Technology for Establishing a Global Presence using Electronic Branding & Marketing : A Perspective Implementation aspect

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Introduction :

The opportunity of establishing a global presence is the key focus of this article, and we will explore the options and discuss the implementation aspects. Implementing Internet Technologies to enhance the firm's Marketing & (Electronic) Branding activities will raise the visibility of these firms, as the internet is widely deployed, and is a cost effective medium. A large number of Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) across industries stand to gain from the proliferation of the Internet with reduced investment for Marketing, Promoting and Branding to address the global market. It is relatively easier for big companies as these can take advantage of in-house expertise, resources to acquire the best-in-class technologies and expensive external consultants for the customer transactions and interfaces as they have already deployed these technology based solution to manage production, processes, productivity and people. The solution for the SMBs should, thus, address the crucial problem of their investment capability, while considering implementation of Internet Technologies.

In the economies of developed as well as developing countries, the SMBs are central to the process of creating economic value, job and wealth. The difference between a successful or failed business finally boils down to the skill and expertise in acquiring, servicing and retaining customers. Thus providing tools to SMEs to acquire new customers and manage their business, harnessing the spread and potential of the Internet, is critical to their growth.

Implementing Internet

Technologies to enhance the firm's Marketing & (Electronic) Branding activities will raise the visibility of these firms, as the internet is widely deployed, and is a cost effective medium.

Our definition of the SMB Small and Medium Business covers a Turnover range of Rs 10 Lacs to Rs 50 Crores companies that include Manufacturing Units, Traders and Exporters, Software units, Consultant, as also Retailers, Fast Food Chains, Health Clinics, Clubs, Educational centers, Investment Consultants who wish to operate efficiently in domestic / local market. If we are to ask a key question: "Who needs the internet for marketing and branding?", we believe that the answer would comprise of businesses meeting some of the following criteria :

- ?? Where customer, suppliers or partners are distributed widely geographically
- ?? When many existing / prospective customers, suppliers or partners use the net,
- ?? Where local presence for physical promotion and branding is outside firm's reach.

It is really irrelevant whether Competitors' have their websites on the net or not.

It is important that the reader gains a reasonable understanding of the terminology of Internet based Marketing, and we have created working definitions for commonly used terms below :

E Marketing encompasses the tasks of Informing, Communicating and Promoting products and services by making information available over the net, covering the availability of the product and services (through physical product and service delivery channels) for achieving sales and provide inputs that helps generate good word of mouth. It is achieved by getting the customer to visit a featured outlet. Almost every large sized firm has this kind of basic information available on their website.

More advanced sites deal with queries on Products and Services through the usage of forms, FAQs and dedicated help service. Usually, these sites have richer content dealing with company's History, Milestones, Policies, highlighting unique strengths and information on Job opportunities.

E Commerce, on the other hand includes the additional technology capability built in a website that permits transactions including enquiring, selecting, collecting payment and providing customer support to ensure "automated" selling of product and services on the net with a bundle of associated services. The complexities involved in ensuring a secure transaction environment for the company as well the customer makes it an expensive and challenging task. User-friendliness makes the difference.

E Business is the most complex form of these technologies, which includes the use of integrated technology platforms and applications to conduct company's entire set of business processes in an automated manner. The example of www.amazon.com, as the best-known e - retailer in the world is relevant here. Amazon utilises the Internet to achieve cheaper, faster and wide accessibility of its services. From any Internet access point, one can spot a bargain and get it delivered, while the system keeps you posted on the fulfillment cycle.

This articles makes the assumption that most of the customers and channel intermediaries (of the businesses under consideration) have access to the Internet at the work place, and have the capability to use the internet and electronic computer based applications to conduct their
business on a routine basis. Also, the author has taken it for granted that concepts / usage of Marketing, Branding and the Internet are not unfamiliar and are well understood. Reading these concepts is
suggested for those who are not quite familiar with these terms.
To get an idea about why people surf on the net, please refer to Table A below:
It is reassuring to note that online directories, news sites, research events and products, usage of search engines (to locate information, etc.) and e-mails are of key importance to the user. These are the same areas that we attempt to target through Marketing and Branding using the Internet. The usage of the Internet by Business Users is growing at over 30 % p.a.
(the growth rate being more than double of the residential user group). They are using the Internet

Reason for use of the Internet

to search for Vendors, Products (through specifications), to obtain Availability and Prices inputs and post Requirements on line (on their sites with links to industry portals).
Referring to an IDC White paper (Titled stepping up to eBusiness -2001) some of the key concern areas of the owner / managers of Small & Medium Businesses include: getting new customers, work efficiently with current customers, finding more time in a day, using technology effectively and using the Internet effectively. And, it is universal!
Having established that there is a growing case for Branding and Marketing using the Internet, let us look at the Businesses to understand what are the typical issues faced by them. The major problem areas are:
1 . It is difficult and expensive to establish and maintain web-presence due to investment and
technical constraints, as a result of which Sales opportunities are often in lack of up-to-date information on
^^
products, or current price lists (when and where it is wanted),
2.Creating and maintaining web content is dependent on external agencies, costing money apart from the efforts involved in follow ups to get things somewhat right!
The key purpose of Marketing, either in the real or virtual world remains the same. It comprises of Creating awareness (that in turn leads to brand building and enhancing the demand for the product, over a period of time), tracking campaigns, creating rich customer contact records, fulfilling literature requests, providing information, assistance or support over web and email, and creating linkage to customer order and support database.
If the above tasks are performed consistently overtime, this will lead to the compilation of all prospect and customer data in a single repository. That in turn will help easily identify the key accounts within this repository. With the right set of analytical capabilities, processes and tools, it will also be possible to develop an ideal client profile(s) by identifying key attributes for targeting just the right kind in a database, based on selection of relevant attributes. Lastly, this will help in identifying prospective client organisations, similar to the businesses, where the offered services are drawing repeat purchases.

feasible only if, there is a systematic effort at acquiring names of key players in the newly identified prospect organizations. This would involve generating leads from key customers through references, converting qualified leads into revenue, forecasting sales pipeline and evaluating the effectiveness of new marketing campaign by understanding which product / service map relates to a specific segment, and conduct surveys to determine level of Customer Satisfaction in each of these segments to drive improvement.
Now that the activities and benefits from the marketing efforts are stated, it may be the right place to seek a few inputs to determine the steps ahead. The following questions will help unearth the key issues for attracting and retaining visitors, prospects:
• How much should you spend on building and marketing your site?
• How can you get more prospects to know and visit your site?
• How do you make your site more experiential and real?
• How can you convert visitors into repeaters?

And once the web site becomes successful (in terms of number of visitors and transactions), the next phase would need to focus on a set of more complex issues:

- How can you build a stronger relationship with your current customers?
- How can you build a customer .community?
- How can you capture and utilise customer data for up selling and cross selling?
- How can you use marketing to spread word-of-mouth?

As it would be clear from the questions, the answers would vary significantly for different organisations, depending on the type of business, nature of business,
customer profile as well as the ability to invest and sustain the level of focus on Internet based marketing.

It may have been perplexing to find the answer to the questions (How do you?...) listed above, for the uninitiated. Experience in the real world indicates that some form of promotion would be necessary to start and maintain the inward flow of visitors to one's website. And, the options for Advertising on the Internet are cheaper than the real world counter-parts. The key considerations here are:

- What are the various ways you can advertise on the Internet?
- How do you choose the right sites for placing your ads or sponsorship?

The available options for Placing Ads and Promotions Online include:

1. Banner ads: Those small changing ads close to the content. These are the most popular, and account for 40% of the overall advertising on the net. They are simple and easy to create, relatively inexpensive, link directly to advertiser's website, delivering quantifiable results.

2. Sponsorship is the usage of a fixed space by an associate service provider. It is also quite popular and accounts for 31 % of the overall advertising on the net.

3. Interstitials are those ads that pop up as you are surfing between two sites- 8%,

4. Alliances and affiliate programs displayed on a site,

5. Push based mailers with
commercial content account for 1 2 % of net expenses.

Often with the right kind of back-end (databases and applications) in place, it will be possible to produce a transactional database. This will permit sending of targeted e-maik for following up visitors, prospects and customers.

The Internet as a medium offers many tools for Marketing and using them judiciously (i.e. the right kind of sites with appropriate frequency and targeted message content) leads to the creation of a Brand on the Internet. It is important to state that unless the word of mouth for the product or service is already present (Being advertised on the net is phenomenally expensive?), it is always a good practice to support Internet presence with print communication.

Key Metrics for advertising on the Internet that are in use currently among the users and advertising sellers include:

- Cost per thousand impressions (CPM) when a banner ad keeps popping up,
- Click through Rate CTR as an
- Power Ratios (Ad spend / Time spent).

However, what the advertiser would like to see are more closely coupled to Business

- Cost per click,
- Cost per lead,
- Cost per sale.

The Internet provides two key modes of communicating your commercial / marketing message. It provides an option between the Internet advertising or through e-mails.

Table B highlights the usage of email with different content and usage categories below:

If one is to compare Direct Mailers
with emails, some clear advantages
emerge:

Marketing areas that can be
improved through Technology and
the Internet include:

- Promotion: Direct Marketing, Advertising, limited Period Offers, Targeted Offers
- Brand Recall and Image Building

I
- Customer Contact, Interaction & Service
- Customer Relationship & Loyalty
- Use the Internet as an alternate sales and product distribution channel

Table C compares the relative effectiveness of e-Advertising and Direct e-Marketing.

In order to be successful in Branding and Marketing using the Internet, a number of Critical
Hosting, firewalls, uptime & Recovery
Listing website on relevant Search Engines
Ability to constantly upgrade/ modify freely
Associated costs &

E-Mail Targeting - High and Right is Best

TABLE B
One-to-One
Segmented
Board
Targeting Offers
Plain Text/ Link
Targeting Graphics
Images and HTML
Interactive & Graphics
Establish a Corporate Website, and have it running quickly at a low cost,

Internet Advertising & Marketing Breakdown

TABLE C
Internet Advertising & Direct Marketing
E-Advertising
Impression-Based
Branding Metric : CPM
Direct E-Markting
Action Based Metric : Click-Through
high
Low
Low
High
Banners
Sponsorships
Interstitial
E-Mail E-Coupons
Source : *Morgan Stanley* Deon W/rter Research *and Digital Impact*
Success Factors have been identified. These include:
• Ownership of domain name and content as these are investments of great value

Direct Mailers

reliability
• and, lastly Keeping track of the hits!
Nihilent Technology, a Pune based IT consulting and Software company has
explored and evaluated the requirements, and Internet usage of the Indian SMB users listed below:
• Web presence to increase Global Reach.
Source : Morgan *Stanley Deon* V. ~*e*ʳ Research and *Digital* /r-csc'
Create, Upload and Modify content frequently,
The technology and utility should permit the owner to modify, even by himself,
Product and contact details are available 24x7 on the net, after closing for the day,
Consultant independent options for Web Development, Updation & Maintenance, and
E-mails to reduce Communication costs reducing Phone, Fax, Courier & Postal Mail.

E-mails

Acquiring mailing database is complex. Getting mailer designed by creative firm, Printing, handling and mailing cost For 1000 mailers the cost comes to
* Rs. 1 0, OOO/- with a 2 to 4 % hit ratio
* Response rate   2%
* Conversion -   < 1 0% of response rate
Utilising e-mail database is more complex Global spam ratio 52% 1 0 out of 1 9 emails Lower cost & higher reach, as revealed by
* Minimum mailers   25000

* Cost/ mailers   Rs.3/-
* Click through ratio   0.7%
* Conversion 1% of click through

At a more detailed level, it was found that more advanced businesses were looking at :
• E-mail
Management for
Productivity & Decisions-

Ease of use by aggregating content on related subjects for e-mails exchanged,
•   Be in a position to use the power, reach and very low cost of use of the internet for their Marketing Communication, and Campaigns,
•   The changeover also permits sharing information widely and instantaneously,
•   The brochure-ware capability of a web-site also reduces costs of Marketing Collaterals by creating professional campaigns, quality brochures at a low-cost, and
•   Seeking opinions, views or confidential inputs from employees, customers and suppliers.

For the above wish list to come true, the SMB needs:
•   A minimum interface with web-consultants and other service providers,
•   Through a low cost Do-It-
Yourself Technology Tools linked to Web site planning, development and initial setting up,
•   E-mail set-up and management, without buying software,
•   Web content updating &
modification, as and when you need it - from your desktop,
•   Single point for Domain
registration renewal, email setup, management, website, and
•   Website administration and maintenance.

The above list of features is oriented towards efficiency and productivity for the businesses.

Over and above these, as the businesses, its employees, customers and associates get more comfortable with conducting businesses over the net, more and more advanced features can be added to the site. These include:
•   File download - Word, Excel, PPT, etc.,
•   Flash /gif - upload animated images,
•   E-catalog - product catalog on the site,
•   Webmail - personalized E-mail on web,
•   SMS - send an SMS to alert -new mail, and
•   Shopping cart linked to a payment gateway.

The most important aspect is that the above will give the user control over the content and performance of the site. And, the site will then generate revenue and become a profit center!

It should be obvious^ why advanced technology continues to be intensively used in a large company. They have the resources for the Hardware, Infrastructure, Operating Systems and other core software^ as well as a whole host of applications that need to be integrated and maintained over a period of time. Technology investment can only workt when the firm has skilled resources to get the most out of the technology investments. So, whatjs the likelihood of a SMB entity succeeding with less of Technology, Resources and skills? The answer lies in the concept of Third Party Service providers, who make the investments in Technology, Resources and Skills, making the ready to use^ product available for use minus all the hassles of setting up and the glitches in usage. Therefore, apart from having an Internet access^ and loading some specific software modules on the desktops of individual employees using the facility, the entire burden of the investments, operations and functionality (achieved through the right mix of hardware, infrastructure, application solutions) as well as assured continuous development of features and functions^ fall in in line with the growth of usage. The way this model works is through subscription^ where the service provider's investment is paid back through subscription by a number of SMBs signing up and enjoying the benefits. A good example of such a business-oriented service is provided by www.thirddream.com

By subscribing to such a service, it will be possible to avoid the pitfalls of a number of SMB sites. Such sites are unattractive and carry outdated information that actually erodes the value of the site. The reasons for failure to stay put on the web could be summarised as insufficient initial planning, incorrect scope, change of requirements, and inability to detect problems. None of these would arise, if the SMB owner were to concentrate on running his business and leave the web to the professionals. This would obviate the typical problems of unqualified project teams and uncooperative support groups that create hurdles in success of a viable web site.

Having said that, it is necessary to re-iterate key elements of what it takes to succeed in Net oriented Marketing. These are

1. Developing a deep
understanding of customer requirements and their profiles so that one clearly identifies where to promote and what the prospective visitor would want to look for in our site.

2. Even more important than getting the visitor to visit your site is the degree of readiness to handle queries by improving the responsiveness of your team. Using the Internet is aimed at reducing cycle times, and the same holds for the responses!

3. Often in order to create an even better impression, organisations are tempted to state or depict products or services that may have limitations or are not available for sale currently. Such instances go towards reducing the credibility of the site. It is important to ensure that the content is firmly linked to current offerings.

4. It is also important to have a team that matches the vibrancy of the site, and build the excitement and liveliness of the site so that even regular visitors get attracted by the changing content to return more frequently. This also helps building a higher recall for the site.

As one gains experience form the past actions, it is important to learn
and apply these to improve everything in the site for the better, and be continuously ahead of your competitors! These would lead to even more features and functionalities in the areas of Shipment & Delivery Tracking and on-line Customer Support.

I To conclude, many Governments, notably the Government in UK (through its UK Online initiative) are helping SMBs use the power of internet for business, leading to a growth of their revenues, productivity, efficiency and profits (http://www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov .uk/).

Similar initiatives by local or central Government agencies associated with Small and Medium Businesses and industry bodies would help the SMB significantly in India. The Internet, thus, provides a strategic opportunity for Indian SMBs to go global quickly!

The Laws of Business Success

Brian Tracy

What is success? Success can be defined as "being happy with what you've got." Success is not necessarily determined by material possessions or accomplishments. You can enjoy success simply by reaching the point where you are perfectly content with your life in every respect and you feel no dissatisfaction or pressing need for anything else. In this sense, you can be a success sitting by yourself in a quiet place contemplating the world.

Achievement is different from success. Achievement refers to "getting what you want." Achievement requires the ability to set goals and objectives, to make plans of action, and then to implement those plans. Achievement requires that you overcome obstacles and difficulties in reaching the goals that you have set for yourself.

In both cases, success and achievement, the starting point of great accomplishment is for you to decide exactly what you want in
every part of your personal and business life.

The remarkable truth is that you always seem to achieve the goals that you set for yourself. If your goal is a small one, for example, to get home at night and watch television, you will certainly achieve it. If your goal is a large one-to achieve financial success, prosperity, and prestige among the people you live and work with-you will achieve that as well.

Your mind contains a cybernetic, goal-seeking mechanism. Once you have programmed a target or a desire into your sub- conscious mind, your subconscious and your superconscious minds take on a power of their own that seems to both drive and steer you inevitably toward the attainment of your goal, whatever it is.

In this sense, goal achieving seems to happen almost automatically. This goal-seeking capacity is as natural to ysu as breathing in and breathing out. The difficulty always lies in your ability to set clear goals
in the first place. The key to activating the Laws of Success is for you to become perfectly clear about what it is you want and exactly what it will look like when you have achieved it. Just as you wouldn't attempt to build a house without a plan, you wouldn't think of building a great life without a clear list of the goals you wish to attain and a written plan of action for the attainment of each of those goals.

You can move yourself into the top rank of people living today by the simple act of sitting down with a pad of paper and a pen and making a list of the things you want. Most people have never done this.

You feel more confident and optimistic. You feel more in control and in command of your life. Best of all, when your goals and plans are in writing, the probability of your accomplishing them increases ten times, or by about 1,000 percent.

Excerpted from **Laws of Business Success**
I A S M ft C   M A N A G L M f N i   K I V