



First, there was internet marketing – which started out in the form of advertisements on websites. Then, there was digital marketing – which instead of confining its reach to internet users, now reaches out to practically anyone and everyone else who uses technology, be it on the mobile phone, sms/mms services, or simply walking past an outdoor digital display.

Shevonne Ang of The Singapore Marketer speaks to James Robbins – Associate Account Director of Mobile Marketing at OgilvyOne Worldwide, Singapore, and a member of the Marketing Institute for his account on how digital marketing is taking the world by storm.

The birth of digital marketing in recent years has provided a blank canvas for new creative opportunities for marketers. How has it impacted your ideas and propositions to your clients?

Digital marketing has been around for a long time. What we have seen recently is an escalation in the use of digital channels old and new. Internet and specifically broadband penetration numbers are up. Social networks and blogs have empowered consumers creating a global forum for opinions and discussion – it is a really exciting time.

Our ideas haven't changed, any successful campaign starts with a big idea. Digital offers us new methods to communicate with specific audiences and sophisticated tools for measurement and tracking. When developing a campaign idea we try not to let technology drive our thinking and focus on what's the core objective. Then we look at suitable channels that fit with the big idea. The benefit of digital today is the advancement in the tools to create stunning interactive work that encourages a dialogue between a brand and consumer, from websites and mobile applications to interactive digital point of sale.

While the bigger companies are beginning to come to terms with how important digital marketing is for their businesses, how do you think the small and medium businesses can embark on this journey?

I would argue that smaller businesses are more fluent with digital marketing and have shaped the path for larger, less flexible organisations to follow. There are always budget constraints for any company but most have at least a website. What is interesting with smaller companies is the effective use of search engine marketing and tactical online media plans.

Many large, global organisations suffer from disparity between departments or sub-brands, an issue that doesn't complicate the SME's marketing and communications. The problem now with larger companies jumping on these tools and tactics is the significant increase in the costs to advertise online as they compete to "own" the space.

User generated content is driving the growth of the internet and may one day possess the ability to make or break a brand. Do you see the day when advertising eventually loses its power over the online community of consumers?

This is already happening with consumers having tremendous power and global reach. A local campaign can hit a global audience for the wrong reasons, bad news travels substantially faster than good news!

There are thousands of consumers commenting on, reviewing and discussing products and services online. Traditional or commercial review sites aren't always the first port of call for skeptical consumers looking for unbiased information that they trust.

The problem for brands is being in the right place with the right message. Most media plans I see these days completely neglect the right places, the blogs, the forums, the social networks, the media sharing sites and prefer focusing on major portals, that get high traffic, instead of using the correct tools to find a specific target audience that may be a minority, but will respond with a higher conversion rate.

At an age where digital technology is transforming the consumption of media in a huge way, what is your prediction of the next wave in digital marketing?

Technology and digital channels will always be evolving. There is no one big thing, it's a combination of many things and the big pressure resides with the agencies and clients to recognize that the traditional advertising model is broken, that there are no lines (ATL/BTL/Online etc). It's all about big ideas being broadcasted via ever increasing and exciting methods. As marketers we need to understand these advancements quickly and have the gusto to evangelise to our clients and ensure we use them correctly.