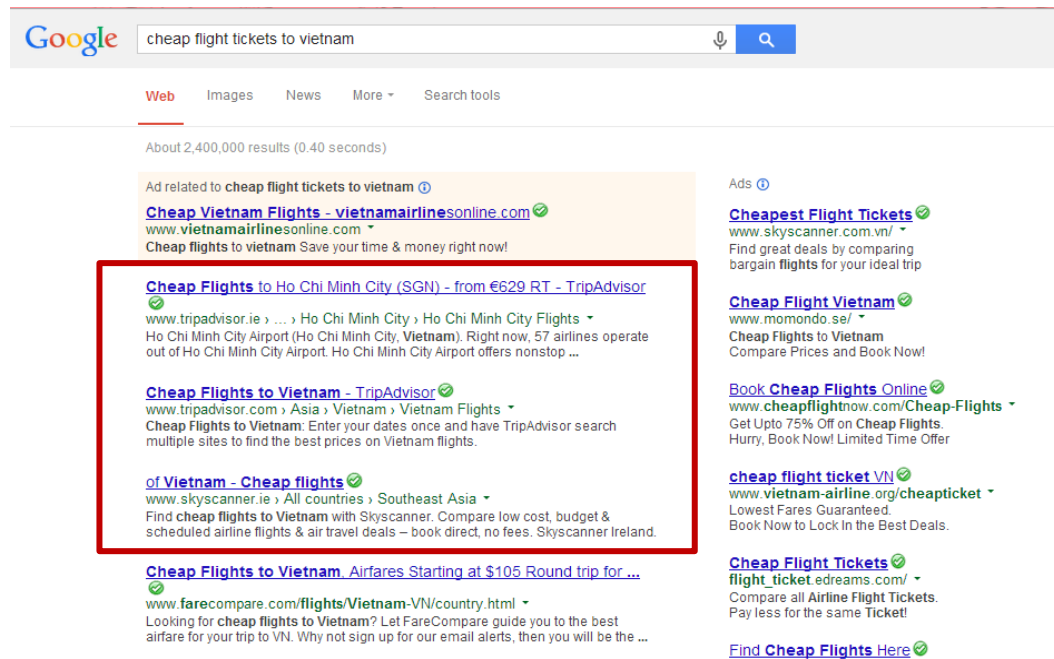


IMAGE 16. Example of SEO (google 2014)

One of the most important aspects of search engine optimization is the usage of key phrases or keywords in developing search engine optimization results. The phrases and keywords indicate the tags, which are used for distinguishing a site with other website's content. The ability to use the phrases and keywords correctly will significantly advance the website's results for search engines, especially when certain keywords are used in the content. However, repetition of keywords does not help much in the quality of the web design. The keywords along with phrases should be used strategically in the content. (Bradley 2011)

Link Building

This is the process of obtaining superior-quality links pointing to a website. There are two types of links: inbound and outbound. Outbound links start from the company's site and lead to an external site, while inbound links or back links, come from an external site to the company's website. Back links are among the main building blocks to an effective SEO campaign. The number of back links is an indication of the popularity or importance of that website. Backlinks are important for SEO as some search engines such as Google, offers extra credit to websites that have a large number of quality back links, and consider those websites more relevant than others in their results pages for a search query. (Sukumar 2011)

Meta tags

Meta tags are used to summarise information of a page for search engine. This information is not directly visible to those visiting the website. The most popular are the meta keywords and description tag. These meta description tags are inserted into the area of the web page. A couple of years ago meta description tags were the primary tool for search engine optimization and there was a direct correlation between keywords in the meta description tags and the ranking in the search results. However, algorithms have got better and today the importance of meta data is decreasing day by day. (Sukumar 2011)



IMAGE 17. Illustration for meta tags (google 2014)

The website content

Search engines and target audience love fresh content which provides them with regularly updated, relevant content is a recipe for success. In general, when a site is frequently updated, this increases the probability that the spider will revisit the site sooner. It is always highly relevant to include a news section on the company's site, such as company news or RSS feeds and this will keep the ball rolling. (Sukumar 2011)

Content Marketing

Consumers have turned their back against the traditional world of marketing. They own a DVR (Digital Video Remote) to skip television commercials, often ignore magazine advertising, and now have become so used to online "surfing" that they can look for online information without caring for banners or buttons. Smart marketers should realise this change and know that there has to be a better way, which is content marketing. (Pulizzi 2012)

Joe Pulizzi (2012) has defined content marketing as "a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience, with the objective of driving profitable customer action". A content marketing strategy can leverage all marketing channels (print, online, in-person, mobile, social, etc.), be used at any or all stages of the buying process, from attention-oriented strategies to retention and loyalty strategies. Content marketing can be also known as what media companies do as their core business, except that in case of paid content or sponsorship as a measure of success, brands define success by ultimately selling more products or services. (Pulizzi 2012)

Content marketing is being employed by some of the giant international marketing organisations, including P&G, Microsoft, Cisco Systems and Coca Cola. It's also developed and executed by small businesses and one-person shops around the globe. According to statistics collected from the 2013 B2B Content Marketing

Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends research, 9 out of 10 B2B marketers are using content marketing, regardless of company size or industry:

- On average, B2B marketers apply eight different content marketing tactics to achieve their marketing goals.
- 60% report that they plan to increase their spending on content marketing over the next 12 months.
- Marketers, on average, spend over a quarter of their marketing budget on content marketing. (Content Marketing Institute 2012)

Alan Grainger, the SEO and Online Marketing Specialist at Superdream (i.e. a marketing agency based in the UK), has come up with seven steps in the process of mastering content marketing (Image 18, page 54). The first step is to **define and communicate the content marketing goal**. This is particularly important if there's a need for the marketer to justify the budget investment to his company's executives, as it will help him measure your results in figures later on the process. Examples for content marketing goal can be like increasing the amount of Facebook "likes" or growing the database of email addresses. By correctly forming the goals from the very start, it is much easier to focus on building the content in a way that will enhance the possibility of meeting those targets (Grainger 2013).

Once the content marketing goals have been decided, the next step is to **record performance metrics**. Google Analytics is great for tracking goal completions. If the set goal is getting readers to take an action (e.g. tweeting a certain post or signing up for a newsletter), it is essential to track the results for each of these events. This information will help to figure out the conversion rate, and allow the marketer to analyse the success of a single content as well as identifying areas for future improvement (Grainger 2013).

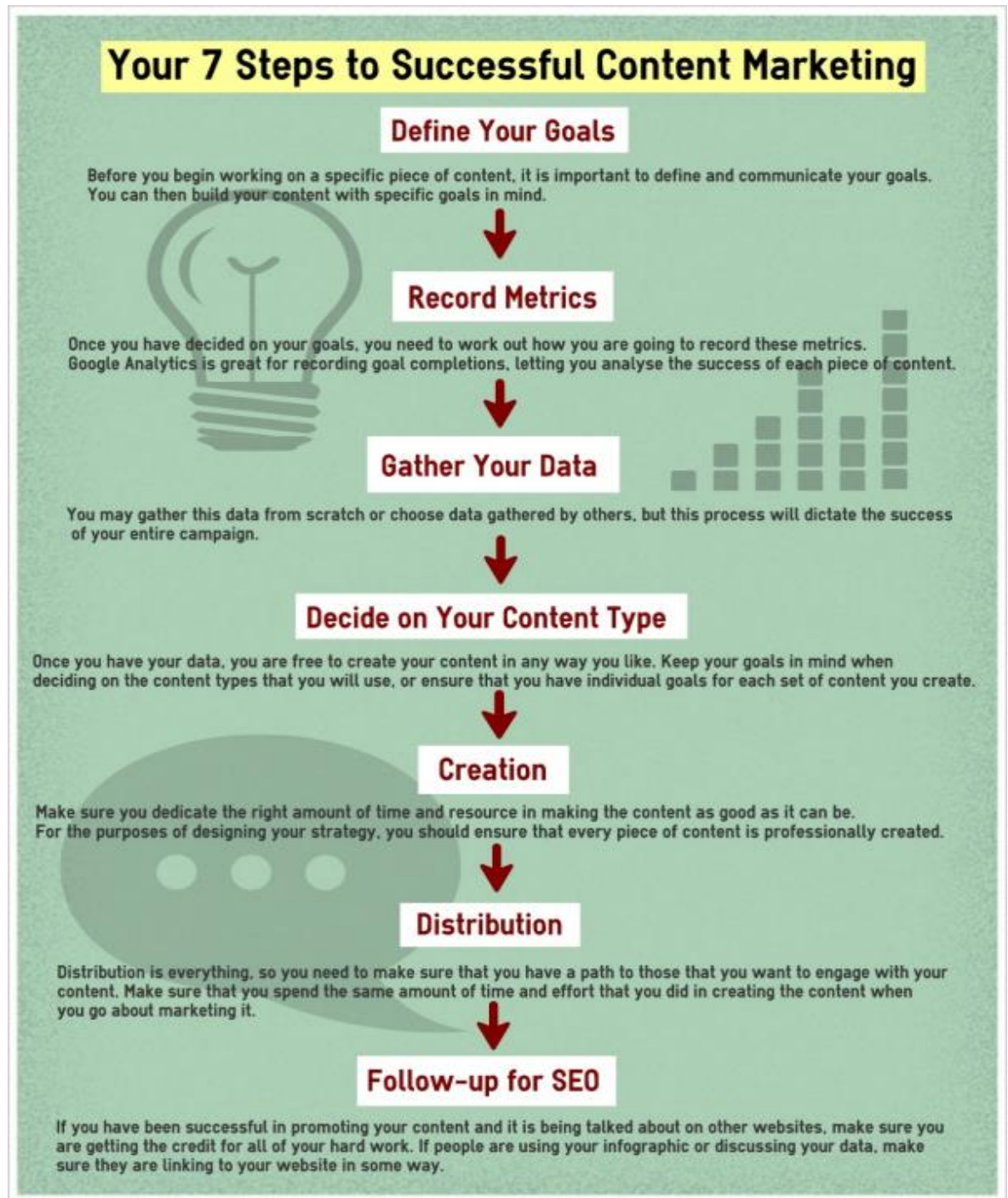


IMAGE 18. 7 steps for successful content marketing (contentmarketinginstitute.com 2013)

Well – projected marketing contents often perform either two following ways:

- Introduce a brand new concept, or news story to target audience (existing or new or both), or
- Re - launch an existing idea into a new format.

No matter which way to choose, it is a must to **gather data** that will provide value to the target audience. This data should offer a unique perspective of the industry that the company is operating in and it could be collected via a multiple tactics such as interviewing customers, discovering the success rate of a particular initiative, working out satisfaction rates, etc. as long as they offer a valuable insight into a particular sector.

The data can be gathered from existing information sources or from scratch. If the marketer is looking to re-purpose other people's data, he can look for independent industry authorities who are known for collecting relevant information. Online marketer Sean Revill, for instance, has produced a comprehensive list of resources for data gathering efforts.

If the company decides to collect the data itself, Survey Monkey or Webropol can come handy, these programmes allow the marketers to create, deliver questionnaires and gather respondent data into their email database. Another option is to utilise social media that the company is present such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to ask questions and compile data on a certain subject (Grainger 2013).

Deciding on the content types is the next step in the process of building up successful content marketing once the desired data is gathered. For example, an info-graphic can be used to compile the data, like what can be seen in the Appendix 3. This info-graphic can be conveniently displayed on the company website, following with a blog post commenting on it in further details. The information can then be added into a press release that promotes this content on the company website, or a guest post can be created on a relevant website that discusses the data from a different perspective (Grainger 2013).

Moving on to the **content creation**, it is highly recommended that every single piece of content is professionally created by experts in the particular content format that are being worked with. For instance, press releases should be written by copywriters, and graphic designers should be in charge of creating info-graphics. Regardless of who creates the marketing content, the marketer himself should also dedicate sufficient time to form creative headline, as this will play a big role in dictating the success of the content marketing campaign (Grainger 2013).

Once the content is well made, it is time to spread the word. One of the biggest pitfalls associated with content marketing is that once content pieces are produced, they can just exist on the website on which they are hosted. **Distribution** is everything, so it is a must to make sure the target audience of the content is well-informed about its arrival. Through their own networks, social media, the press, industry authorities can be reliable tools to share the content with the target audiences.

The last step in the process of creating successful content marketing is to **follow-up for SEO**. Even if a successful content piece has been published by a majority of the target websites and discussed by the target audiences, sometimes they may publish or re - tweet the content without mentioning any links back to the company website. Therefore, it is highly recommended to keep a list of the websites that have run your content as complete as possible. With the help of Google Alerts set up in the marketer's email account, the programme will inform him whenever the company's blog title is published or re-tweeted or the company itself is mentioned.

Once a list of websites that have published the company's content have fully compiled, it is allowable to analyse each one and make sure they have linked back to your website. If it happens to find websites that haven't linked back the company's website, the marketer can simply drop them an email or a tweet and request that they include a link to his company's website. (Grainger 2013).

It is safe to say that marketing is impossible without great content. Indeed, regardless of what type of marketing tactics that are used, content marketing should be part of the marketing strategy, not something separate. Quality content is part of all forms of marketing including social media marketing (Content marketing strategy comes before social media strategy), SEO (Search engines reward businesses that publish quality and consistent content), PPC and email marketing (these campaigns work only when there is a great content behind them) (Contentmarketinginstitute.com 2012).

3 EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN IRISH SMEs

The theoretical part has revealed that Irish SMEs play a tremendous role in the economy of the State, and a majority of Irish customers have move online. The arising issue is that what have the Irish SMEs implemented in order to adapt with this current trend? How far have they engaged digital marketing into their existing marketing strategy? What hinder them from the integration of digital marketing? The answers will be clarified in this chapter.

The research in the thesis was carried out by the quantitative research approach and survey method. The ability to measure the results in a larger scale is one key benefit that quantitative research has to offer the researcher. Ideally, quantitative research is concerned with making prediction or inferences about a population from observations and analysis of a sample. That is, the results of an analysis using a sample can be used to generalise to larger population which the sample represents. (Lane, 20-25)

3.1 Research implementation

Questionnaire, the most common way to retrieve information in quantitative survey method, was employed in this thesis' research. The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information about the application of digital marketing in Irish SMEs, which allows the researcher to identify challenges that Irish SMEs are experiencing when dealing with digital marketing and thus to initiate suggestions for them to overcome those obstacles and effectively engage digital marketing into their business operation in the future.

3.1.1 Population identification and sample size calculation

A survey population is defined as “the total set of individuals, groups, or events that are being studied” (Lane, 20). Therefore, the population of the survey is the Irish SMEs in Ireland. According to statistics provided by SBA Fact Sheet 2012, there were approximately 154,489 Irish SMEs operating across the country. (SBA Facts Sheet 2012, 2)

TABLE 1. SMEs in Ireland in basic figures (SBA Facts Sheet 2012, 3)

	Number of Enterprises			Employment			Value added		
	Ireland		EU27	Ireland		EU27	Ireland		EU27
	Number	Share	Share	Number	Share	Share	Billion €	Share	Share
Micro	137.669	88,9%	92,2%	248.646	23,5%	29,6%	14	16,3%	21,2%
Small	14.168	9,1%	6,5%	255.953	24,2%	20,6%	12	14,8%	18,5%
Medium-sized	2.652	1,7%	1,1%	225.386	21,3%	17,2%	17	20,4%	18,4%
SMEs	154.489	99,7%	99,8%	729.985	69,0%	67,4%	43	51,5%	58,1%
Large	450	0,3%	0,2%	327.975	31,0%	32,6%	41	48,5%	41,9%
Total	154.939	100,0%	100,0%	1.057.960	100,0%	100,0%	84	100,0%	100,0%

Sampling is the process of choosing units (e.g. individuals, companies) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, the researcher is able to fairly generalise the results back to the population from which were being selected (Lane, 20-21)

The sample used in this thesis' research was automatically calculated on the following website: <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm> (2014) on the basis of the figures of confidence interval and population provided by the researcher. The sample size needed for the survey worked out to be “n = 461”, with confidence interval and population being 4.56 and 154,489 respectively.

3.1.3 Questionnaire structure and data collection method

The questionnaire was designed on Webropol programme accrediting by Savonia University of Applied Sciences. There were twenty questions in the survey, divided into four following sections:

- Familiarity level of digital marketing concept
- Social media marketing
- Marketing expenditures on digital marketing activities
- Workshops and training

The questions in the questionnaire are practical and easy to answer, so they do not take the respondents much time to finish the survey. Information extracted from the questionnaire is confidential and is used for research purposes only.

The simple random sampling is applied in the survey, meaning all the Irish SMEs in the population share the same chance to be chosen. The questionnaire was delivered by email invitations to 461 randomly chosen Irish SMEs including the case company. The survey results will support and offer guidance towards a successful digital marketing strategy for the case company.

3.2 Survey result analysis

The questionnaire was delivered to 461 randomly chosen Irish SMEs by the end of January 2014 and ended in the middle of February 2014. There were totally 177 questionnaire respondents, and the survey report was generated by the Webropol programme. The questionnaire form can be retrieved in Appendix 1.

In the questionnaire structure, there were four sections in the questionnaire structure, each of which will be analysed according to collected statistics. The digital marketing practice of English Language Ireland will be closely discussed in the last part of the empirical study. The number of respondents to each question will be marked as the letter *n*.

3.2.1 Background of survey's respondents

As shown in Figure 11 below, over a quarter of survey respondents were holding marketing manager position in the company, followed by marketing assistant and sales manager position with the same selected rate, which is 19.2 %. Sales assistant and CEO positions came to the third common choice with the selected rate being roughly 14.1 % and 13.6 %, respectively. This fact may imply that the quality of the survey's responses is reliable as the respondents have good knowledge about marketing.

Q1. What is your current position in the company?
($n = 177$)

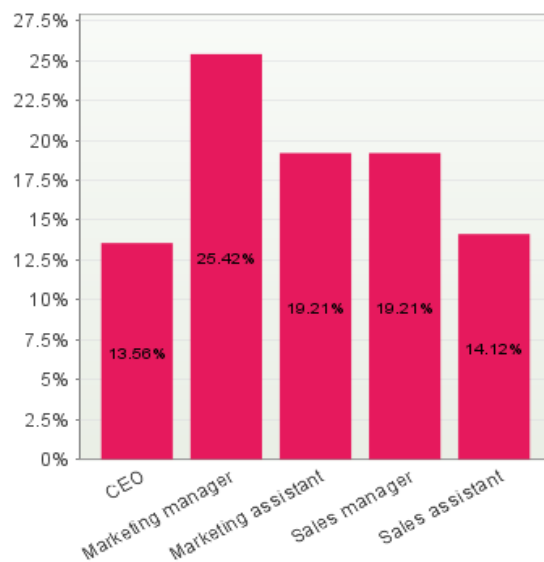


FIGURE 11. Current positions in the company held by the respondents

Q2. What business sector is the company operating in?
(n=177)

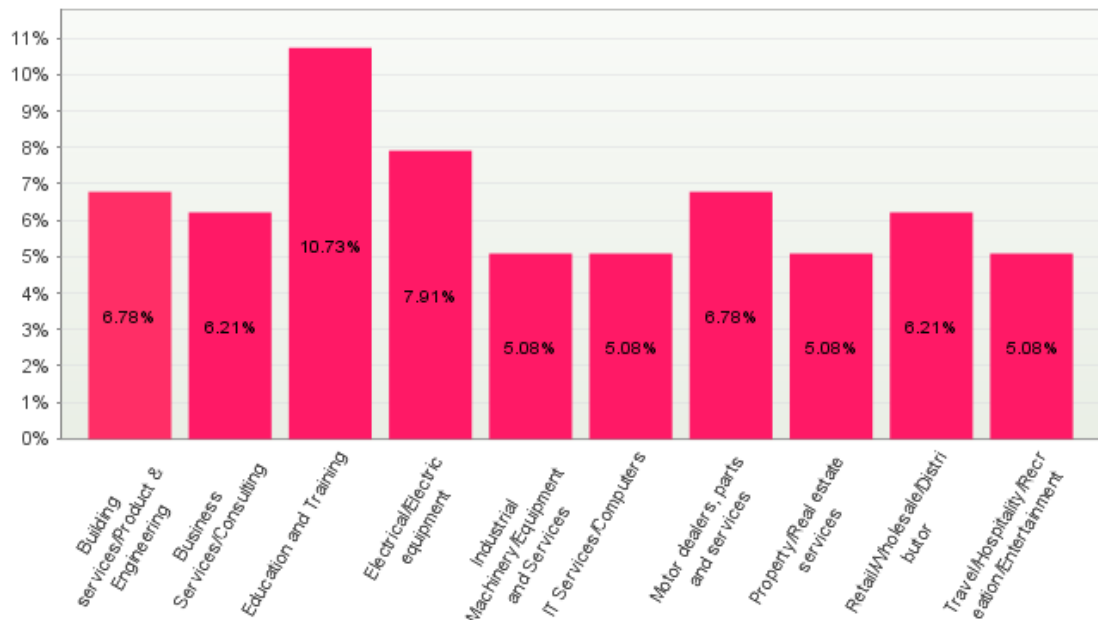


FIGURE 12. Business sectors by participating SMEs

More than 10 % of participating companies operates in education and training field (Figure 12). The rest of the participating SMEs were working in different field of business with the selecting percentage being varied from 5 % to 7 %. As the survey sample was chosen randomly, it can be noted that Irish SMEs are very diverse and operate in many different sectors and activities (SBA Fact Sheet 2012).

3.2.2 Familiarity level of digital marketing concept

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to examine the familiarity level of digital marketing concept of participating companies. It is undeniable that a majority of SMEs relies significantly on traditional marketing channels to promote their business (Wade 2012); indeed, statistics shown in Figure 13 (page 62) reveals that newspaper/magazine and radio advertising remain important to a majority of Irish SMEs as over half of respondents claimed these two methods for their most commonly used traditional marketing tools.

The second mostly used traditional marketing methods went to “outdoor and direct advertising”, “word of mouth”, and “TV commercials”. Approximately 26 % of respondents stated “cold calling” method as their currently applied traditional marketing tool, whereas only 5 % of participating companies opted to faxing for promoting their business.

Q3. Please select traditional marketing methods that the company is currently using.

(n=177)

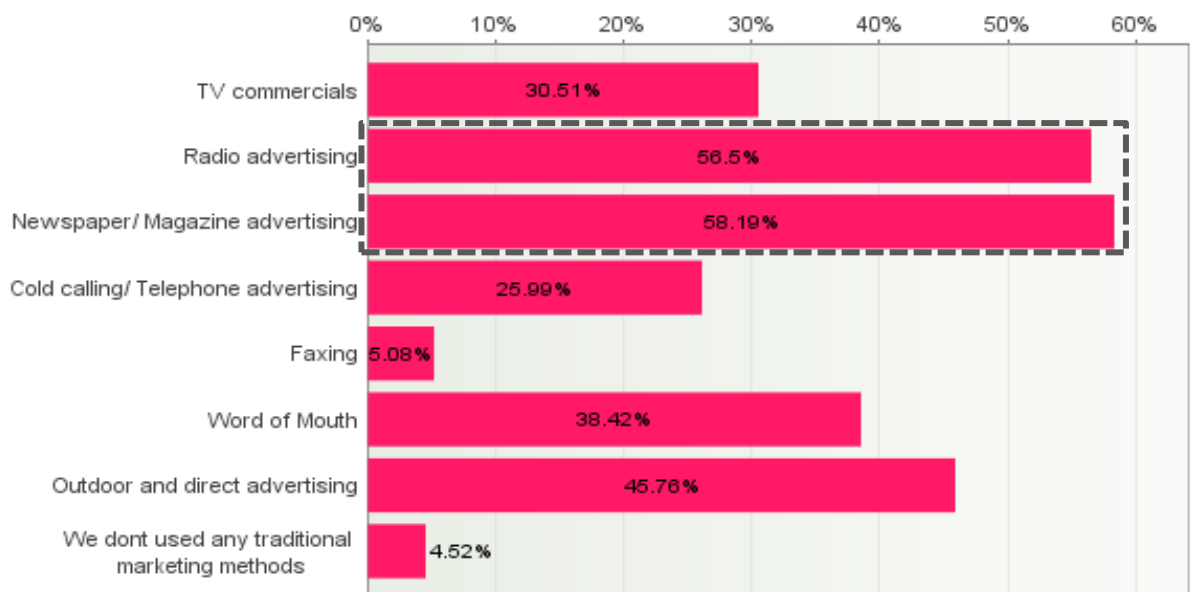


FIGURE 13. Traditional marketing methods currently used by the participating companies

Question number four allowed the respondents to self-evaluate their understanding level of digital marketing concept by giving them four statement options in the descending order, from very well understanding the concept to having no idea about digital marketing.

Statistics revealed in the Figure 14 below indicated that only 12 % of participating SMEs confidently claimed that they understand the concept very well, whereas 40 % of respondents opted for the second option stating that they are more or less used to the concept. Option three which stated that the respondents just heard about it, in other words, their knowledge about digital marketing concept is pretty low, received almost the same percentage as the second option did. Only 7 % of respondents claimed that they do not know about digital marketing at all.

Q4. Is the company familiar with the digital marketing concept?
($n=177$)

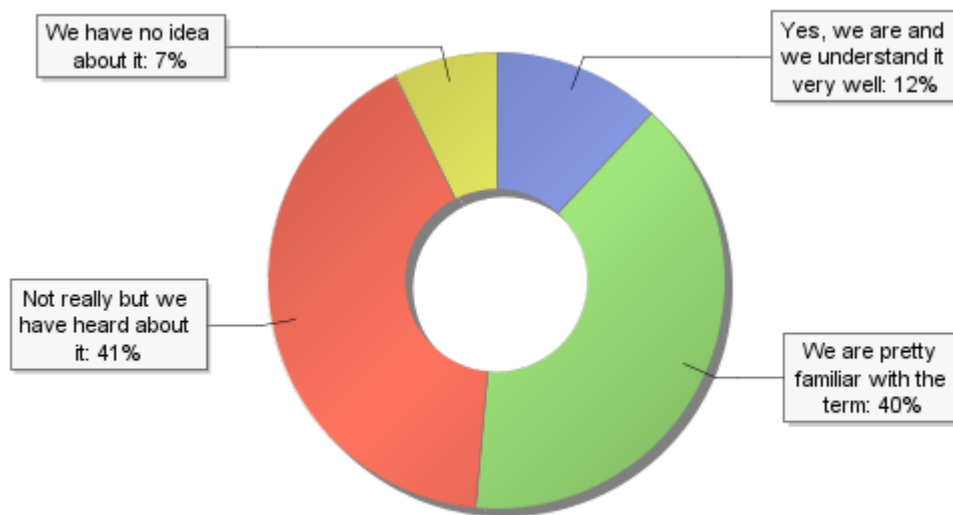


FIGURE 14. The familiarity level with digital marketing concept in the participating companies

Also in the question number four, those who selected the first three options (i.e. “We are pretty familiar with the term”, “Yes, we are and we understand it very well”, “Not really but we have heard about it”) were directed to question five relating to the important level of common reasons for using digital marketing. Those who opted for the last option (i.e. “We have no idea about it”) were advised to skip to the eighth question regarding obstacles against being familiar with digital marketing. Therefore, the number of respondents of the question number five was 165.

Over half of the respondents select scale four out of five (i.e. very important) for the first five common reasons for using digital marketing, which were “cost-saving”, “Able to reach more prospects regardless of geographical distance”, “customer engagement”, “easy to measure return on investment” and “collect insights into customer’s preference and opinions about a product or a service” (Figure 15).

Q5. Below are common reasons for using digital marketing, please rate them in terms of importance from your own point of view according to scale 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely important)
($n=165$)

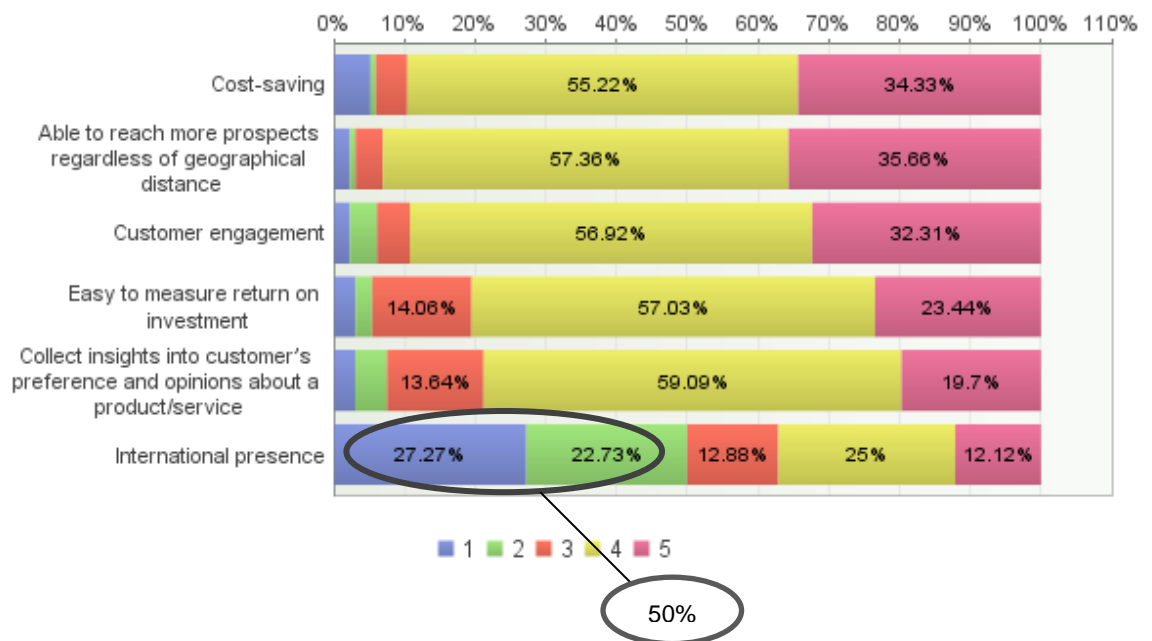


FIGURE 15. Rating common reasons for using digital marketing according to the important scale

Referring to the reason “International presence”, altogether 50 % of respondents rated it as level 1 and 2 (i.e. being unimportant and not important, respectively) whereas only approximately 25 % stated that international presence is a very important reason to use digital marketing. This fact happens in this research probably because a large proportion of survey’s respondents were Irish SMEs whose business nature is to serve customers mainly in the domestic market, and they may not intend to move abroad in the near future.

After identifying the importance level of common reasons for applying digital marketing, the respondents were asked whether or not they process a well-defined marketing strategy in their business operation at present (Figure 16). 55 % of respondents stated that they do have the strategy but it is still in the process of development, whereas those claiming that they do have a digital marketing strategy at the moment, but probably maybe in the future, made up almost 35 % of the total selection. Only 11 % of respondents think that they have a defined digital marketing strategy at present.

Q6. Does the company have a defined digital marketing strategy at present?

(*n*=165)

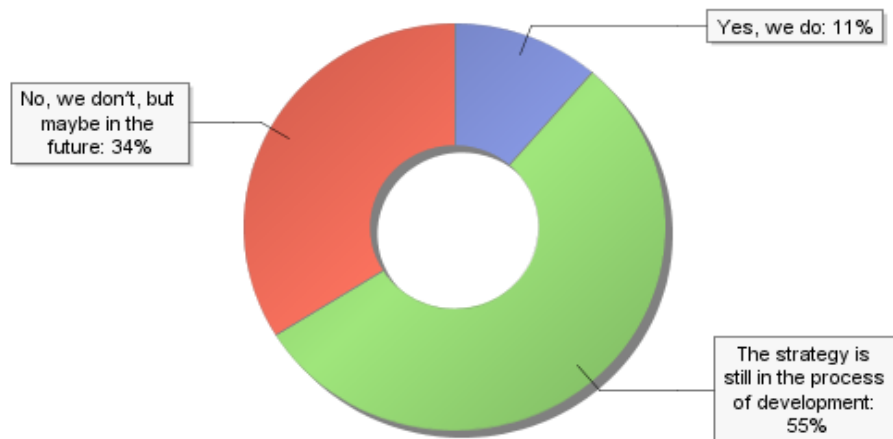


FIGURE 16. The existence of a defined digital marketing strategy in the company at present

Statistics shown in Figure 17 (page 66) examines the effectiveness on sales of popular digital marketing activities. With over 75 % of respondents, “Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)” accounted for the largest proportion of high effectiveness on sales, followed by “social media” with the rate on sales effectiveness being 55.4 %. What’s more, “Online advertising” and “Email marketing”, each of which made up more than 50 % of total selection in terms of moderate effectiveness on sales.

Results on question number seven also reveal that a little over half of participating Irish SMEs thought that the “Pay-Per-Click advertising” method shows no or moderate effectiveness on sales. Regarding “Viral/Content marketing” and “mobile marketing”, approximately 45 - 50 % of respondents perceived that they were unfamiliar with the terms. In other words, these two digital marketing channels seem to be quite new to most of Irish SMEs.

Q7. Please rate the effectiveness on sales of the following digital marketing activities.
(*n*=165)

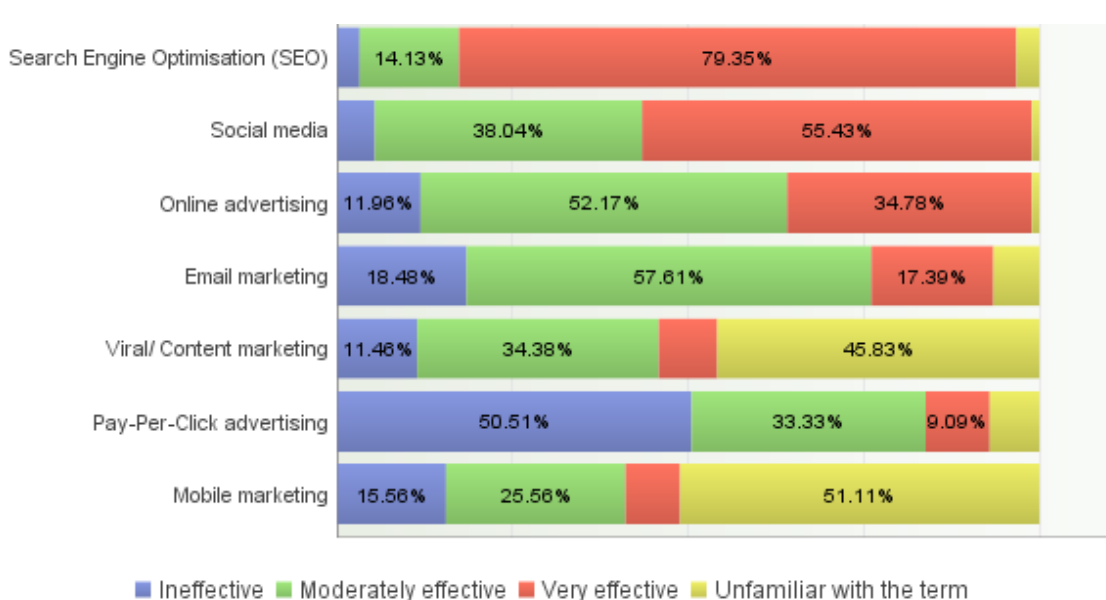


FIGURE 17. The effectiveness on sales of typical digital marketing activities

Question number eight aimed to clarify what hinder Irish SMEs from being used to digital marketing. As shown in Figure 18, over 60 % of respondents blamed for the lack of time, knowledge and needed technical understanding to learn about digital marketing; whereas “Limited opportunities to attend digital marketing related workshops/courses” and “High perceived risks about online activities” came to the second most popular answers rated by respondents, with the percentage being approximately 36 % and 32.8 %, respectively.

Q8. Please specify the reasons that hinder your organisation from being familiar with the digital marketing concept.

(*n* = 177)

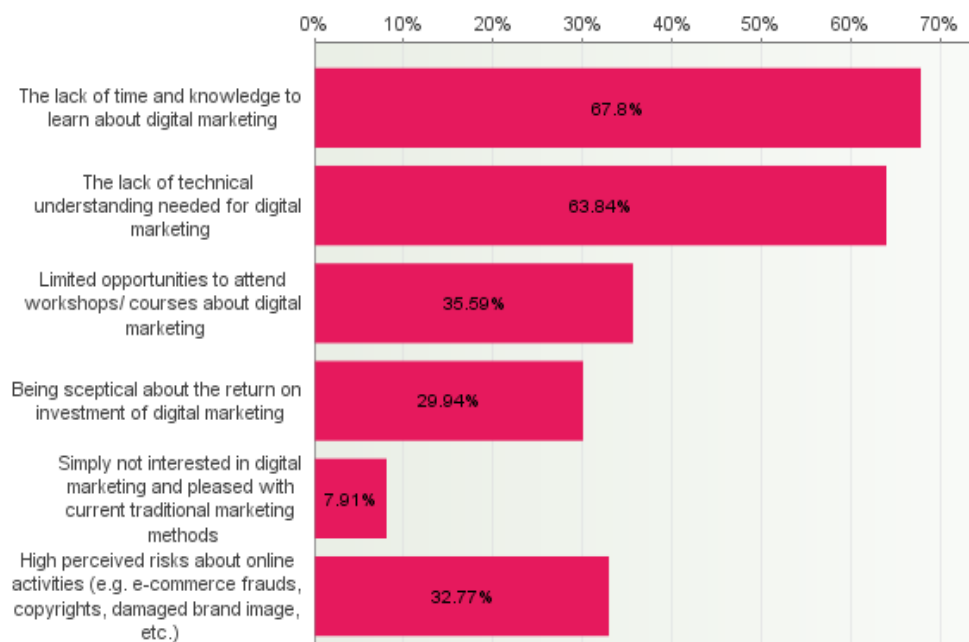


FIGURE 18. Reasons that hinder organisations from being familiar with the digital marketing concept

More than a quarter of participating Irish SMEs were doubtful about the return on investment of online activities, which actually pull them off from investing in digital marketing. Only 7.9 % of respondents claimed that they were not interested in digital marketing and were pleased with traditional marketing channels currently used to promote their business.

3.2.3 Social media marketing

The second part of the questionnaire aimed to collect insights into current practice of social media marketing application in Irish SMEs. There were a total of five questions in this part, each of which will be examined in details as below.

It is known for a fact that Facebook has over a billion users, and recently, Dan Levy, Facebook's director of small business, the number of total business pages has gone up to more than two million in the past three months to achieve a new milestone, which is over 15 million (Darwell 2012).

Ireland is not an exception from this tendency. Figure 19 below shows that Facebook, which accounted for over 65 % of the total selection, became the most popular social network used by businesses. LinkedIn, with over 50 % of the selection came to the second mostly used by SMEs, followed by Twitter with the percentage of choice being 41.8 %. With less than 20 % of selection, it is noticed that business users for YouTube, Google +, and Pinterest were not as many as those for the other top three social networks.

Q9. What social networks does the company use the most at present?
(Please select 3 options only)
 (n = 177)

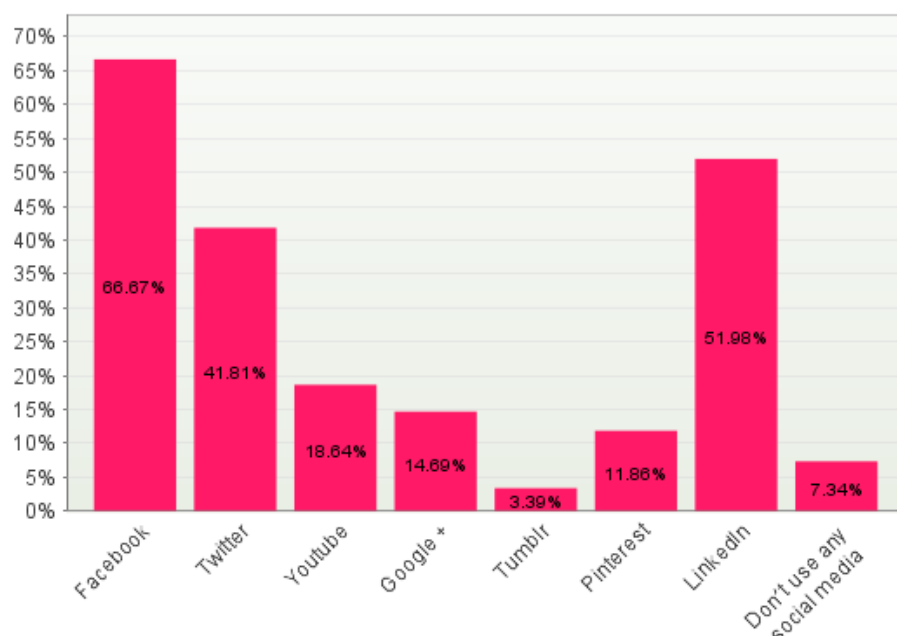


FIGURE 19. Social networks being currently used by companies

Question number 10 summarised key reasons for using social media for business purposes. The results shown in Figure 20 were randomly in descending order. Over 50 % of respondents used social media to build brand awareness and to promote new products/services. The reason “Collecting comments from customers” came to the third most common reason with over 40 % of the total selection.

There was about 33 % of respondents opted to “building customer relationships” as the reason for using social media, whereas a bit over 20 % used social media to keep their customers updated with latest news and activities.

Q10. What do you use social media for? (Please select 3 options only)
(*n* = 176)

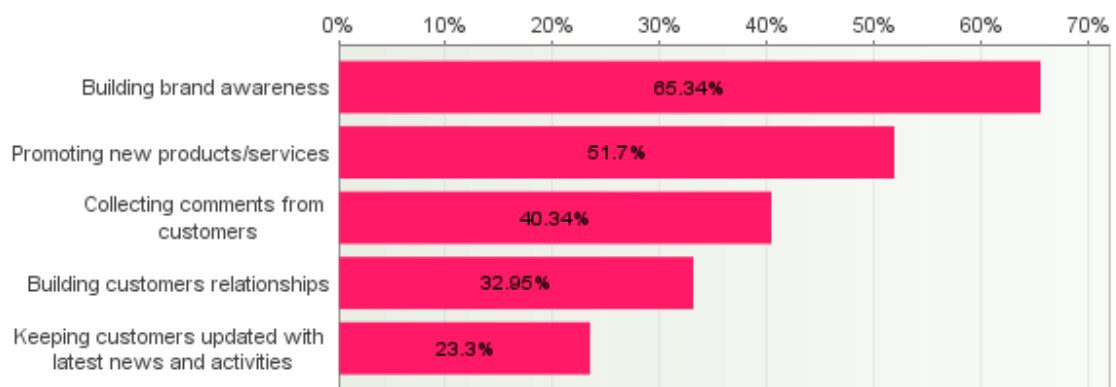


FIGURE 20. Respondent's points of view about reasons to use social media

Question number eleven provided a general picture about the experience level of using social media in a business context by Irish SMEs. As can be seen in Figure 21, almost half of the respondents claimed that they have been using social media for business purposes from 6 months to less than a year, whereas 25.6 % of respondent got familiar with the social media for less than 2 years.

Only a small proportion of respondents (5.1 %) had been experiencing social media in business concept for more than 3 years, which gives the researcher an idea that Irish SMEs are still on the process of developing their knowledge and experiences about digital marketing activities.

Q11. How long have you been using social media in a business context?
(*n* = 176)

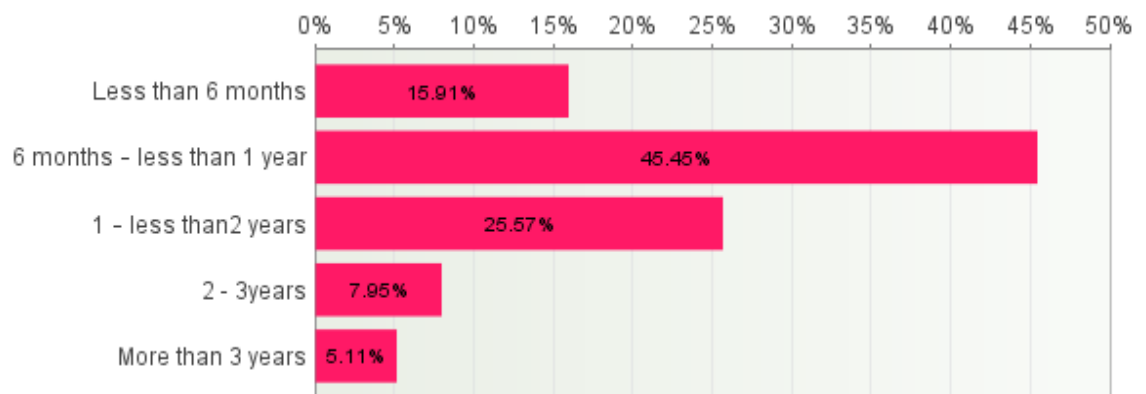


FIGURE 21. The length of time using social media in a business context

Using Facebook Ads campaigns to promote the business has become more common these days, especially in SMEs, as they help the businesses to reach their local audience, every day and everywhere, driving more new prospects to the business (Facebook 2014).

This practice, however, seems to be new to a majority of Irish SMEs. In fact, around 70.5 % of the survey respondents claimed that they have never been using Facebook Ads campaigns before, whereas only 53 out of 177 respondents have been using the campaigns several times (Figure 22).

Q12. Have you ever used paid advertising campaign on Facebook?
(*n* = 176)

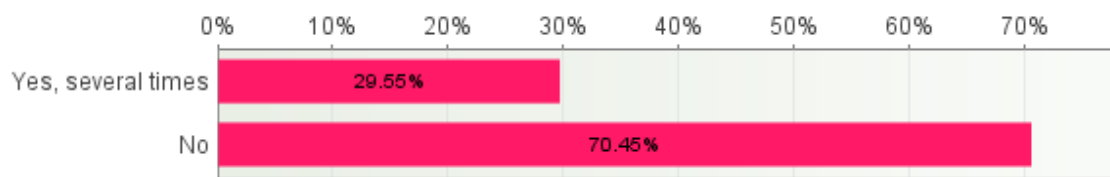


FIGURE 22. Respondent's ideas about paid advertising campaign on Facebook

Those who select the first option in question number twelve were directed to question number thirteen, which allowed the respondents to self-evaluate the Facebook Ads campaigns. As shown in Figure 23 (page 72), a majority of respondents (i.e. over 70 %) agreed that Facebook Ads campaigns allow users to track the traffic and thus to measure the campaign's results conveniently. The fact that Facebook Ads campaigns cover a broad geography was also agreed by a large proportion of respondents.

Q13. Please evaluate the following statements about Facebook ad campaigns.
(n = 53)

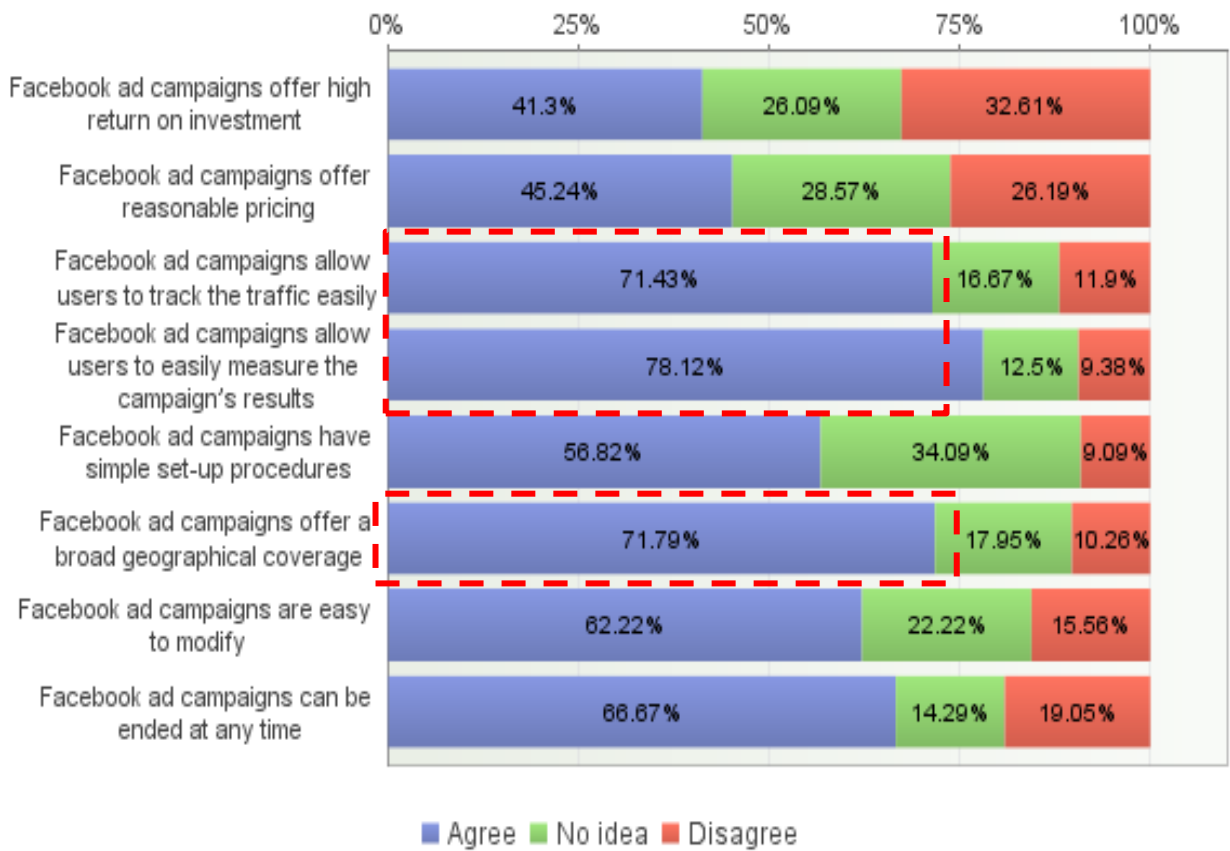


FIGURE 23. Respondents' evaluations on Facebook Ads campaigns

Over 60 % of participating Irish SMEs agreed that Facebook Ads campaigns are easy to modify and can be ended at any time. Less than 50 % of respondents agreed that Facebook Ads campaigns offer high return on investment and reasonable price ranges.

3.2.4 Marketing expenditures on digital activities

The third section of the survey questionnaire focussed on marketing expenditures spent on digital activities by Irish SMEs. The first question in this part was made to find out how much the respondents spend their marketing budget on digital marketing in 2013. As show in Figure 24, approximately 23.4 % of respondents stated that they spent less than 30 % of marketing budget on digital activities.

Respondents who spent from 31 % to 50 % of marketing budget on digital activities made up 31 % of the total selection, sharing about the same amount of those who claimed to spend over 50 % of marketing budget on digital activities.

Q14. What percentage of the marketing budget of your enterprise was spent only on digital marketing in 2013?

(*n* = 164)

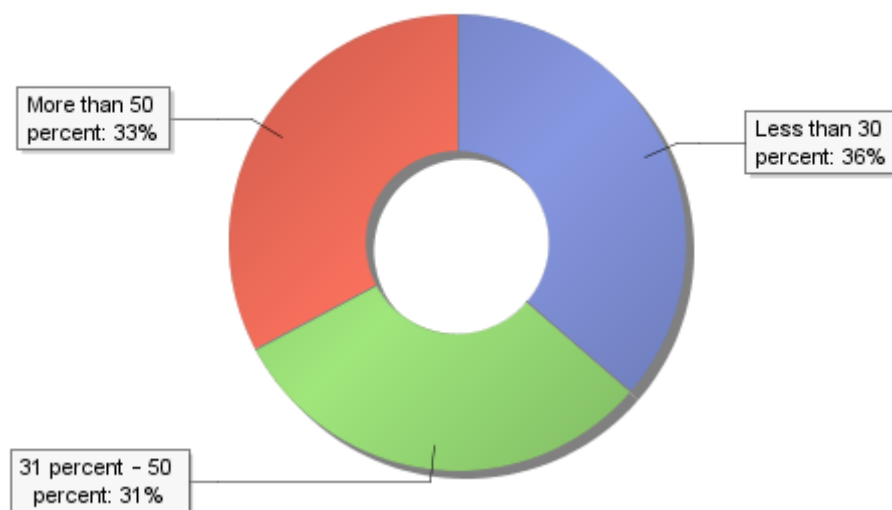


FIGURE 24. The percentage of marketing budget spent on digital marketing activities in 2013

Question number fifteen offered a closer look into estimated marketing expenditures specifically spending on digital marketing activities currently used in the company's operation. It can be obviously seen from Figure 25, a majority of respondents claimed that they spent less than 30 % of their marketing costs on several digital marketing channels namely online advertising, email marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, and pay-per-click advertising.

Web design and SEO together with social media, on the other hand, received approximately half of the respondents who spent between 31 % to less than 50 % of their marketing budget on these two types of digital activities. Less than 25 % of respondents spent more than 50 % of their marketing expenditures on all of digital activities listed in the question number fifteen.

Q15. Please estimate marketing expenditures spent on digital activities which are currently being used.

(*n* = 164)

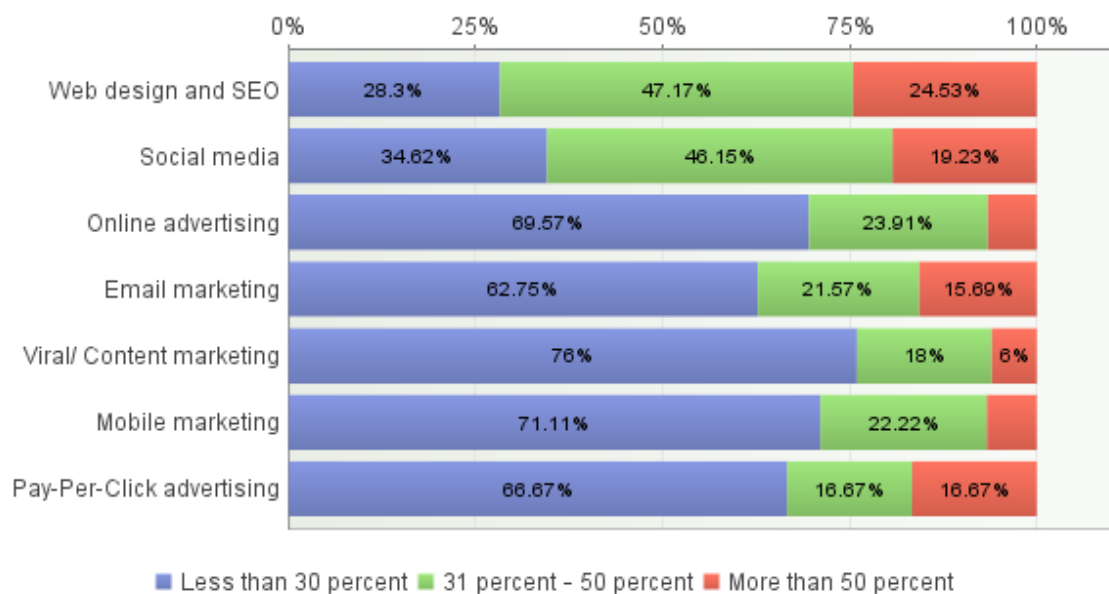


FIGURE 25. Estimated marketing expenditures spent on currently used digital marketing activities

Question number sixteen revealed possible changes in marketing expenditures on digital activities in 2014. 36 % of respondents would maintain the current spending and 38 % plan on increasing the budget on their digital marketing channels,

whereas a bit over a quarter of respondents claimed that they will reduce the current marketing spending on digital activities in 2014 (Figure 26).

Q16. What changes will the company make to its current digital marketing expenditures in 2014?
(*n* = 165)

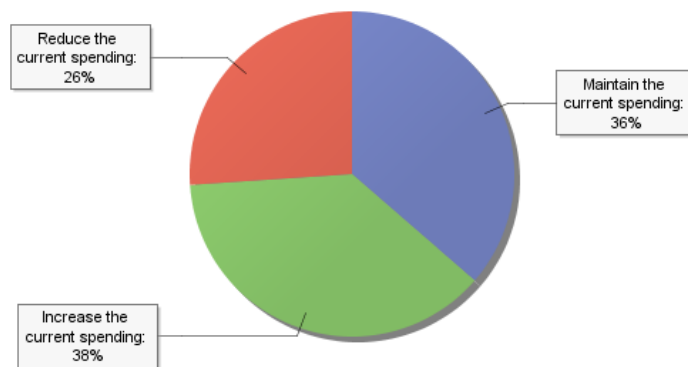


FIGURE 26. Possible changes in digital marketing expenditures in 2014

The last question in the section three of the survey explored which digital marketing activities will be focused and invested further by Irish SMEs in 2014. Statistics shown in Figure 27 indicated that over 20 % of respondents will pay more attention to Web design and SEO, as well as mobile marketing and content marketing. The rest of the selection was shared by social media, online advertising and email marketing. Only 10.9 % of respondents agreed to focus further in pay-per-click advertising.

Q17. On which digital activities will the company focus and invest further in 2014 (Please select 3 options only)?

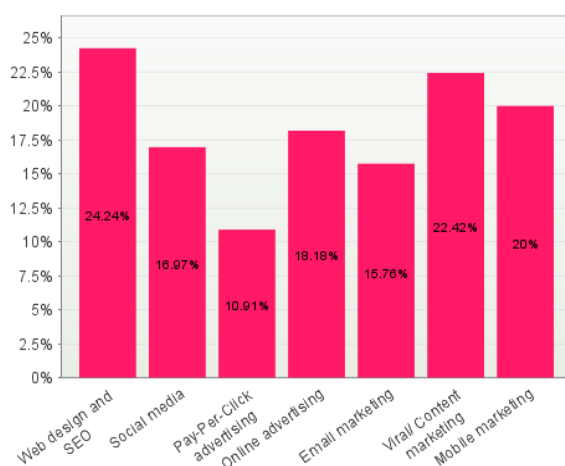


FIGURE 27. Digital marketing activities which will be focussed and invested further in 2014

3.2.5 Workshops and training

In the last section of the survey questionnaire, information related to workshops and training programmes regarding digital marketing concept was collected. Question number eighteen concerned about the frequency of attending workshops and training courses among Irish SMEs. Figure 28 below revealed that a majority of respondents joined the workshops/courses whenever they got informed from marketing consultancies about the upcoming training programmes. Those who took part in the workshops/courses every 3 months made up 30.5 % of the total selection. Only 9.6 % of respondents claimed that they went to the informed training programmes once a month.

Q18. How often do you attend workshops and training programmes about digital marketing organised by Irish marketing consultancies?
(*n* = 177)

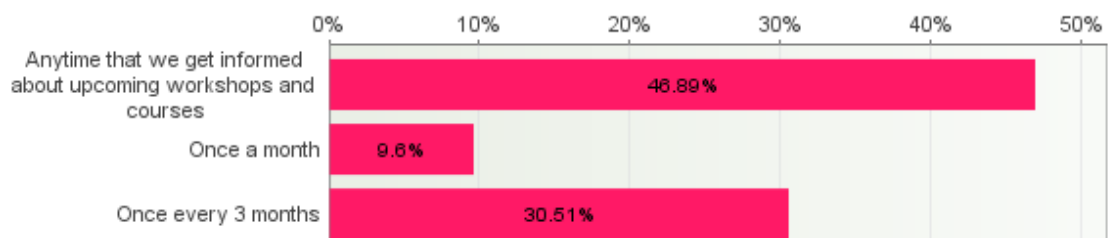


FIGURE 28. Frequency of attending workshops/courses related to digital marketing held by Irish marketing consultancies

When being asked about which forms of workshops and training programmes were preferred by the respondents, “Personal training programme with a small audience group” was the most preferable training format with the percentage of selection being roughly 50.3 % (Figure 29). Slightly over a quarter of respondents claimed that they prefer to attend workshops/courses which were held in formal meeting with high interaction between audience and the presenter, whereas only 14.1 % of respondents opted to online meeting format for training programmes.

Q19. Which forms of workshops or training programmes do you prefer to attend?

(*n* = 177)

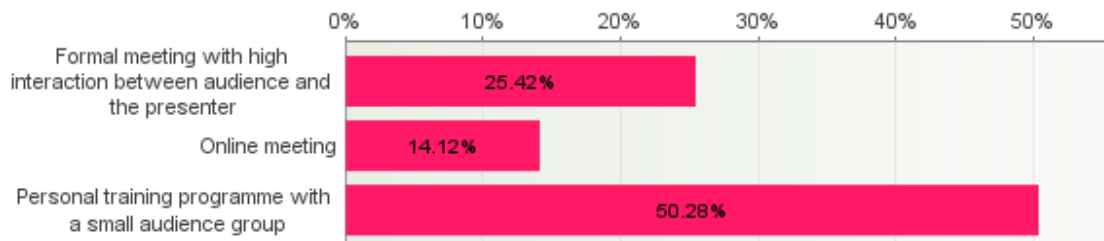
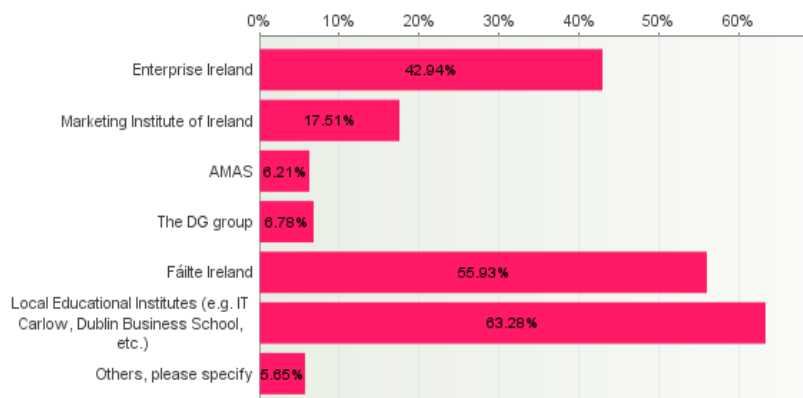


FIGURE 29. Workshops/courses formats preferred by respondents

Question number twenty regarded Irish marketing consultancies that provide digital marketing related workshops and training courses to Irish SMEs. As shown in Figure 30, a large proportion of the respondents (around 63.3 %) received training programmes from local educational institutes, for instance, Carlow Institute of Technology, Dublin Business School, Waterford Institute of Technology, just to name a few.

Q20. From which marketing consultancies does the company usually receive their workshops and training programmes?

(*n* = 177)



Open text answers: Others, please specify

Area partnership
Local Enterprise Board

FIGURE 30. Irish marketing consultancies that the respondents usually attend their workshops and training programmes

Failte Ireland came to the second most popular choice of respondents. It is the National Tourism Development Authority supporting the Irish tourism industry. The organisation provides a range of practical business supports to help tourism businesses better manage and market their products and services.

Apart from Failte Ireland, Enterprise Ireland also received high percentage of selection (approximately 43 %) as the business consultancy that the respondents usually attend their workshops and training programmes regarding digital marketing issues. It is one of the government organisations responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in both domestics and international markets.

3.3 Digital marketing practice at English Language Ireland on the basis of its survey responses

English Language Ireland (ELI) was one of 177 respondents to the survey questionnaire. The case company's survey response is attached in Appendix 2 of the thesis report.

Regarding the traditional marketing methods that ELI is currently applying to promote its business were "Newspaper/magazine advertising", "Word of Mouth", and "Outdoor and direct advertising". At the same time, the company is also pretty familiar with the digital marketing concept and is on the process of developing a defined digital marketing strategy. (Appendix 2, question 4).



IMAGE 19. ELI's poster in front of the administration office (English Language Ireland 2013)

For reasons of using digital marketing activities, ELI considers the following reasons “Cost saving”, “Able to reach more prospects regardless of geographical distance”, “Customer engagement”, and “International presence” to be extremely important to the company. This is understandable as ELI’s business nature is an English language school which target customers are mostly international non-English speakers. Thus it is critical for the company to have its reputation spread across the world in order to attract more potential prospects. (Appendix 2, question 5).

Apart from upgrading the company’s official website recently, ELI is managing to engage other digital marketing channels into its marketing strategy, such as social media (mainly Facebook and LinkedIn), online advertising, and content marketing (mainly YouTube). The company’s Facebook page has gained over a thousand “likes” and achieved busier online traffic for the past six months. ELI’s profile is also available on LinkedIn, YouTube and some online advertising websites regarding education and training field.

When it comes to evaluating the effectiveness on sales of digital marketing activities that ELI is currently using, social media, online advertising and content marketing were rated to have great effects on the company sales, whereas email marketing only have a moderate effectiveness on sales. The representatives of ELI also mentioned that the company has not understood thoroughly the following digital marketing tools “Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)”, “Pay-Per-Click Advertising” and “Mobile marketing”. (Appendix 2, question 7).

Broic, Pionn is said to have stopped here to consolidate his followers on his way north to do battle and had a vision of angels while in St. Mullins, who foretold the setting up of the monastery four hundred years later. The site has also been associated with St. Brendan the Navigator.

ATTRACTIONS: Heritage centre – see page 12 for details.

ACTIVITIES: Barrow Way walking route – see page 19 for details. Carrigleade Golf Club – see page 29 for details.

dragoon run that joins the river barrow.

ACTIVITIES: Canoeing, scenic riverside walk from Tinnahinch to St. Mullins – 6km – see page 19 for details.

TINRYLAND: A quiet picturesque village located 5.5km from Carlow Town, off the N80 Carlow–Rosslare Road. St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, built in 1819, contains the striking stained glass window to the memory of Captain Myles Keogh who was born in Leighlinbridge in 1840 and was killed at the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. St. Joseph’s claims to be the

english language schools

Carlow International English Language School (C.I.E.L.S.), Sycamore Road, Rathnapish, Carlow
T/F: 059-9142066
Dave Barron (B.A., M.Ed., Dip.Ed. Management): 087-2204488
Catherine Barron (Accomm. Officer/HLO): 086-8621266
Danny Barron (B.B.S., Cambridge DELTA M1 & M3): 086-4060804 E: info@ciels.ie W: www.ciels.ie

C.I.E.L.S. enjoys the unique status of being the only English Language School in Carlow that was founded and run by a fully qualified mainstream secondary school teacher, Dave Barron, with English being one of his teaching subjects. C.I.E.L.S. is an exclusive, family run School of English Language and Irish Culture, the longest-running in Carlow, (16 years). It is recognised by the Department of Education and Skills via Q.Q.I. / A.C.E.L.S. (Quality & Qualifications Ireland / Accreditation and Co-ordination of English Language Schools). C.I.E.L.S. is a member and supporter of Carlow Tourism. It continues to promote language tourism for the benefit of its students and the Carlow community. In conjunction with Carlow Tourism and Carlow Institute of Further Education, C.I.E.L.S. works in the areas of Summer Vacation English and Irish Culture, Vocational Training with English, School Integration Programmes and Work Placements. Testimony to the quality of its programmes is the amount of repeat business it enjoys from long standing business partners.



Streetscape in Tullow

English Language Ireland,
The Schoolhouse,
O’ Brien Road,
Carlow
T: 059-9140227
F: 059-9104539
Ruth Coffey Managing Director
E: info@englishlanguage.ie
W: www.englishlanguage.ie

Welcome to English Language Ireland where we speak, write, sing and teach the best English in the world! English Language Ireland (E.L.I.) has been delivering English language programmes in Carlow, since 2000. E.L.I. offers a full range of courses including the now very popular career creating Certificate in English Language Training, Academic, Business, Junior, High School and Family Courses. The emphasis throughout E.L.I.’s courses is on quality learning in a personal, relaxed and friendly atmosphere. English Language Ireland is recognised by A.C.E.L.S., a service of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, for English language teaching (E.L.T.).

“This is a well organised and efficiently run school with a serious commitment to quality” A.C.E.L.S. Inspection Report.

42

visit us online at www.carlowtourism.com

IMAGE 20. ELI Ads on Carlow Tourism brochure 2013 (Carlow Tourism 2013, 42)

Referring to reasons that prevent the company from mastering digital marketing concept, it is the high perceived cost, the lack of time, knowledge and needed technical understanding that ELI finds it challenging to have a full access to the digital marketing concept. (Appendix 2, question 8).

As mentioned earlier, Facebook is one of social network that ELI is currently using the most. The company has just been investing seriously in Facebook business page for less than 2 years in order to build brand awareness, to advertise upcoming English courses/training programmes, and to keep its customers updated with the company's latest news and activities.



IMAGE 21. ELI Facebook page (Facebook Admin page 2014)

ELI has also experienced with Facebook Ads campaigns to attract more visitors to its Facebook page and to promote several English courses. The company is satisfied with what the Facebook Ads campaigns offers, such as high return on investment, reasonable pricing, user-friendly set-up procedures, broad geographical coverage and the possibility of ending the campaign at any time (Appendix 2, question 13).

Last year, ELI spent 31 % - 50 % of its marketing budget on digital activities mainly for social media, which pays for the costs of Facebook Ads campaigns, less than 30 % of the company's marketing expenditures were spent on other digital activities. In 2014, the company agrees to increase its current digital marketing spending, especially on Web design and social media. (Appendix 2, questions 15, 17).

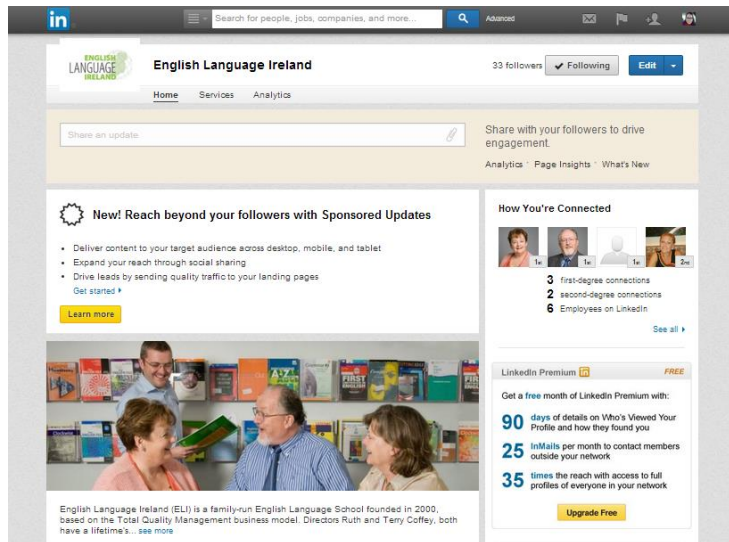


IMAGE 22. ELI's profile on LinkedIn (linkedin.com 2014)

ELI attends workshops and training programmes about digital marketing at whenever the company gets informed by provided marketing consultancies, who are mainly Failte Ireland and local educational institutes (i.e. Carlow Institute of Technology). The company prefers to take part in workshops/courses which are organised under formal meetings with high interaction between audience and the speaker. (Appendix 2, questions 18, 19, 20).

4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN IRISH SMEs AND IN THE CASE COMPANY

4.1 Conclusions on the survey results

Giving the analysed survey results and the theoretical framework as a foundation, several comments about the practice of applying digital marketing into business operation of Irish SMEs are made as below:

- It is significantly noticed that traditional marketing channels remain important for Irish SMEs in promoting their business nowadays. To some extent, traditional marketing methods such as newspaper and outdoor advertising, allow enterprises to easily measure their returns on investment. For example, a well-written advert placed on daily newspapers, on radio or on TV can instantly attracts new potential customers.
- Though traditional marketing still plays a vital role in Irish SMEs' business operations, their awareness about the digital marketing concept has been significantly increased. They understand quite well benefits that digital marketing can offer to their business in a long run (e.g. cost-saving, customer engagement or international presence, etc.) and engage different forms of digital marketing into their current marketing strategy. According to the survey, over two third of Irish SMEs has online presence with common digital marketing forms like Search Engine Optimisation, social media (with Facebook being the dominant social network for business used by over half of the survey's respondents), online marketing, email marketing and pay-per-click advertising.
- However, the number of Irish SMEs which fully access to the digital marketing concept is still critically low. The survey result shows that there were approximately 12 out of 177 respondents claiming that they understand the concept very well and have a defined digital marketing concept in their business operation at present. It is the lack of time and knowledge as well as

technical understanding regarding the digital marketing that hinders Irish SMEs from learning about the concept in more depth. A majority of Irish SMEs in the survey are unfamiliar with content marketing and mobile marketing, not mention to only a small amount of Irish SMEs has been using Facebook Ads to promote a marketing campaign.

The research result also reveals that less than 30 % of marketing budget was spent on most of common forms of digital marketing except for web design and SEO and social media last year, implying that Irish SMEs did not invest enough into different aspects of the digital marketing concept. This is, again, resulting from the shortage of technical understanding about the concept and thus, leading to high perceived risks and costs associated with digital marketing channels.

- With the percentage of selection of more than 20 %, web design and SEO, content marketing and mobile marketing are the three digital activities that will be paid more attention in 2014, which positively indicates that Irish SMEs aim to gain further experiences on other aspects of digital marketing field. This will enrich their know-hows as well as confidence in completing their digital marketing strategy.
- Last but not least, referring to the workshops and training programmes, with mostly half of the respondents including the case company, having attended a digital- marketing training course at whenever they are informed, it can be seen that Irish enterprises are seriously eager to develop and sharpen their knowledge about digital marketing concept.

Referring to the case company, the survey's results have revealed that ELI has been putting great efforts in exposing itself to online presence. Indeed, the company's upgraded website appeals to more interactive with online visitors in the way that they can trace and download needed documents without any technical hassle. Its Facebook page has gained busier online traffic for the last six months, and the company's business profile can be found on a couple of online advertising sites, Youtube and LinkedIn.

Like a majority of Irish SMEs, however, there are some areas of digital marketing that ELI has not been experiencing because of the lack of related knowledge and high perceived related costs.

4.2 Suggestions on the application of digital marketing in Irish SMEs

The empirical part of the thesis report has not just shown some great achievements of Irish SMEs and the case company in engaging digital marketing into their business operation, it has also revealed their downsides which need to be significantly re-considered, especially the fact that they have not stretched themselves other effective forms of digital marketing, which is mobile and content marketing.

Therefore, suggestions below are initiated with a purpose to assist Irish SMEs in general and ELI in particular to understand why they should look into further on those two digital marketing channels in order to perfect the process of engaging digital marketing into their existing marketing strategy.

4.2.1 Going mobile to gain more online prospects

Possessing well-designed business websites or high-profile social network pages are just not good enough to achieve a full access to what digital marketing can offer to the business's wellbeing. The increase of broadband Internet, Wi-Fi and phone Internet access results in a vast number of consumers spending more time online. What's more, a majority of all media interactions today are on a screen, from smartphones and tablets to laptops and TV, and businesses that allow users to interact with their brand on all platforms and on all devices are like able to generate more engagement (site.google.com 2014)

Therefore, it is highly recommended to Irish SMEs to look into it further in the future by having their own mobile websites created, QR codes and mobile applications regarding most common products/services that the companies offer to

target customers. In this way, it will increase the possibility to attract new customers and create new or repeating sales.

Specific suggestions for the case company

For English Language Ireland, its mobile website application may include the following points:

- A mobile version of the English language test which is used to evaluate the current English proficiency level of a new student.
- A shortcut with information of on-going English language or teacher training courses, which allow online users to collect details about their interest language course, such as the course content, minimum requirements to enrol the course, contact details, course fees, course duration, etc.
- A shortcut with information for those who wish to do work with English Language Ireland as a host-family, hosting foreign students who is going to stay a few weeks or months in Ireland to improve their English.
- A shortcut that leads the visitors to the company's Facebook page, LinkedIn and Youtube profiles.
- Contact details and road directions to the company head office.

Image 23 illustrates somehow how the mobile website of English Language Ireland should look like.



IMAGE 23. Illustrations of English Language Ireland's mobile website (qrmobilize.com 2014)



ONE TO ONE PROGRAMMES

WHAT IS THE O-T-O PROGRAMME?

Students come all year round for this more personal and intensive exposure to English language. The minimum length of a course is one week. All students have the option of an airport transfer to their host tutor for which they pay a fee €150 per transfer. Junior students (≤ 18 yrs old) must avail of private transfer. Adult students may choose to travel on their own. In that case, students must contact the host tutor in advance to let him/her know the approximate time of arrival in Carlow. The tutor will arrange to collect the student at the Bus Park or Train Station, whichever is appropriate.

There are 2 main types of OTO programmes provided by English Language Ireland (ELI):

- ⇒ OTO course based at The Schoolhouse (no host facilities needed)
- ⇒ OTO tuition based at the Tutor's Home – the perfect combination of quality one to one English tuition with the cultural experience of living with an Irish family and sharing their home.

We offer OTO Programmes for Junior and Adult students.

Please contact us for further details.

BENEFITS OF OTO PROGRAMME

There are so many advantages which will help you gain more effective results from the OTO programme:

- ⇒ Have extended authentic teacher-student interaction.
- ⇒ The students are immersed in the target language and culture throughout their stay in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere and receive an individualised, tailor-made programme to suit their specific needs.
- ⇒ The students integrate with the family, friends and the local community in a way not catered for in school-based classes and they provide the teacher with the much striven-for opportunity to totally provide for individual needs, free from the constraints of group needs.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE IRELAND

Órála Náisiúnta
Coláiste na hÉireann
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland

ANES
National Qualifications
Authority of Ireland

corrow

Skillnets
Enterprise-led
learning networks

Carlow
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

MCI
RELSA

IMAGE 24. An illustration of a QR code attached to one of ELI's brochure. (ELI's internal source 2012)

Alternatively, English Language Ireland can generate and attach QR codes used as shortcuts leading to either the company's mobile website or other mobile application relating to language courses and services offered by the company. Image 24 shows a sample of a QR code which can be attached to one of ELI's brochure, allowing viewers to see mobile version of the brochure on their mobile devices.

4.2.2 Having promotional videos as part of promotional materials

In today's fast paced world, people want quick and easy way to find their wanted information, so it is much more common for someone to click on a video link than it is for them to read through a text. Being considered to be content marketing at its most pure, unlike other types of marketing promotion, a promotional video tells a story which can help customers identify with the company and make them feel positive and countable about what the company offers them. (Riegel 2010)

A promotional video can be used as an incredibly valuable marketing tool when it comes to present the business to new clients in numerous situations, ranging from online environment (e.g. Streaming the promotional video on the company's website, on YouTube, or on online advertising sites, and so on.) to business conferences and exhibitions, trade fairs, business presentations and seminars, just to name a few. (Riegel 2010)

As the content marketing will be looked into further in 2014 by a majority of participating Irish SMEs, an investment in a well-projected promotional video is highly advised for its huge promotional effects as below:

- Effectively presents a professional image of the company, which will significantly boost brand recognition, confidence and trust in the business.
- Grab people's attention at ease
- Clearly explains the company identity, what it can offer to its customers, and highlights competitive strengths of the company.

Specific suggestions for the case company

As for English Language Ireland, the company currently displays a video titled "Education in Ireland" on its official website, which obviously does not mention the company's business at any points. It is better that the company has that promotional video replaced by its own one in order to provide its potential customers with a clear picture about what English Language Ireland stands for and why it will be their wise decision to choose the company as a place to master their English proficiency (Image 25).

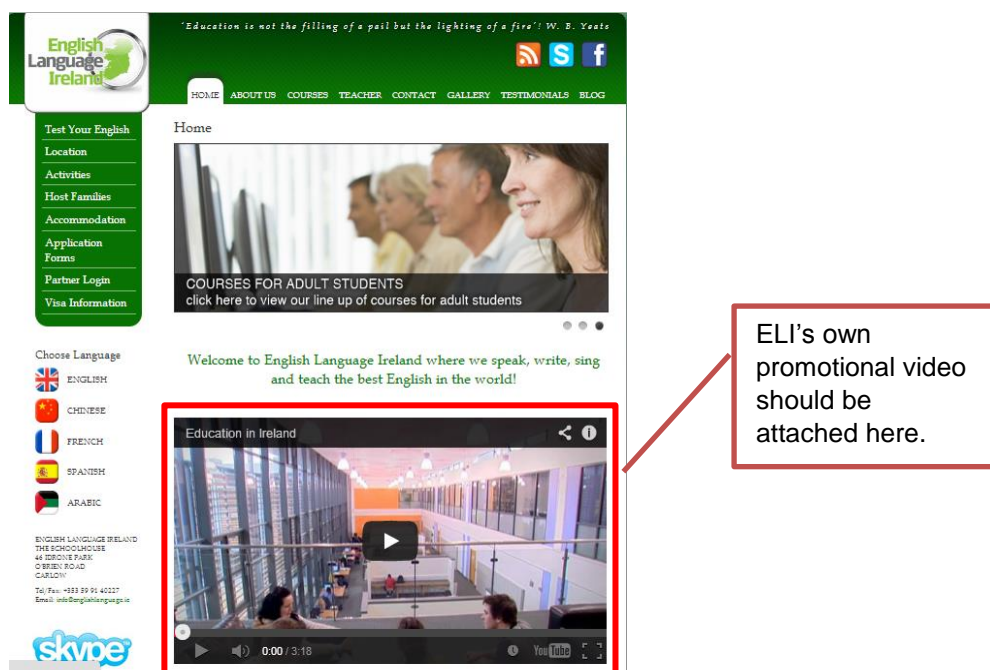
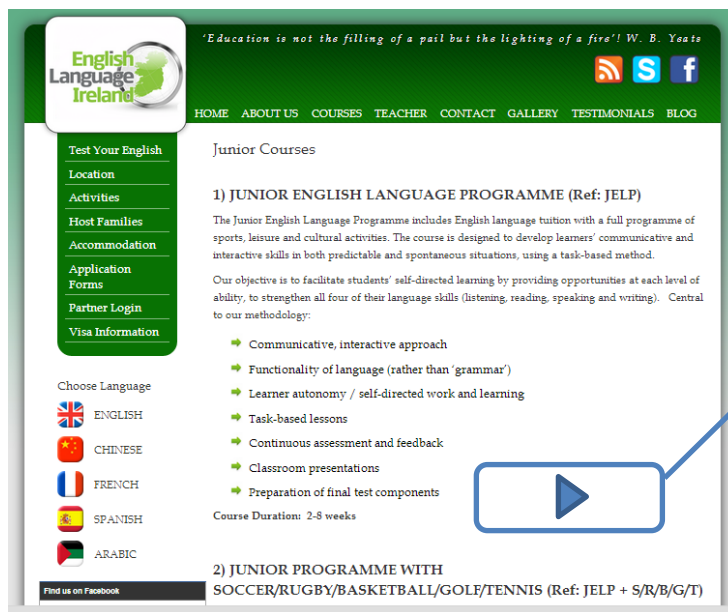


IMAGE 25. Currently used promotional video on English Language Ireland's official website (englishlanguage.ie 2014)

Apart from having a promotional video regarding the company's business concept, it is also a good idea to build up other marketing-purposed videos which contents are referred to specific language courses. For example, Junior English Language Programme is one of the language courses that ELI runs throughout the year and has a fairly good customer base coming from Spain, France and North Korea. A well-made video, which successfully conveys the key characteristics of the programme (i.e. study with native junior students, flexible and variable curriculum, etc.) and the unique benefits of the language programme could offer to the foreign junior students (i.e. multi - culture, high level of language interaction, etc.), will increase better chances to attract more prospects registering for the programme.

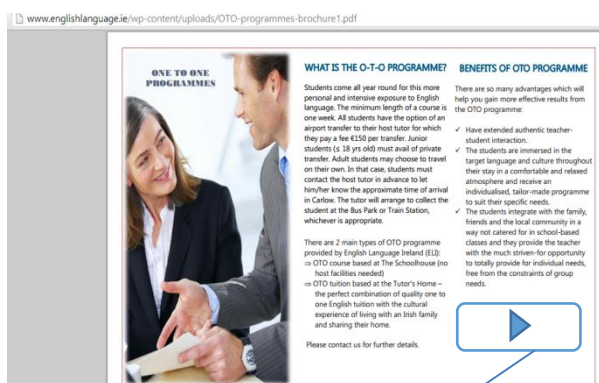
There are a plenty of ways to display and show the promotional videos especially tailored for a certain language programme. Conveniently, they can be presented to potential business partners in educational exhibitions or conferences. It is also possible to attach them to the company's website under the programme's description as being illustrated in Image 25.



The promotional video for the Junior English Language Programme could be attached here.

IMAGE 26. An illustration for where to place a tailor-made promotional video on ELI's website (englishlanguage.ie 2014)

Another option is to upload tailor - made promotional videos on media channels which have ELI's presence such as YouTube and Facebook page. Digital - versioned brochure or leaflet of a specific language programme can leave lasting impression in the mind of new customers with an enclosed link to related promotional videos (Images 26 and 27).



The promotional video for One-to-One programme can be attached here on its online brochure.

IMAGE 27. An illustration for promotional video placed on related digital - versioned programme brochure

To be concluded, content and mobile marketing can consume a significant amount of time, efforts and costs of investment. However, once the company knows how to engage such two channels of digital marketing in the way which goes along with their business natures, they can pay back in major dividends when co-operating with other existing marketing campaigns. The results, thus, can be tremendous, which not only significantly extends the existing customer base, reduces perceived purchased risks, but also concretes customer's loyalty to the company and positively increases the online identity of the company itself.

Own reflections of the thesis

I formed the idea for my graduation thesis during the time that I did my professional internship at English Language Ireland, where my daily job was involved in helping the company get used to with digital marketing concept. By implementing this thesis, I have gained much more vital understanding and technical terms relating to digital marketing concept, which will play as a concrete foundation for my master programme in Ireland next year majoring in digital marketing.

As for English Language Ireland, I had enjoyed working for the company during my stay in Ireland, and now it is my pleasure to write about the company for my graduation thesis and to be able to initiate some suggestions for its process of developing a well - defined digital marketing strategy.

It was also a great learning experience regarding the completion of the quantitative research in my thesis. I learnt to use the Webropol programme to design and deliver the survey questionnaire to target respondents, as well as analysing the survey results on the basis of survey report prepared by Webropol programme. This will be an extra plus to my curriculum vitae for the job application in the future.

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THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN SMEs

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Trang Thuy Vo, a final year student at Savonia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, majoring in International Marketing Management. I am currently working on a graduation thesis entitled **“Establishing an effective Digital Marketing Strategy for Irish SMEs”**. As part of the thesis implementation, the purpose of the following questionnaire is to collect data about the application of Digital Marketing in Irish SMEs. Information gathered from this survey will allow me to identify challenges that Irish SMEs are experiencing when dealing with digital marketing and thus to initiate suggestions for them to overcome those obstacles and embrace digital marketing into their business operation effectively in the future.

There are 20 questions in the survey, divided into 4 sections:

- 1 Familiarity level of digital marketing concept
- 2 Social media marketing
- 3 Marketing expenditures on digital marketing activities
- 4 Workshops and training

The questions are concretely designed and easy to answer so they will not take you a long time to finish the survey. Information extracted from the questionnaire will be confidential and used for research purposes only.

I sincerely appreciate your spending time and effort on the survey and for helping me successfully fulfil my graduation thesis. Please feel free to contact me should you have any concerns about the questionnaire.

Best regards,

Trang Thuy Vo

Email: thuy.t.vo@edu.savonia.fi

I. Familiarity level of digital marketing concept

1 What is your current position in the company?

☐ CEO

☐ Marketing manager

☐ Marketing assistant

☐ Sales manager

☐ Sales assistant

☐ Others, please specify: _____

2 What business sector the company is operating in? Please Choose an item.

3 Please select traditional marketing methods that the company is currently using (can select more than 1 options)

☐ TV commercials

☐ Radio advertising

☐ Newspaper/magazine advertising

☐ Cold calling / Telephone advertising

☐ Faxing

☐ Word of Mouth

☐ Outdoor and direct advertising

☐ We don't use any traditional marketing methods

☐ Others, please specify _____

4 Is the company familiar with the digital marketing concept?

☐ Yes, we are and we understand it very well

☐ We are pretty familiar with the term

☐ Not really but we have heard about it

☐ We have no idea about it (if selected, please skip to [question 8](#))

5 Below are common reasons for using digital marketing, please rate them in terms of importance from your own point of view according to scale 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely important)

○ Cost-saving

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

○ International presence

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

○ Customer engagement

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

○ Easy to measure return on investment

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- Collect insights into customer's preference and opinions about a product/service
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- Able to reach more prospects regardless of geographical distance
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6 Does the company have a defined digital marketing strategy at present?

- ☐ Yes, we do
- ☐ The strategy is still in the process of development
- ☐ No, we don't, but maybe in the future

7 Please rate the effectiveness on sales of the following digital marketing activities

- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Pinterest, etc.)
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Online advertising
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Email marketing
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Viral/ Content marketing (i.e. This can include videos on Youtube, blogs, email marketing, as well as traditional elements, but the aim is to ensure that the content captures the imagination of target market, and that the content spreads naturally through online communities)
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Pay-Per-Click advertising (e.g. Google Adwords)
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term
- Mobile marketing (e.g. mobile apps, QR code)
☐ Ineffective ☐ Moderately effective ☐ Very effective ☐ Unfamiliar with the term

8 Please specify the reasons that hinder your organisation from being familiar with digital marketing concept? (You can select more than 1 options)

- ☐ The lack of time and knowledge to learn about digital marketing (e.g. its functions and benefits, how to take advantage of it)

- ☐ The lack of technical understanding needed for digital marketing
- ☐ Limited opportunities to attend workshops/ trainings about digital marketing
- ☐ Being sceptical about return on investment of digital marketing
- ☐ Simply not interested in digital marketing and pleased with current traditional marketing methods
- ☐ High perceived risks about online activities (e.g. e-commerce frauds, copyrights, damaged brand image, etc.)
- ☐ Other reasons, please specify _____

II. Social media marketing

9 What social networks does the company use the most at present (please select 3 options only)?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Google +
- ☐ Tumblr
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Don't use any social media
- ☐ Others, please specify _____

10 What do you use social media for? (Please select 3 options only)

- ☐ Building brand awareness
- ☐ Promoting new products/services
- ☐ Collecting comments from customers
- ☐ Building customers relationships
- ☐ Keeping customers updated with latest news and activities
- ☐ Other reasons, please specify _____

11 How long have you been using social media in a business context?

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 months – less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 – less than 2 years
- ☐ 2 - 3 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

12 Have you ever used paid advertising campaign on Facebook?

- ☐ Yes, several times
- ☐ No (please move to part III)

13 Please evaluate the following statements about Facebook ad campaigns

- Facebook ad campaigns offer high return on investment
 - ☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns offer reasonable pricing
 - ☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns allow to track the traffic easily
 - ☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree

- Facebook ad campaigns allow users to easily measure the campaign's results
☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns have simple set-up procedures
☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns offer a broad geographical coverage
☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns is easy to modify
☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree
- Facebook ad campaigns can be ended at any time
☐ Agree ☐ No idea ☐ Disagree

III. Marketing expenditures on digital activities

14 What percentage of the marketing budget of your enterprise was spent only on digital marketing in 2013?

- ☐ Less than 30 percent
- ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
- ☐ More than 50 percent

15 Please estimate marketing expenditures spent on digital activities which are currently being used?

- Web design and SEO
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent
- Social media
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent
- Online advertising
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent
- Email marketing
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent
- Viral/ Content marketing (i.e. This can include videos on Youtube, blogs, email marketing, as well as traditional elements, but the aim is to ensure that the content captures the imagination of target market, and that the content spreads naturally through online communities)
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent
- Mobile marketing (e.g. mobile apps, QR code)
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent

- Pay-Per-Click advertising
 - ☐ Less than 30 percent
 - ☐ 31 percent – 50 percent
 - ☐ More than 50 percent

16 What changes will the company make to its current digital marketing expenditures in 2014?

- ☐ Maintain the current spending
- ☐ Increase the current spending
- ☐ Reduce the current spending

17 Which digital activities will the company focus and invest further in 2014 (please select 3 options)?

- ☐ Web design and SEO
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Pay-Per-Click advertising
- ☐ Online advertising
- ☐ Email marketing
- ☐ Viral/ Content marketing
- ☐ Mobile marketing

IV. Workshops and Trainings

18 How often do you attend workshops and trainings about digital marketing organised by Irish marketing consultancies?

- ☐ Anytime that we get informed about upcoming workshops and trainings
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once every 3 months
- ☐ Never, please specify the reasons_____

19 Which forms of workshops or trainings do you prefer to attend?

- ☐ Formal meeting with high interaction between audience and the presenter
- ☐ Online meeting
- ☐ Personal trainings with a small audience group
- ☐ Others, please specify_____

20 From which marketing consultancies does the company usually attend their workshops and trainings? (You can select more than 1 options)

- ☐ Enterprise Ireland
- ☐ Marketing Institute of Ireland
- ☐ AMAS
- ☐ The DG group
- ☐ Failte Ireland
- ☐ Local Educational Institutes (e.g. I.T Carlow, Dublin Business School, etc.)
- ☐ Others, please specify_____

Thank you for your time and efforts in fulfilling the questionnaire!

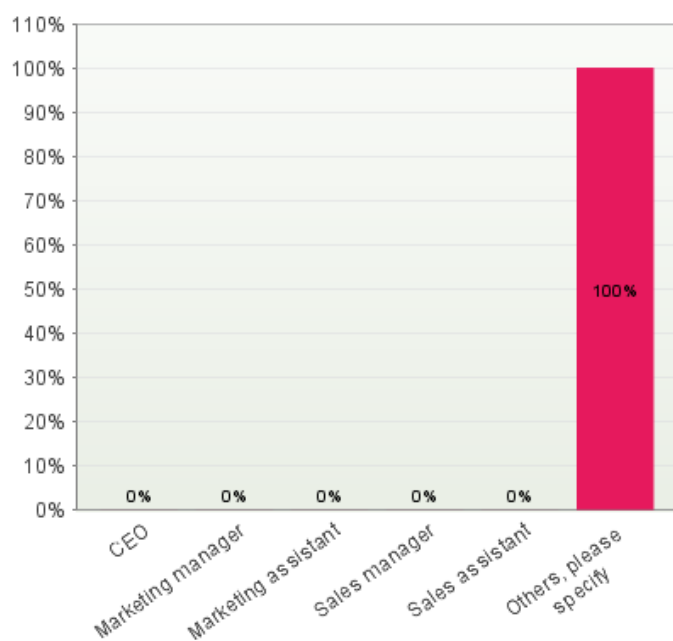
APPENDIX 2

English Language Ireland's survey response

THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN SMEs

1. What is your current position in the company?

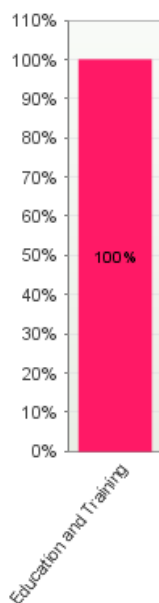
Number of respondents: 1



Open text answers: Others,
please specify
- Administration assistant

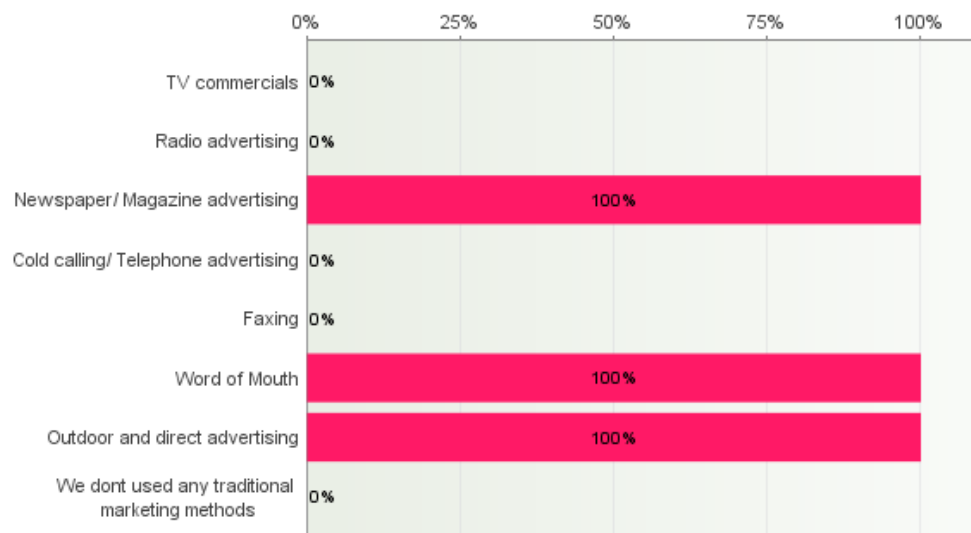
2. In what business sector the company is operating?

Number of respondents: 1



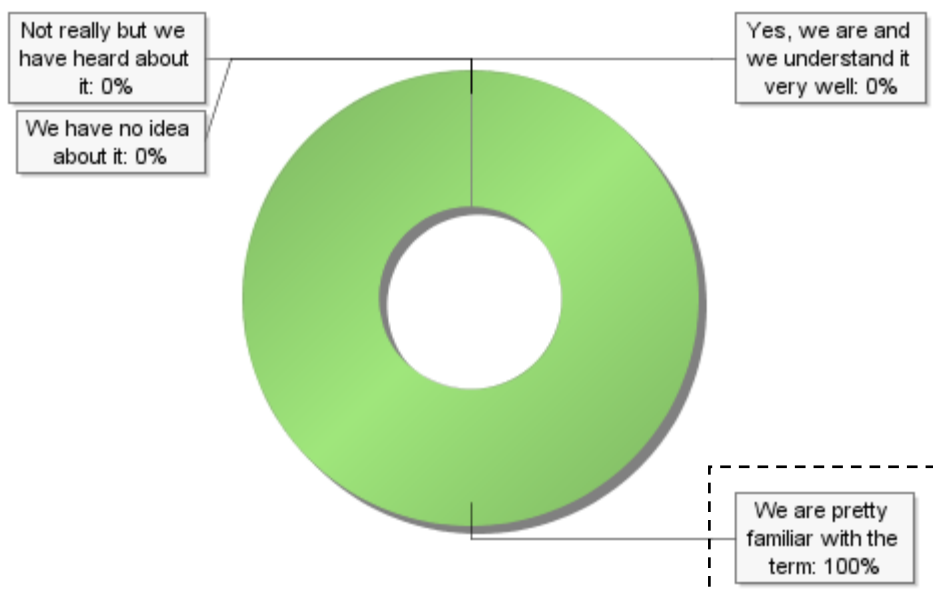
3. Please select traditional marketing methods that the company is currently using? (You can select more than 1 option)

Number of respondents: 1



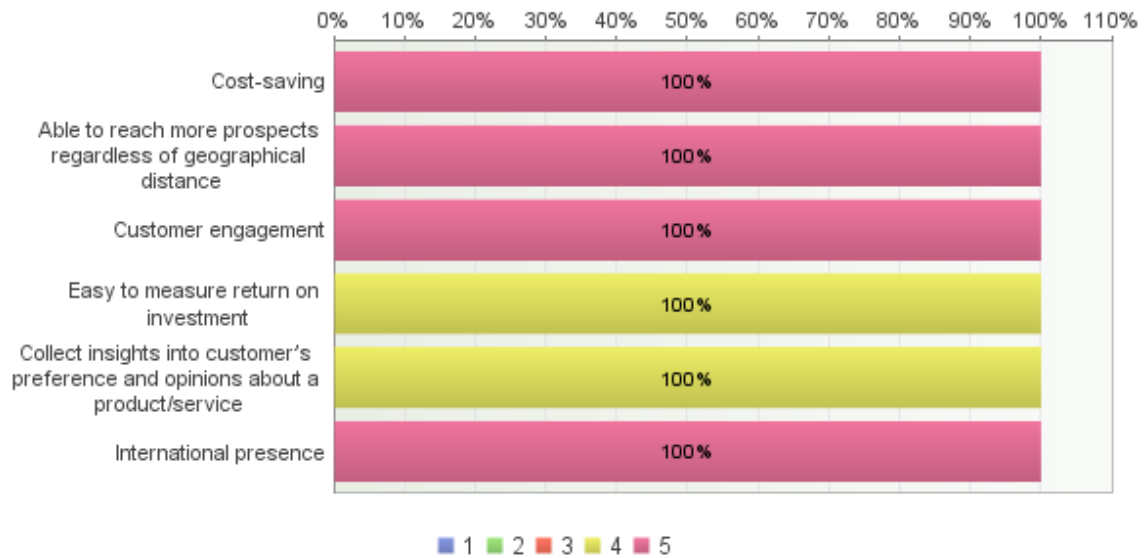
4. Is the company familiar with the digital marketing concept?

Number of respondents: 1



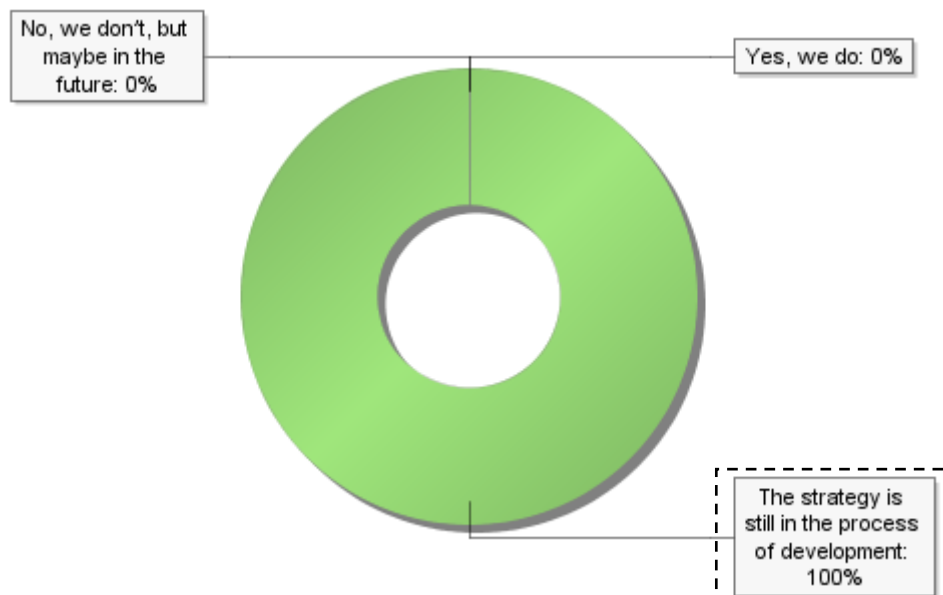
5. Below are common reasons for using digital marketing, please rate them in terms of importance from your own point of view according to scale 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Extremely important)

Number of respondents: 1



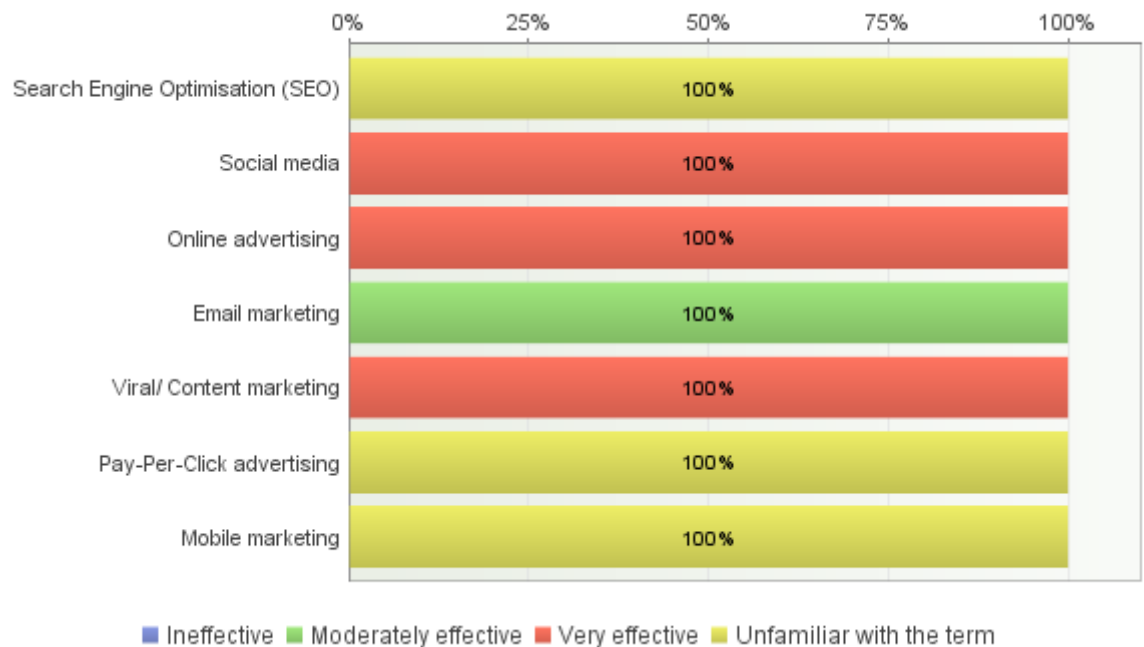
6. Does the company have a defined digital marketing strategy at present?

Number of respondents: 1



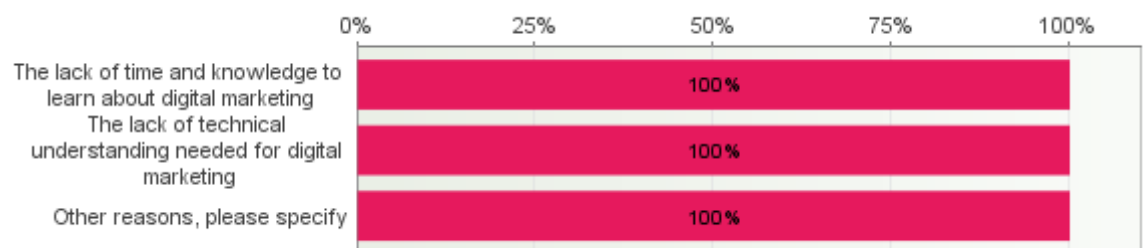
7. Please rate the effectiveness on sales of the following digital marketing activities

Number of respondents: 1



8. Please specify the reasons that hinder your organisation from being familiar with the digital marketing concept? (You can select more than 1 options)

Number of respondents: 1

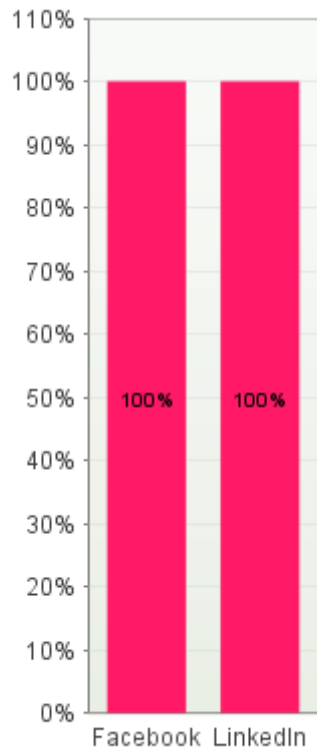


Open text answers: Other reasons, please specify

- High perceived cost

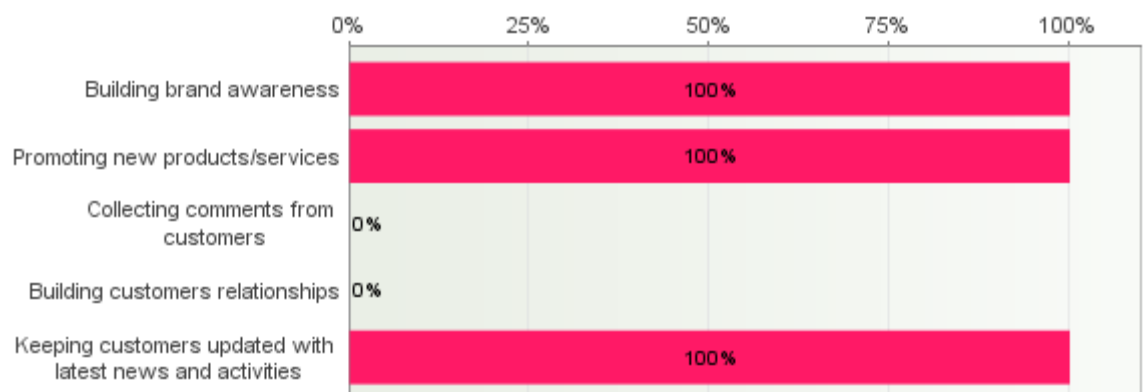
9. What social networks does the company use the most at present (Please select 3 options only)?

Number of respondents: 1



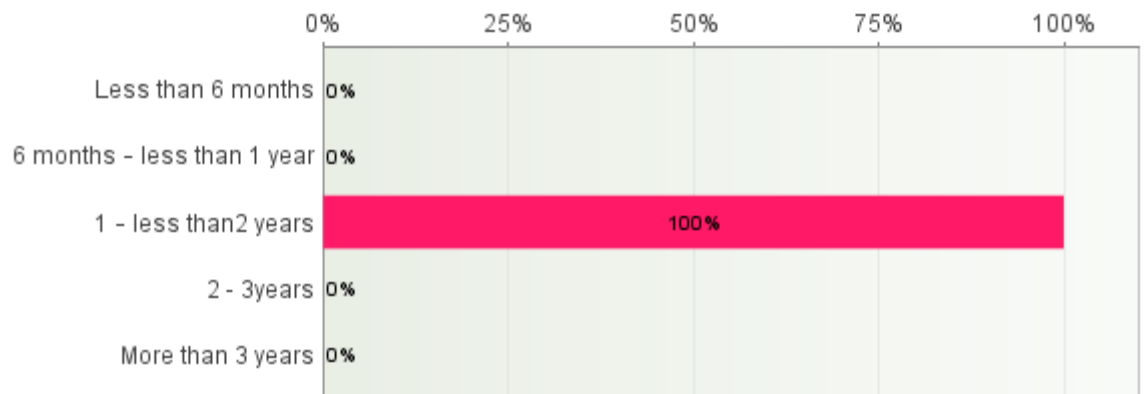
10. What do you use social media for? (Please select 3 options)

Number of respondents: 1



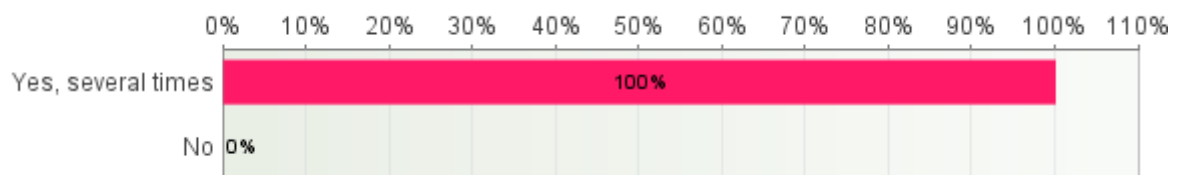
11. How long have you been using social media in a business context?

Number of respondents: 1



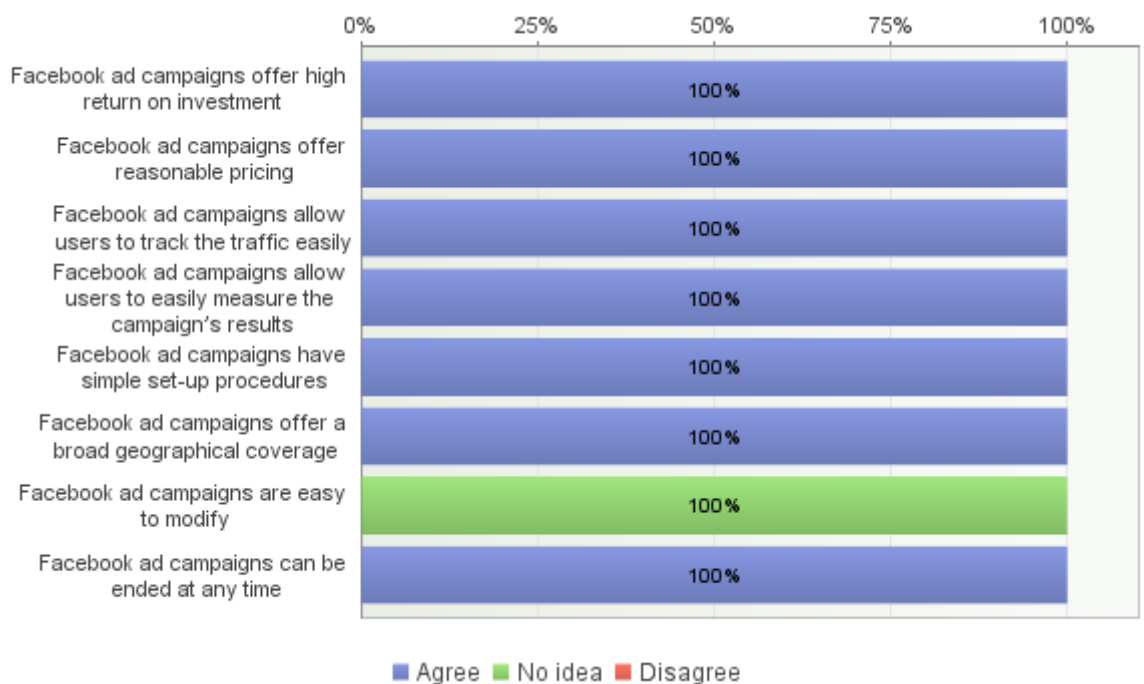
12. Have you ever used paid advertising campaign on Facebook?

Number of respondents: 1



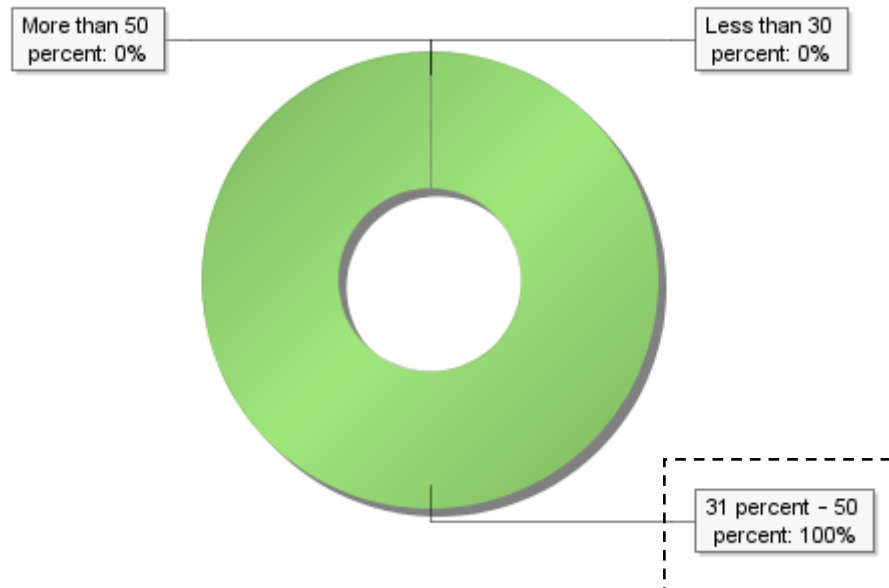
13. Please evaluate the following statements about Facebook ad campaigns

Number of respondents: 1



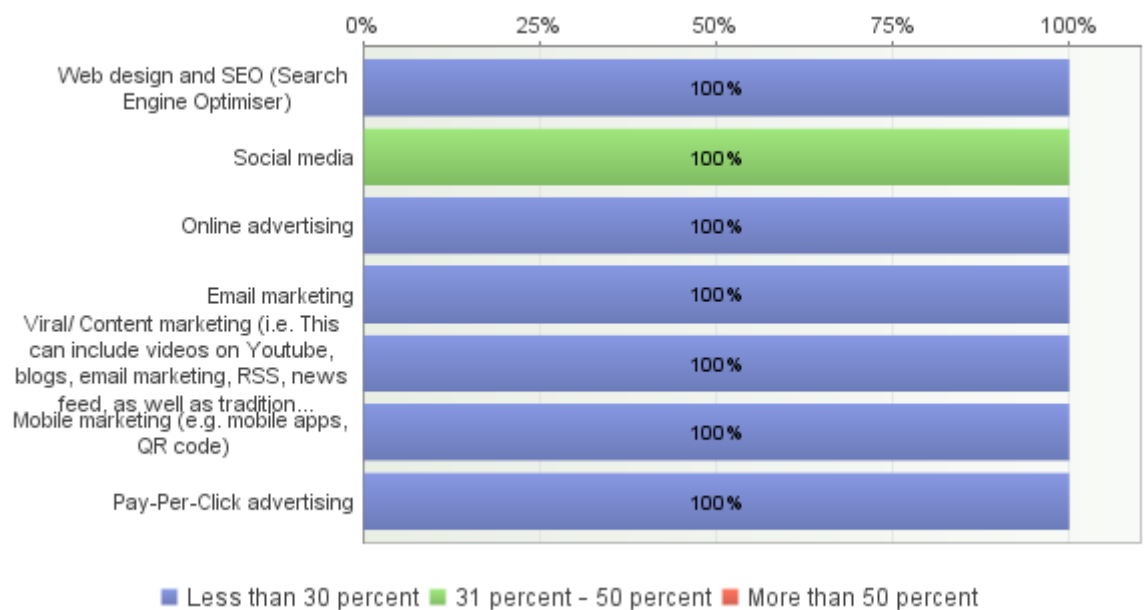
14. What percentage of the marketing budget of your enterprise was spent only on digital marketing in 2013?

Number of respondents: 1



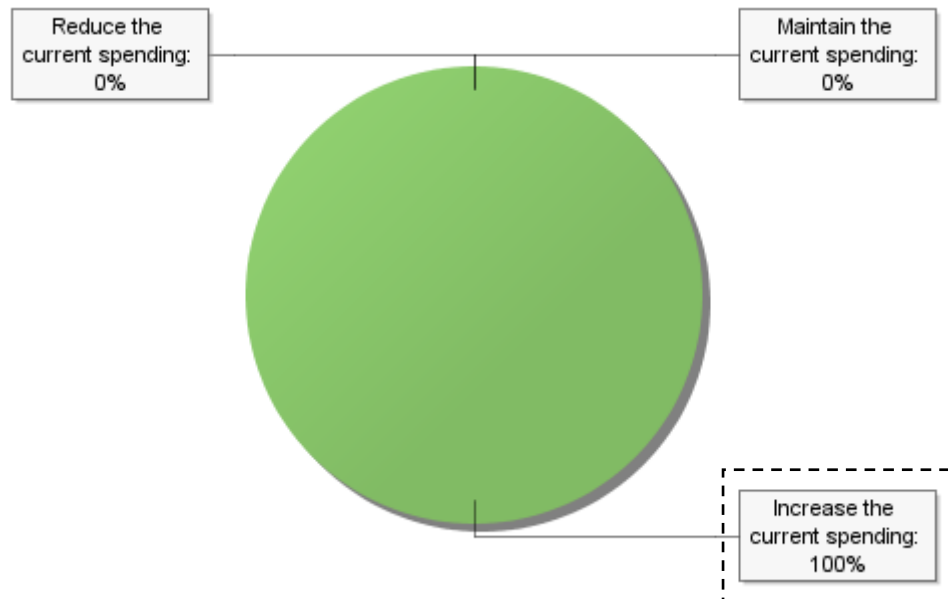
15. Please estimate marketing expenditures spent on digital activities which are currently being used?

Number of respondents: 1



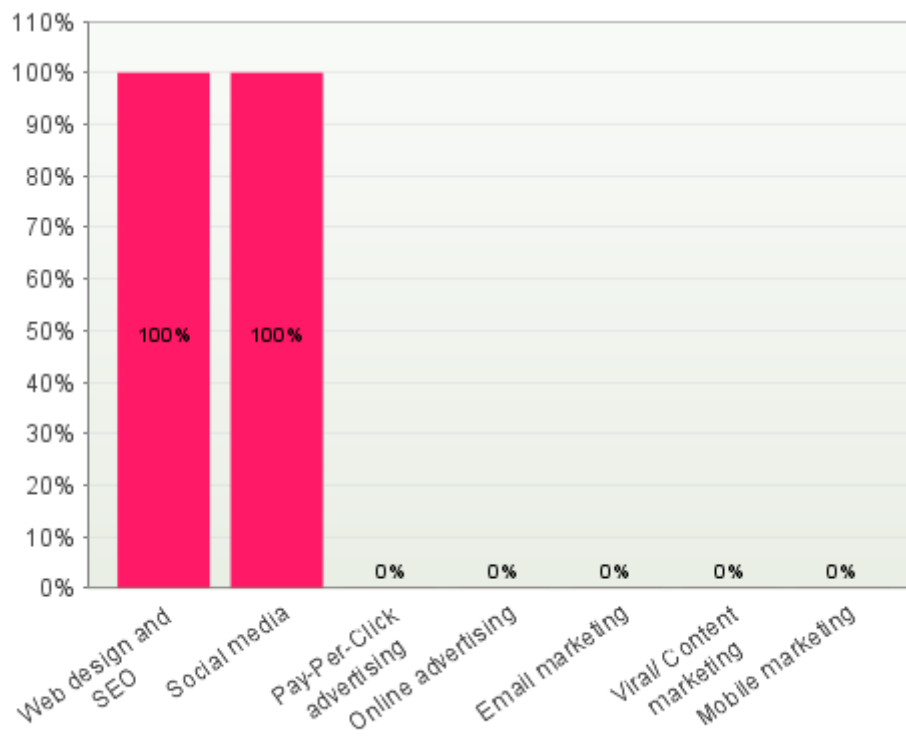
16. What changes will the company make to its current digital marketing expenditures in 2014?

Number of respondents: 1



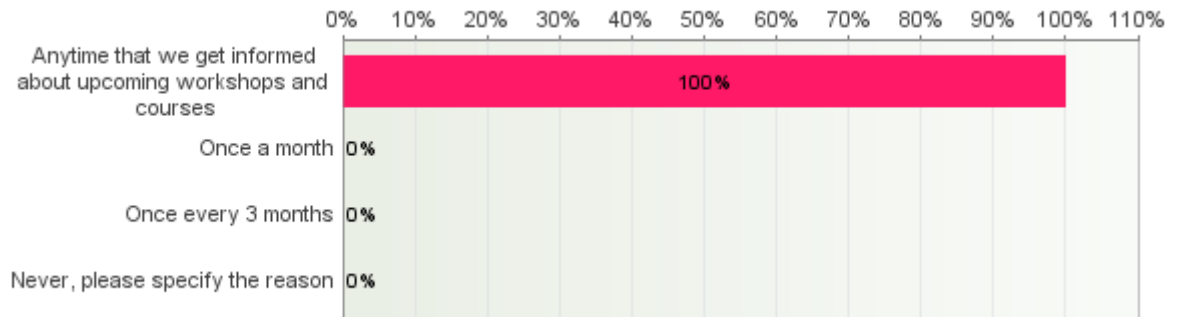
17. On which digital activities will the company focus and invest further in 2014 (Please select 3 options only)?

Number of respondents: 1



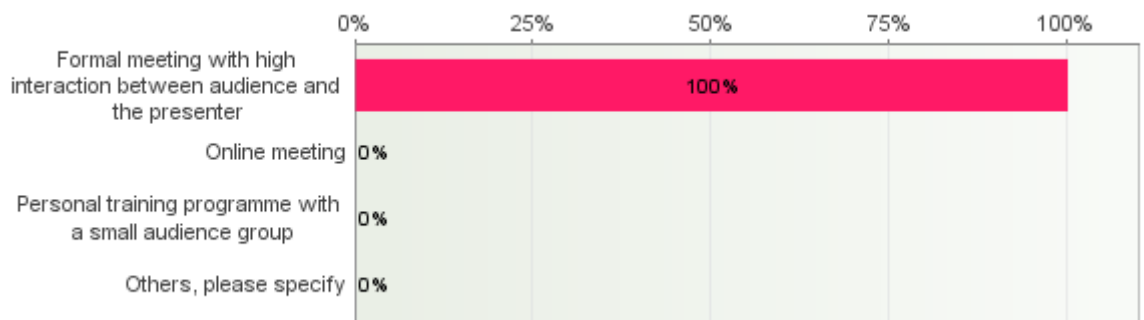
18. How often do you attend workshops and training programmes about digital marketing organised by Irish marketing consultancies?

Number of respondents: 1



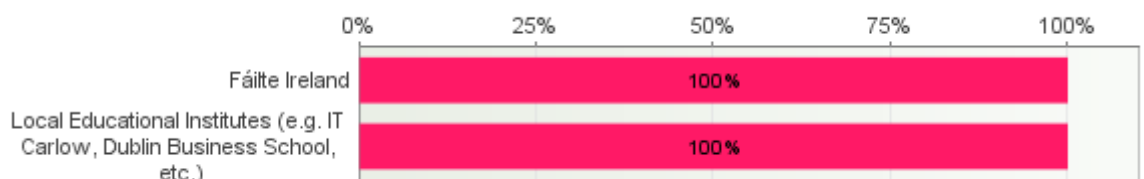
19. Which forms of workshops or training programmes do you prefer to attend?

Number of respondents: 1



20. From which marketing consultancies does the company usually receive their workshops and training programmes? (You can select more than 1 option)

Number of respondents: 1



Info – graphic picture of Search Engine Optimisation

APPENDIX 3

