

Digital marketing assignment

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1. INTRODUCTION As a result of the current innovative experience driven economy, brands and their functioning have the opportunity to utilise digital platforms to build themselves and reach new market segments. However, these brands are functioning in a market defined by consumers as providing worthless clutter due to immense number of brands trying to compete against one another. This is emphasised by Anonymous (2009a) who states that forty three percent of South African consumers develop powerful filters to protect themselves from this clutter and as a result it is harder for brands to capture their attention.

Furthermore, in order for these brands to not only survive but also thrive by gaining a competitive advantage, which according to Whitford (2008) is imperative in the competitive race that they are operating in, it is essential for the development of a new digital platform, as a brand, that offers the prospect to build itself, present a brand experience and create new avenues for the consumer to interact with the brand. The importance of this is accentuated by Swart (2009: 83) as he states that brands need to provide customers with authentic experiences and interaction in order to create brand loyalty.

The purpose of this essay will be to discuss one such innovative digital platform, “ The Online Doctor,” as well as to critically discuss, from a strategic digital branding perspective, the various elements that need to be taken into consideration to ensure that this new digital platform, “ The Online Doctor,” is an effective and creative brand building tool through the following: the existing economy, the application of digital platforms in the South African marketing communications landscape, the effectiveness of <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

digital platforms in building brands, development and goals of “ The Online Doctor”, the realism and ability to execute “ The Online Doctor”, the need for “ The Online Doctor” with regard to the target market, promotion tactics for “ The Online Doctor,” design ideologies of “ The Online Doctor,” the need for online reputation management and online public relations and the dynamics of tracking tools. 2. THE EXISTING ECONOMY The marketing communication landscape has changed significantly in the way that brands and businesses communicate with consumers and consequentially has resulted in the new economy or digital economy. Furthermore, this digital economy emphasises knowledge and information and how it is applied within a specific context as a commercial and competitive tool, (Cook & Muir, 2010: 374).

In the development of this new digital landscape, the internet prevails as one of the most important communication and information technologies as it operates as a strategic business and communication resource due to its ability to offer consumers the opportunity to function in an environment that has no geographic or time boundaries. This is of significant value to the new consumer who encounters time pressure on a daily basis. In addition the internet further proves to be a fresh business resource as it has led to the creation of a new marketplace in which consumers do not need to visit a physical store in order to make a purchase and is therefore referred to as the marketpace.

Additionally the Internet and its functioning has created an innovative experience driven economy in which the delivery of personalised experiences to consumers has become imperative to the success of businesses and brands functioning in this economy. Cook and Muir (2010: <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

374) highlight the essence of the experiences for consumers in view of the value of a product. This is further emphasised by Herber (2010) that the time has come where ensuring a person an individual experience is crucial.

Furthermore, as several traditional mass marketing and communication tools have failed to provide consumer experiences, swift acceptance and use of digital communication to launch and develop brands has resulted.

Digital communication is defined by Cook and Muir, (2010: 370) as a more accurate description for interactive digital devices such as the Internet, websites, email, cellular tools and social networks. Furthermore, the development of the new digital landscape has enabled digital marketing which according to Cook and Muir (2010: 372) refers to any promotional message that is sent via a medium that uses digital technology. However it is imperative for businesses utilising digital marketing to obtain permission from the consumer to receive customised advertising messages. The new economy enforces that businesses no longer have choice of online versus offline advertising but rather presents brands with the challenge of ensuring that they are consistent online and offline. Moerdyk (2009) agrees with this statement, by explaining that the challenge brands are facing is how to utilise both online and offline media to provide a holistic image of the brand. In addition brands in the new digital landscape require a multi channel approach and focus on providing consumers access to online content from a range of devices. The importance of this is emphasised by Cook and Muir (2010: 372) as they explain that the new consumer is device agnostic and will therefore be secure using various devices that can be integrated. However, this then provides brands with meeting the challenge of the

integration of both the communication devices as well as the communication of a synergised consistent message using these devices.

Additionally the digital landscape is being adapted by more individuals and populations around the world. 3. THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE

Marsland (2009: 22) states that South Africa's acceptance and use of digital platforms is occurring at a rapid rate. According to World Wide Worx, the Internet user base in South Africa saw its highest growth rate since 2001 in 2008, growing by twelve and half percent to 4.5 million users (Cook & Muir, 2010: 371). Cook and Muir (2010: 378) further explain this growth as having a penetration rate of 10.5 percent based on an estimated population of 43.8 million South Africans.

This growth has been facilitated by more broadband offerings leading to a shift from dial up connections to broadband connectivity as well as the Seacom undersea cable commissioned by Neotel. (Cook & Muir, 2010: 371). Furthermore, the South African marketing communications landscape is witnessing consumers accessing the Internet via mobile phones. In addition South African consumers are engaging in mobile messages referred to as short message service (SMS). According to Cook and Muir (2010: 383) a total of approximately R3 billion was generated of SMS messages in 2006. This is a result of 37 million people in South Africa owning and utilising mobile phones. Another digital platform that has gained popularity among South African consumers is blogging. Amatomu. om an aggregator of South African blogosphere states that there were 1.9 million pages served by the South African blogosphere in 2009, (Cook & Muir, 2010: 385). Lastly social

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networking sites have gained significant recognition among South African consumers over the last few years. Cook and Muir (2010: 388) explain that the well known social networking site, Facebook is ranked as the fourth most popular social networking site in South Africa. In addition due to significant recognition of these digital platforms it is imperative for brands to consider how digital platforms are used as brand building tools. 4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN BUILDING BRANDS

The correct use of interactive digital communication platforms plays a significant role in the development of an integrated approach in building a brand and communicating the value of that brand. In addition, digital communication tools such as the Internet, email, mobile and social networking sites provide brands with the advantage of interactive communication and marketing. Cook and Muir (2010: 377) define the internet as “ a self regulated super system of millions of lined computer networks around the globe, forming part of the foundation of modern human life and distributing the power of information through the entire sphere of human activity. However, put in its simplest form by Stokes (2008: 4) the Internet is a collection of connected documents or objects through hyperlinks.

Firstly, the Internet as a digital communications platform offers brands a variety of opportunities to create a relationship and an experience for the consumer irrespective of geographic or time location. Secondly, as a result of its seamlessness, global reach, comprehensiveness and interactivity, if integrated with other digital media, the Internet can present a consistent, synergised brand message (Cook & Muir, 2010: 377). In addition, the <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

Internet consists of a sub factor or multi media section referred to as the “Worldwide Web” which enables individuals and organisations to present and represent data and information on the Internet. Lastly, through the Internet and the Web, websites, which enable brands to engage in powerful marketing communications, are established.

Cook and Muir (2010: 380) emphasise that through its inclusion of pictures, graphics, 3D models, video and audio segments; websites supply brands with flexibility in advertising their products and services. Stokes (2008: 8) defines email and in particular email marketing, as a form of direct marketing that utilises electronic means to deliver commercial messages to an audiences. He further emphasises that if used correctly with permission based marketing; email marketing can deliver one of the highest returns of investment. Moreover, email is highly effective in building brands through marketing communication. Email marketing follows a soft sell approach which is preferred by consumers. In addition email marketing builds the brand by allowing the organisation to provide consumers and potential consumers with value added information.

Ratushny (2009) explains that consumers who perceive added value are more likely to be loyal to a brand. Moreover, Anonymous (2008a) defines mobile marketing as marketing on or with a mobile device enabling consumers to access marketed messages at any time or place. In addition one tool utilised by mobile marketing is that of the mobile phone and its short message service (SMS). This short message service is very effective in building brands when used in conjunction with a larger integrated communication platform. Kajee, (2009) emphasises this, as he states that <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

when mobile marketing is used within with a larger strategic platform it can amount to considerable return on investment for that brand.

Firstly, the cellphone, due to its mobility and the technology it utilises aids that communication between an organisation and the customer. Secondly, due to the modern technology encompassed in cellphones, consumers are able to receive and store marketing messages and engage in an experience with the brand regardless of time or geographic location. Lastly according to Cook and Muir (2010: 385) multimedia messaging service (MMS) an extension of SMS technology allows organisations to integrate a rich composition of visual information. Stokes (2008: 125) defines a social networking site as a type of website model where individual members become part of a broader virtual community. They provide great value in building brands for numerous reasons.

Brands are able to target their adverts to particular market segment as a result of the demographic information collected by the social network. Stokes (2008: 134) explains that as brands are too, able to create profiles on these social networking sites, they are capable of connecting with current and potential fans. Furthermore, brands can also employ social networking sights to identify how users are perceiving or interacting with their brand, opening up new structures of communicating with them. Through social networking, brands are built to connect with consumers on a more personal level providing them with a personalised experience as well as keeping them with up to date information regarding the brand.

Last of all Stokes (2008: 134) accentuates how social networking sites acts as a medium for members to voice their brand loves and frustrations, enabling more efficient brand building. According to Asberg (2009) in this way social networking can function as a useful tracking tool. 5.

DEVELOPMENT AND GOALS OF “ THE ONLINE DOCTOR” “ The Online Doctor” is a new digital platform that utilises other digital touch points in its functioning. In addition, it based on the digital platform of a website, which according to Delon Cheketri Managing Director of the Web Development Company, Fusebox Online, is a set of interconnected webpages, including a homepage, usually located on the same server, and organized and retained as a set of information by an organization.

In addition the use of a website is highly beneficial to “ The Online Doctor” as The Online Publishing Association (2010) explains that websites are one of the most viable mediums to utilise in aiming to reach audiences and provide them with exceptional experiences. The new digital platform is constructed in the following way. The first phase of its functioning involves the individual user of the website. A computer screen with an explicit Infrared web camera attached to it is required (See Appendix 1). When an individual is feeling ill and senses that he/she might be running a temperature the first step they need to take is to log on to a website referred to as [www. theonlinedoctor. co. za](http://www.theonlinedoctor.co.za). The individual is the required to set up an account by providing their email address as a user name and a password.

For example: user name:mweb. co. za, password: john123.

Once the individual has setup and logged into their account on the website, the infrared web camera will in turn be activated. Secondly, the individual is <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

then required to look into the web camera with both eyes for a minimum of 3 seconds. The infrared technology is then able to obtain and store within the website programme relevant data such as an individual's temperature and particulars that accompany it. The third step involves the individual clicking on the “ send to a doctor” tab on the website. A new webpage will then open requiring the individual to select a province and then a city.

Once this is completed they will need to select a doctor from the available list. Before this stored information, gathered from the infrared technology, regarding the individual, is sent to the selected doctor, the individual needs to complete step four which involves filling out a form consisting of the individuals name, date of birth, symptoms felt, email address and mobile/cellphone number. The fifth step then involves the individual paying the doctors fee of R150 either through the use of their credit card by selecting that option on the webpage and then being linked to a secure banking website whereby their banking details are filled in or through an electronic funds transfer option.

The sixth and final step is then to click on the “ submit” button and the results will then be sent to the selected doctors email address. The second phase of the functioning of this new digital platform involves the doctor who receives an email from the individual containing a filled in form with regard to their personal details as well as their temperature and symptoms. As a result of the temperature recorded by the infrared web camera and the symptoms mentioned by the individual, the doctor is able to distinguish whether the individual has a mild flu, a severe flu such as the H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu, an ear infection or a stomach bug. From the above <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

provided information, the doctor makes a diagnosis and prepares a prescription for the individual.

The doctor then uploads this prescription on the website under the respective persons account. At the same time an email and a short message service (SMS) will be sent to the individual containing a link to the prescription. Anonymous (2009b) believes that this is a great benefit to the brand as time pressured consumers don't have time to keep logging onto the Internet to check if the prescription is available. By receiving an email, they will be notified that the prescription is ready and only have to log onto the Internet once. However, if the doctor perceives the case to be quite serious and would prefer to see the individual an email and SMS stating so will be sent to the individual.

The final phase of the functioning involves the individual in either clicking on the link received and automatically being transferred to the website or logging onto the website manually. This received prescription will be the first thing that appears as the individual logs into their account. In addition the second stage involves the individual clicking on the “ send to a pharmacy” button above the prescription. They will then select a province and a city and then the desired pharmacy for the prescription to be sent to from the available list. The next stage requires the individual to fill out a form filling consisting of the individual's name, date of birth, physical address, and email address as well as mobile/cellphone number.

The individual will then submit this form to the selected pharmacy by clicking on the “ submit” button and the prescription will be sent to the selected

pharmacies email address. The pharmacy will then prepare the prescription and deliver to it to the individual's physical address where they will require payment. As consumers visit websites to develop their knowledge about the organisation and its products or services, it is imperative for theonlinedoctor. co. za to provide a clear overview of the brand itself and its offerings. In addition as this new platform, " The Online Doctor", is built on that of a website it has the advantage of content, such as the list of doctors available for example, being changed and updated rapidly.

Furthermore, when the doctor emails the individual a link to their prescription, the email is providing the doctor with an efficient, inexpensive and speedy means of responding to the individual's plea. Lastly the link to the website provided in the email for the individual to access the script is to the advantage of " The Online Doctor" as it takes the individual directly to their website. Similarly the above structure and design must be applied to the email containing the prescription and the individual's personal details that the pharmacy will receive. The goal of " The Online Doctor" is user focused. Theonlinedoctor. co. za does not obtain any payment from the individuals making use of the website. Their im is to provide the users with a creative personalised experience that offers them convenience. Through the satisfaction of these experiences the individuals will return to the website in the future and therefore the doctor online will retain a customer base.

Through their retention of consumers (who in turn pay the doctor doctors fees of R150 and medicinal charges as well as pharmacy delivery fees) doctors and pharmacies will want to be on the utilised doctors and pharmacies list encompassed in the doctor online website. In addition, not

only will they desire to be on this website but will too be willing to pay for their secured place on this website. The Online Doctor” website will charge these doctors and pharmacies a monthly fee of say for example R180 to be apart of the registered available list on the website. In this way this new digital platform will then obtain revenue. Furthermore, “ The Online Doctor” as a new digital platform can be perceived as an effective and efficient branding tool for both the doctors and pharmacies. These doctors practices (businesses) and pharmacies are considered and promote themselves as brands. As a result of “ The Online Doctor’s” structure and functioning, it acts as a means of providing an indirect form of advertising and marketing for these doctors and pharmacies. In other words it can be described as “ advertising at work. While these doctors are providing diagnoses and pharmacies preparing and delivering prescriptions they are actually being marketed and are marketing themselves through “ The Online Doctor”. In addition they can also place advertisements in the form of banner adverts on the new digital platform. For example Dischem Cresta might have a banner advertising its free delivery of medications within in a 10 kilometre radius. A banner advert is defined by Stokes, (2008: 31) as a graphic image or animation displayed on a website for an advertising purpose. “ The Online Doctor” could then make use cost per click payment model, for example in which the advertiser will pay them (the sponsor) each time a user clicks on that banner advert.

6. THE REALISM AND ABILITY TO EXECUTE “ THE ONLINE DOCTOR” The Online Doctor”, through its use of the infrared web camera in determining the illness is very realistic and applicable to the current environment. It is based on the theory, development and utilisation of a unique type of equipment known as Infrared Thermal Imagers. The Infrared

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Thermal Imagers are used in airports around the world in screening people for elevated body temperature (temperature. com, 2010). In addition, the Infrared Thermal Imagers consist of a computer screen with an infrared web camera attached to it. Individuals entering through customs at an airport are required to look into the camera in order for their temperature to be screened.

This technological equipment is not however based on the use of a website and a doctor as the airport has highly significant and complex programmes that automatically store the reading of the temperature and then inform the customs staff if any illness is detected. In addition temperature. com (2010) further explains that it provides diagnosis for mild flu, severe flu such as the H1N1 Virus, ear infection and bugs. As a result of its stable measurement and sophisticated software it has proved to be highly successful (temperature. com, 2010). 7. THE NEED FOR “ THE ONLINE DOCTOR” WITH REGARD TO THE TARGET MARKET “ The Online Doctor” appeals to a very broad target market in terms of demographics and living standards measure (LSM).

To be more specific, “ The Online Doctor” appeals to all genders, races and cultures and to those between the ages of 18 and 55 years old. However, it can appeal to children who are ill as well, but they would require the assistance of a parent or guardian. Therefore “ The Online Doctor” needs to appeal to that older parent or guardian to. Moreover, “ The Online Doctor” can also appeal to those older than 55 years old that may very well be too frail to visit a doctor. However, this is limited, due to noted technological barriers that older generations encounter. In addition, “ The Online Doctor”
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targets those individuals who fall between LSM 6 and 10 and earn a minimum monthly income of R6466 (Anonymous, 2010).

It is imperative for the individual to earn this minimum monthly income so as to afford both the Internet connection as well as the infrared web cameras which according to temperature. com (2010) are relatively expensive.

Additionally due to the emergence of a new digital landscape discussed earlier, a new consumer also materialised. This new consumer is a strong target market for “ The Online Doctor” due its characteristics and experience imperative focus. According to Cook and Muir (2010: 374) the new consumer is characterised as being independent minded, individualistic and well informed. In addition this new consumer may be cash rich but time poor.

As a result “ The Online Doctor” who acquires the individual to possess a substantial amount of cash as well as the convenience provided for the time poor individual is highly suitable. Furthermore, as mentioned above, “ The Online Doctors” target market is very broad and the importance of this in appealing to the new consumer is emphasised by Cook and Muir (2010: 375) as they state that the new consumer is not bounded by age, gender, race or any other characteristic but are merely new consumers due to the integration of technology into their lifestyles. Lastly these consumers desire an experience at every point of contact i. e. the experience of anticipating consumption, the experience of purchasing, the experience of consuming and the experience as a memory. The Online Doctor” provides all four of these as individuals can anticipate using the digital platform when they fall ill, the individuals can experience the actual purchase of sending their temperature recorded to the doctor, the individuals can experience the ease

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of being diagnosed and receiving their medication and lastly the individual can experience the memory of using “ The Online Doctor” and tell others. The importance of this is highlighted by Anonymous (2008b) who illustrates that when consumers acquire experiences from a brand they are more likely to inform others about this brand. 8. PROMOTION TACTICS FOR “ THE ONLINE DOCTOR” It is imperative to make use of other digital touch points as well as offline touch points, in this particular instance, to market the new digital platform. This task however, is not simple as Cook and Muir (2010: 389) comment that only a very select number of brands have managed to integrate both traditional offline and interactive digital communication tools.

Without promoting this platform, consumers will be unaware of the new digital platform and this will result in the inability of “ The Online Doctor” to grow and succeed. “ The Online Doctor” will set up their equipment outside major pharmacies such as Dischem and Clicks in shopping malls around South Africa. Their personnel will then invite and assist individuals who enter these pharmacies to test “ The Online Doctor” following the same three phases mentioned earlier. Once they have observed how it works and its reliability, the personnel will then ask them to fill in a form containing their name, age, email address and whether they have a Facebook profile.

This form and information will then enable the commencement of the digital promotion as well as provide insight as to who to target due to them possessing a Facebook profile or not. From the email addresses obtained “ The Online Doctor” will send these individuals personalised emails inviting them to visit and become a fan of “ The Online Doctor” Facebook page.

These commercial emails sent to the individuals will be both that of

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promotional as they are geared at enticing the user to take an immediate action (join the fan base of Facebook) as well as retention based as it is focused on providing information of value to the user as well as building a long term relationship with the user. This retention will then ensure that when and if the individual should fall ill they will remember “ The Online Doctor. However in order for the email campaign to be a success, it is critical for “ The Online Doctor” to conform to the steps to executing an email campaign. The first step should involve “ The Online Doctor” strategically planning the goals to be achieved. The goals include familiarising consumers with the new digital platform through Facebook as well as the overall goal of increasing the use of the website by providing value and personalised experiences and hence creating long term relationships. According to Stokes (2008: 12) long term relationships are the key to a successful email campaign. The second step requires that “ The Online Doctor” has a genuine opt in database as Stokes (2008: 12) describes this as the most valuable asset.

The offline tactics mentioned above ensures the genuine opt in database. In addition it is imperative that this database is grown to keep it targeted. The third step to take into consideration involves the creative execution of the email. “ The Online Doctor” needs to ensure the use of a relevant subject line, a personalised greeting, the name and contact details of their organisation, a forward to a friend link in the footer (a form of viral marketing defined by Stokes (2008: 150) as a form of word of mouth marketing which aims to result in marketing spreading exponentially), an unsubscribe link, relevant, informative and enticing content, and a link to the Facebook page.

Furthermore, it is essential for “ The Online Doctor” to test the emails for display and deliverability, and personalise all messages (e. g. Hi Mary Jones). In addition “ The Online Doctor” needs to ensure consistency in deploying and arranging the email content as well as ensuring that they have a good email reputation. Lastly “ The Online Doctor” needs to generate email reports and analyse these results so as to improve the next email campaign. This is further emphasised by Stokes who states that tracking, analysing and optimising is key to growth. Once the prospective consumers have received their personalised email the goal is for them to either log into their existing Facebook account or create a new account.

By becoming a fan of “ The Online Doctor” on Facebook they are provided with up to date valuable information and can develop a more personalised relationship with the brand and therefore voice their frustrations. In addition according to Sauer (2010) when it comes to social media it is wise for the brand to go to the consumer, instead of making the consumer come to them. Therefore it is of significant value for “ The Online Doctor” to be apart of Facebook (the common place for consumer communication) as it provides them with the following benefits. Social networking sites allow the brand to interact with customers through targeted communications. Furthermore, consumers can use their creativity and the potential of Facebook, through the “ share” icon and inviting friends to join the group, to go viral at a low cost.

It enables “ The Online Doctor” to create an online community for the brand and as a result helps to gather constructive feedback and drive future business. In addition it is important for “ The Online Doctor” to consider that <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

may prospective consumers may have heard of them via the grapevine and then search for them via search engines. Stokes (2008: 68) defines a search engine as a tool for searching the Internet. Users of search engines enter keywords relevant to their search and the search engine returns results from its databases. However, it is important to comprehend that search engines provide two different kinds of results namely organic search results and paid search results.

Organic search results are listings generally found on the left hand side of the search engine results page resulting from the search engines algorithm and are not paid for, (Stokes, 2008: 68). In contrast paid search results also referred to as pay per click advertising displays sponsored results alongside the organic results, (Stokes, 2008: 68). In this way advertisers bid for placement and pay the search engine when their advert is clicked on. Furthermore, another form of digital marketing for “ The Online Doctor” is search engine marketing which consists of two categories namely search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay per click (PPC) advertising.

In order for “ The Online Doctor” to utilise search engine marketing and in turn reap the benefits it is imperative for the digital platform to understand both categories so as to utilise them effectively. SEO is the practice of optimising a website so as to achieve preferred ranking in the natural or organic search results on the search engine results page (Stokes, 2008: 74). Furthermore, search engines look for signals of relevance, importance, popularity, trust and authority in websites. In addition, “ The Online Doctor” website needs to ensure that its structure is search engine friendly by removing technical barriers and makes use of a well researched list of key <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

phrases that take into account the search volume and competition of these keywords. The Online Doctor” needs to consider the right mix of keywords to target, what kind of phrases they would prefer to be associated with, for example: online sick detector, website doctor etc and consider misspellings and synonyms. The website then needs to ensure that it contains relevant content to target the above mentioned. In addition PPC advertising is used by brands in an attempt for their websites to gain a higher ranking on the search engine results page. A typical example of a suitable PPC advertisement for “ The Online Doctor” would consist of a heading such as The Online Doctor, then two lines of advert copy and a website address such as “ to sick to get out of bed? Want a fast reliable doctor? www.theonlinedoctor.co.za.

In addition there are various keywords and match types that “ The Online Doctor” could utilise in determining the search queries for which their advert could appear. One in particular that should be utilised by “ The Online Doctor” is the broad match which means that their advert will appear for keywords that they have entered as well as other search terms which contain their keywords and any other words in any order and lastly some variations such as misspellings and abbreviations of their keyword (Stokes, 2008: 101). For example the following keywords were chosen: Online Doctor. Their advert could then appear for the following searches: online doctor, the online doctor, the online GP, doc online.

In order for this PPC campaign to work “ The Online Doctor” needs to define the goals of the campaign, determine their budgets and the maximum they are willing to pay for a click on their advert as well as the maximum bids for <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

each keyword. It is critical for “ The Online Doctor” to engage in both SEO and PPC advertising so as to obtain the benefits of search engine marketing. Both categories provide unique benefits. SEO will ensure “ The Online Doctor” a long term return on investment, a high volume of users as well as more exposure, branding and awareness. In addition Cheketri (2010) states that PPC advertising is beneficial for this new digital platform as it is not known by consumers and search engine optimisation is a long, continuous process.

This is exemplified by Weeler (2009) as she states that SEO is a fairly deep process and takes at least three months for results to begin to show themselves. Cheketri (2010) further explains that PPC advertising will provide the new platform with instant, short term recognition as well as highly measurable and trackable results. 9. DESIGN IDEOLOGIES FOR “ THE ONLINE DOCTOR” Stokes (2008: 200) discusses the importance of websites being built to serve the needs of the user. Therefore if the users of “ The Online Doctor” website’s needs are served the website will enable the new digital platform to achieve its goals. In developing “ The Online Doctor” the most important factors considered was usability and search engine visibility upon which the design was hinged.

According to Lawrence, (2010) the journey through usability, search engine visibility, design and strategised copy needs to be seamless as this will result in higher conversion rates. Usability was achieved in the following way. The site made use of standard conventions such as menus, logos, colours and layout that are distinct, easy to find and consistent throughout the website. For example the “ search for a doctor” and “ search for a pharmacy” tabs

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are both at the top of the website in the same colours. The site has further made use of information architecture in which categorisation flows from broad to narrow and is built around the users needs.

This can be seen when an individual clicks on the “ send to a doctor” icon and the list of South African provinces then opens from there, it is narrowed down to a list of cities and then to the available doctors. In addition the website has ensured accessibility and ease of use by ensuring that all functions on the website work, and by making certain that low bandwidth users can access the site without waiting for hours which according to Marsland (2009: 58) is critical to the retaining customers. They have further ensured that a search box in the top right hand corner is available and works. In this way their users are able to search for a particular doctor or pharmacy that they may require.

In addition through the use of paragraphs, bulleted lists and bold key phrases users can grab the information from the site in as little time as possible. Stokes (2008: 204) states that search engine visibility is vital and through it the search engine will drive traffic to a website. In order for “ The Online Doctor” to be visible to the search engine the following needs to be considered. Their URL needs to be as brief and descriptive as possible, for example www.theonlinedoctor.co.za. In addition they have made use of alt tags above images which are descriptive tags for images (such as Doctors at 2010 Medical Awards above a picture of doctors), as search engines can only read text.

As title tags, which appear on the top of a browser, are used by search engines to determine the content of the webpage, “ The Online Doctor” has titled its page exactly that, as this best describes the content. “ The Online Doctor” also ensures that the information is well organised following a link structure. Moreover, “ The Online Doctor” makes certain that only one URL exists i. e. www.theonlinedoctor.co.za, for the same webpage. This is highly beneficial and will ensure higher ranking by the search engine. Additionally, the design of “ The Online Doctor” utilised cascading style sheets (CSS) which according to Stokes (2008: 212) is a standard layout language that controls colours, typography and the size and placement of elements on a webpage. The utilisation of CSS enabled easier maintenance and update to “ The Online Doctor” website.

In other words as it is so easy to update information, doctors, who are not web developers, can upload prescriptions to the sight with ease. In addition to further enhance the ease of updating by doctors and pharmacies, “ The Online Doctor” made use of a content management system. Stokes (2008: 212) supports this decision as he states that if a site is updated regularly by people other than web developers a content management system is imperative. “ The Online Doctor” needs to apply online copywriting to their website, emails and pay per click advertisements so as to provide information, engage with and convince prospective customer to utilise the new digital platform. This has been done in various ways. The Online Doctor” through its website and emails sent, engages in above the fold, which according to Stokes (2008: 222) is content that appears on a screen without the user having to scroll down. In their emails to prospective users

encouraging them to visit “ The Online Doctor” Facebook page the important information i. e. the invitation and the direct link are above the fold. Through their emails they have utilised active sentences to convey the action/behaviour required as well as a direct call to action. For example “ Log onto to Facebook to visit us. ” “ The Online Doctor” has further described and made use of their features and benefits to create appealing messages to users such as “ indulge in the opportunity to stay at home in bed and let the online doctor attend to your illness in the comfort of your own home. In addition, due to the inexpensive nature of the Internet and email “ The Online Doctor” is able to engage in mass customisation, tailoring content for many individuals. This mass customisation provides relevancy to the individual which according to Ras (2010: 20) will inevitably improve the success of the brand. This can be seen in their emails as they greet the individuals personally, as well as in their personalised account log in on the website that provides them with personalised account information as well as prescriptions. They further develop their unique selling proposition in terms of the actual service, “ The Online Doctor,” itself being innovative. Last of all “ The

Online Doctor” ensures that its copy on both the website and email is standardised so as to be understood by many. Mukhuba (2010) agrees with this as he states that confusing copy can be interpreted differently by different people depending on age, gender, race and culture and therefore needs to be of a standardised nature. They also ensure that the copy on both the website and email is easy to scan, through the use of bulleted and numbered lists (for example the available doctors appear in a bulleted list),

short paragraphs in explaining “ The Online Doctor” and how it works, clear and concise headings (for example “ Available Doctors in Gauteng”) and bold and italics of certain words and phrases. 10.

THE NEED FOR ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT AND ONLINE PUBLIC RELATIONS Stokes (2008: 164) explains that the use of social media has equipped consumers with a voice and a platform providing them with the ability to amplify their positive and negative brand views, which according to Shier (2008) define the brand itself. Therefore, brands need to manage their reputations. In order to control their online reputation, “ The Online Doctor” must engage in listening and monitoring the consumer buzz. In addition online reputation management (ORM) keywords (i. e. those selected keywords mentioned earlier) would allow “ The Online Doctor” to track mentions of itself, its staff, its products, its industry and its competitors.

Moreover, there are a number of different tools that can be utilised by “ The Online Doctor” to monitor areas such as Facebook, blogs, website changes, news etc. One such tool is Google Alerts which will send the brand an email when the keyword is used in news, blogs or social media. Secondly, it is imperative for “ The Online Doctor” to analyse what is being said by all parties, in other words the users, the doctors, the pharmacies, their web developers, and their website. Through this information the brand can then decipher positive from negative views and monitor traffic to these negative statements. Thirdly, “ The Online Doctor” needs to influence, engage in and lead the conversation. According to Stokes (2008: 173) the best way for a brand to show that they are listening is by responding.

In other words if “ The Online Doctor” only receives positive comments they need to respond by acknowledging them. However if they receive criticisms that are true they need to be dealt with immediately. On the other hand if these criticisms are false they need to correct it in a friendly manner by providing evidence. Pretorius (2008) is in agreement with this as she states false facts can destroy a brand's reputation and therefore need to be rectified immediately. Above all “ The Online Doctor” needs to manage their online reputation by listening, maintaining communication and being prepared. In addition, Stokes (2008: 182) defines online public relations (also known as WebPR) as the ways in which a brand can expose their messages online.

It is used to connect with customers and enhance brand awareness, exposure and search engine optimisation using different online channels such as article directories, press release sites, and social media. WebPR would enable brands such as “ The Online Doctor” to manage their online reputations by responding to consumers with honesty and using the tools of the Internet to build and enhance the brand's voice. Stokes (2008: 185) describes online article syndication as one of WebPR's principle and most successful tactics. This would involve “ The Online Doctor” public relations personnel writing articles that are in no way a direct promotion of the site.

These would be written to provide information and valuable content about “ The Online Doctor”. They are then submitted to online article directories where they are picked up and published on other sites such as Dischem or Click website for example. As these articles contain links and keywords relevant to “ The Online Doctor” website it is beneficial to search engine optimisation. Furthermore, “ The Online Doctor” can utilise press releases

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which according to Stokes (2008: 188) is a standardised format for releasing information, in order to reveal new information about “ The Online Doctor” such as doctors inventing new remedies, or the release of new medical products on the market.

The use of online press releases are highly beneficial to “ The Online Doctor” or any other brand as it allows for almost instant publishing of news, top rankings with search engines, a distribution beyond their contact list, far greater reach and trackability of reach and distribution. Furthermore, using the tools provided by social media, templates for social media press releases have been designed to communicate facts more clearly and concisely. “ The Online Doctor” would make use of their Facebook page as well as the tools of Facebook such as “ share” icons and “ thread” messages to inform consumers of the new, relevant information. Lastly, Bester accentuates the most significance factor of WebPR (2009) as she states that communication is what connects you to your customers and drives your reputation and should therefore be a key priority. 11. THE DYNAMICS OF TRACKING TOOLS

Stokes (2008: 236) illustrates that online, a brand, is provided with a wealth of resources to assist it with tracking, analysing and optimising its performance. Brands and websites such as “ The Online Doctor” need to clearly define their goals as these are used to measure the success of the website. There are two main technology approaches for collecting web analytics data namely log file analysis and page tagging. According to Stokes (2008: 240) log file analysis software reads the records, called log files, on the web server which records all clicks that take place on the server.

Furthermore, page tagging sends information to a third party server, where <https://assignbuster.com/digital-marketing-assignment-essay-samples-7/>

statistics can be generated. It is recommended that “ The Online Doctor” utilise both as they have differentiating advantages.

Log file analysis would benefit “ The Online Doctor as raw data is readily available, log files are highly accurate, and log files record visits from search engine spiders. Page tagging is advantageous due to its utilisation of JavaScript enabling easier information capture, and it can be used by organisations that do not run their own web servers. In addition “ The Online Doctor” must be aware of the different types of web analytics metrics namely count, ratio and key performance indicators as well as the three different universe’s, specifically aggregate (all the traffic), segmented (a subset of traffic) and the individual (a single user), that the metrics can be applied to.

Lastly there are different key metrics upon which “ The Online Doctor” can focus but as a result of its goal of obtaining prospective customers to utilise the website and service, it would focus on visit and content characterisation as well as conversion metrics such as adwords tracking, goal tracking and ecommerce tracking. Once the raw figures have been gathered, “ The Online Doctor” can engage in a three point approach to web analytics. Firstly they can analyse behaviour data that infers the intent of the sites visitors and what they expect “ The Online Doctor” to solve. Secondly, they can analyse outcome metrics that show how many visitors performed the goal actions (of getting visitors to use “ The Online Doctor”) on the website. Thirdly testing and analysing the data, will provide “ The Online Doctor” with information about the user experience.

By understanding why users behave in a certain way on “ The Online Doctor” website will show the brand how that behaviour can be influence so as to increase successful outcomes. According to Shier (2008), conversion optimisation is largely about making a change and testing the impacts that the change has. In addition, Blake (2010) highlights the importance of conversion optimisation for a successful website in the way that it can boost the websites performance, therefore increasing revenue and making consumers happy. There are many ways that “ The Online Doctor” can utilise conversion optimisation. Furthermore, “ The Online Doctor” can utilise A/B split testing which according to Stokes (2008: 246) measures one variable at a time to determine its effects on an outcome.

For example “ The Online Doctor” could utilise two different email subject lines for the same email inviting users to become a fan of their Facebook page, to see which produces a superior open rate. Another form of testing that can be utilised is multivariate testing which enables testing of many variables at once and still determining which version of each variable has a significant effect on outcomes (Stokes, 2008: 246). “ The Online Doctor” could test for the colour, font size and image size of their websites. In addition, “ The Online Doctor” can also utilise single page heat maps that would assist them to know what areas of the site are clickable but attract few or no clicks, and what areas are not clickable but have users attempting to click there. 12. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as a result of the current innovative experience driven economy, brands and their functioning have the opportunity to utilise digital platforms to build themselves and reach new market segments. However,
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these brands are functioning in a market defined by consumers as providing worthless clutter due to immense number of brands trying to compete against one another. Furthermore, in order for these brands to not only survive but also thrive by gaining a competitive advantage, it is essential for the development of a new digital platform as a brand such as “ The Online Doctor” that offers the prospect to build itself, present a brand experience and create new avenues for the consumer to interact with the brand.

As a result of these implications required for online success it is therefore suggested that innovative digital platforms take into consideration the various online elements such as digital touch points and tracking in order to ensure that the new digital platform, is an effective, creative and strategic brand building tool. 13. SOURCE LIST Anonymous. (2008a). Mobile Marketing. Available from: <http://www.marketingmix.co.za/pebble.asp?relid=3200>. (Accessed 1 June 2010) Anonymous. (April 2008b). Status Stories. Available from: <http://www.trendwatching.com/briefing/> (Accessed 3 April 2008). Anonymous. (2009a). SA consumers cut discretionary spending.

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