

Impact of Digital Marketing on Business Growth in Nepal

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Abstract

Digital marketing has transformed business practices worldwide, including in Nepal, driven by the widespread adoption of the internet and smartphones. Over the past decade, Nepal's digital landscape has evolved rapidly, marked by increased internet penetration, improved connectivity, and the growing use of digital payment systems. These developments have enabled businesses to expand market reach, enhance customer engagement, and acquire new customers through technology-enabled platforms. This study examines the impact of digital marketing on business development in Nepal by analyzing its key benefits, including cost-effectiveness, brand awareness, and customer interaction. It also explores major challenges faced by Nepalese businesses, such as limited technological knowledge, inadequate access to digital devices, and cultural considerations that require localized marketing approaches. By investigating how startups and established organizations utilize digital tools—such as search engines, social media, and email marketing—the study provides insights into consumer behavior and emerging market trends in Nepal. Furthermore, the research assesses the future prospects of digital marketing in the context of rapid technological change and shifting consumer preferences. The study emphasizes the importance of adopting innovative, data-driven strategies to remain competitive and offers recommendations for businesses, policymakers, and researchers seeking to harness the potential of digital marketing in Nepal's dynamic business environment.

Keywords: digital marketing, business growth, SMEs, social media marketing, internet penetration

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Introduction

Online marketing transforms traditional business practices with inexpensive, high-target promotion mechanisms that maximize customer engagement and business growth. Nepal, as a developing nation with an evolving digital market, presents a unique blend of challenges and opportunities in this regard. With the expansion of the use of the internet, particularly through mobile phones, Nepalese businesses increasingly look to online media to engage with their target markets. The role of digital marketing towards Nepalese firm performance has been under examination in this study, and a focus is placed on the most critical customer acquisition, brand awareness, customer engagement, and revenue generation metrics. Digital marketing strategies include search engine optimisation (SEO), social media marketing (SMM),

email marketing, content marketing, influencer marketing, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). They allow organisations to reach local and global consumers effectively, targeting specific customer groups with messages. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are gaining traction in Nepal as effective tools for reaching young consumers, with YouTube and search engines like Google offering avenues for video and display advertising. The application of analytics tools such as Google Analytics and social media analytics enables businesses to track the performance of their campaigns in real-time and alter them for improved results. Despite all such improvements, there are serious problems as well. Nepal's digital ecosystem is infested with chronic issues such as low digital literacy, weak internet infrastructure in rural areas of the country, and high prices of quality internet services (Rai, 2023). Also, cultural, linguistic, and consumer resistance to change demands context-based marketing. Campaigns that work in urban areas, i.e., Kathmandu, will need to be drastically reoriented to find more traction with rural consumers where there is still high adherence to traditional values as well as media consumption patterns. Businesses can circumvent these pitfalls and have a long-term sustainable presence in the market by bridging infrastructural gaps, enhancing digital literacy through education, and translating content.

Digital marketing possesses tremendous potential for driving business development in Nepal, specifically through elevating customer acquisition, raising awareness for a brand, and generating revenue. With growing internet connectivity and access through mobile, new avenues for companies to access a larger base of potential customers have emerged through digital channels. Yet, technology adoption, in terms of digital marketing, remains disparate, with urban companies having a relatively greater proportion of companies utilizing such tools in contrast to rural and semi-urban locations. This diversity in technology adoption arises mainly

through factors such as poor digital infrastructure, lack of availability of resources, and low digital literacy in less developed regions.

Furthermore, there is a considerable lack of tailoring digital marketing techniques according to Nepal's multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-class environment. Several companies struggle to contextualize campaigns in a manner that appeals to various groups of consumers in a region. The application of a one-fits-all model with a view towards current worldwide trends in digital marketing restricts companies from effectively connecting with Nepal's multi-dimensional populace. The inability to generate relevant, locally specific content and language-based targeting options is an added factor in driving under-performance in specific geos under digital marketing campaigns.

Additionally, a lack of trust in online transactions continues to hinder the widespread acceptance of e-commerce in Nepal. Consumers, particularly in rural communities, still have apprehensions regarding online payment platforms, and this deters them from participating in such transactions through electronic platforms. This lack of trust can discourage companies from embracing the full-fledged use of e-commerce and incorporating it into electronic marketing strategies.

The purpose of this study is to bridge these gaps through an examination of the role of electronic marketing in business development in Nepal, with specific consideration for factors driving its use. It will assess the contribution of electronic marketing to business performance and develop strategies for overcoming its challenges in terms of infrastructure, electronic competency, and cultural adaptation, prevalent in Nepali companies, in particular. Through this investigation, the study hopes to present insights and recommendations that will allow companies, particularly SMEs, to utilize the full potential of electronic marketing for growth and long-term survival in the Nepali economy.

In an age of worldwide digitization, an awareness of the changing role of digital marketing in Nepal is a must for companies working towards durable development and competitiveness. Through this research, an attempt is made to shed light on opportunities and challenges in the country's specific digital marketing environment, providing actionable insights and recommendations for its rich cultural and infrastructure realities. By studying successful case studies and studying the performance of digital marketing in sectors, this work proposes a blueprint for companies to realize the potential of digital tools.

In addition, through this study, an attempt will be made to inform policymakers and stakeholders in smoothing out structural obstacles such as poor digital infrastructure, low level of digital literacy, and trust deficit in the minds of buyers. By pinpointing areas for focused intervention, such as developing capacities and enhancing access to digital tools, this work aims to contribute towards creating a vibrant digital ecosystem in Nepal. In the long run, such efforts will enable companies of all sizes to realize their potential, driving innovation, inclusivity, and economic development in a more interconnected world.

Research Objectives

Following are the objectives of the present study:

- o To analyze the impact and effectiveness of digital marketing tools and strategies on business growth in Nepal.
- o To identify the key challenges faced by Nepali businesses in implementing digital marketing practices.
- o To provide actionable recommendations for optimizing digital marketing efforts in the Nepali business context.

4. Literature Review

Literature Review

Since its beginning, digital marketing has gone through a tremendous change. Initially, marketing involved static websites that served as

electronic pamphlets with no interaction and basic email campaigns. Search engine development in the early 2000s enhanced companies' online visibility even further, but such techniques were simple and focused on listing goods and services. As new technology and changing consumer behaviour developed, digital marketing grew to become a complex and multi-faceted field.

Now, digital marketing involves a variety of sophisticated techniques, such as programmatic advertisement, influencer marketing, artificial intelligence (AI)-based personalization, and omnichannel marketing. Programmatic advertisement enables companies to buy digital ad space programmatically, targeting specific groups with accuracy using analysis of data. Influence marketing has become an effective tool for companies to reach out to buyers, with social media influencers with significant followers having a strong say in buying behaviour. AI-facilitated personalization personalizes the consumer journey by offering recommendations based on past behaviour, preferences, and activity, making marketing relevant and exciting. Omnichannel techniques, in contrast, deliver a harmonious and consolidated customer journey incorporated through many platforms, both online and offline (Kotler et al., 2021).

These advancements in digital marketing have helped companies worldwide to garner increased return on investment (ROI), streamline customer experiences, and make fact-based decisions. By capturing and analyzing customer information, companies can sharpen their strategies, even more, and tailor them in a manner that is congruent to the wants and needs of buyers. Consequently, digital marketing is imperative for companies wishing to remain competitive in an ever-changing marketplace. As a developing country with diverse geography and socio-economic disparities, Nepal is experiencing rapid digital growth, driven by increased internet access, mobile penetration, and government initiatives like the Digital Nepal Framework (Shah, Sah & Jha, 2025). In Nepal, similar trends can also be seen. With a growing

inclination towards sophisticated approaches to digital marketing, companies in Nepal have moved away from simple web presence to information-based, multi-channel campaigns that utilize numerous digital tools. As yet, Nepal's digital marketing scenario is developing, but in the past years, rapid development in this field can be seen, fueled by growing connectivity and penetration of the web and mobile technology.

Digital Marketing in Nepal

The growth in digital marketing in Nepal can be credited to some factors, most notably the growing availability of the Internet. According to the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA), internet penetration in Nepal will rise by over 90% in 2024, a major benchmark fueled by smartphone price drop increased smartphone adoption, and expansion in mobile broadband offerings (Adhikari, 2023). With an increased availability of connectivity, and an ever-growing pool of Nepali buyers consuming digital content, new avenues for companies to target a larger group of buyers, therefore, arise.

Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok dominate the Nepali online sphere with social media platforms taking over. With these platforms, companies have a range of avenues through which they can target buyers with customised advertisement, collaboration with influencers, and interactive content. Out of these platforms, Facebook has continued to be most preferred, offering companies a chance to target a general group of buyers, with Instagram and TikTok having gained traction, with the youth buyers being key.

The explosion in video content has played a significant role in this transformation, with platforms such as YouTube and TikTok becoming incredibly popular. Videos allow companies to target buyers more vibrantly and interactively, which serves a useful purpose in marketing, especially when targeting youth, technology-embracing buyers.

Search engine marketing (SEM) is becoming yet another emerging trend in Nepal. SEM

techniques, including Google Ads, are increasingly being adopted by local businesses to expand their presence in search engines. Apart from SEM, the emerging trend of localized content is also contributing to the development of Nepal's digital marketing trends. As Nepal boasts a multi-lingual and multi-cultural populace, companies are identifying the importance of formulating localized digital marketing strategies in terms of language and cultural sensitization. Content in the native language, speaking with localized subjects in a localized language, is emerging as a powerful tool for generating buzz and developing loyalists among target segments. By following cultural sensitization and taking into consideration localized consumer preferences, companies can maximize the effectiveness of their digital campaign (Shrestha, 2024).

The integration of SEO and SEM techniques with localized content and social media campaigns helps companies in Nepal develop a multi-faceted campaign for connecting with target segments. By utilizing such techniques, companies can extend their digital presence, become communicative with customers on a variety of platforms, and maximize their marketing for effectiveness.

Impact on SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a critical role in Nepal's digital marketing boom. Most SMEs, working with meagre resources, have discovered that digital marketing is an efficient and cost-effective platform for growing and widening the circle of customers. Unlike conventional marketing techniques such as television and print advertisement, with high expenses and no guaranteed delivery, digital marketing comes in cheap alternatives with demonstrable returns, allowing SMEs to maximize expenses and maximize return on investment.

Digital marketing presents numerous advantages for SMEs, such as increased brand awareness, improved customer engagement, and increased sales and revenue. According to studies, companies that implement digital marketing

channels witness considerable improvement in terms of customer gain and awareness of the brand name. For instance, a study conducted by Thapa (2023) discovered that companies utilizing Facebook Ads saw a 40% boost in sales compared to counterparts utilizing conventional marketing channels exclusively. Apart from increased sales, SMEs can use digital platforms to target niche segments that could not have been reached through conventional channels.

A survey conducted by Gurung (2024) discovered that 70% of SMEs utilizing digital platforms have experienced an improvement in the retention of customers in one year's use of such platforms. Customer retention can be attributed to the fact that companies can respond in real-time, answer queries, and establish deeper relations through personalized communications and personalized offers. Social media platforms, in particular, have been discovered to be an effective tool in creating continuous dialogue and generating loyal customers.

Despite these achievements, SMEs have several challenges in fully exploiting opportunities in digital marketing. One of them is the insufficient technical capabilities of owners and workers, which can make it difficult for them to effectively conduct digital campaigns. There is a lack of workers with expertise and competencies in developing and utilizing sophisticated digital marketing techniques, including SEO, content marketing, and analysis, in most SMEs in Nepal. In addition, the lack of information regarding supportive tools and resources for SMEs also restricts them from embracing full use of digital marketing opportunities.

An additional challenge is a lack of strong analytics and tracking tools for data collection. Most SMEs lack a proper mechanism for tracking the success of their digital campaign and therefore suffer in optimizing their strategies according to performance. Overcoming such impediments through capacity development, training programs,

and access to cheap and effective tools for digital marketing can enable SMEs in Nepal to capitalize on their full potential and become competitive in a growing marketplace with a high level of use of technology.

Challenges of Digital Marketing in the Nepali Context

Despite its high potential, the use of digital marketing in Nepal faces numerous obstacles in its widespread and effective use. One of them is the lack of proper digital infrastructure. Urban regions such as Kathmandu and Pokhara have relatively reliable internet connectivity, but rural areas still suffer from spotty access and slow internet connectivity, constraining the capability of companies to effectively utilize digital campaigns (Acharya, 2022).

Another key challenge is a lack of digital literacy in both customers and owners of companies. Most companies, including small and medium companies (SMEs), lack technical expertise in dealing with digital marketing tools, and most often, customers have difficulty with web platforms and transactions. Lack of such expertise keeps companies from utilizing the full potential of web platforms and holds back trust and acceptance of web services among customers. A key obstruction is the lack of trust in web-based transactions. Fear of security for information, scams, and untrustworthy delivery processes have kept customers apprehensive about participating in web-based commerce and other web-related actions (Shrestha, 2023; Mishra & Aithal, 2021). In addition, the lack of homogeneity in cultures and languages in the country brings difficulty in creating marketing messages relevant to the diverse demographics of Nepal. Most campaigns cannot speak to region-specific requirements and choices of target segments, and therefore present fewer engagements and conversions. Overcoming such obstacles is critical for companies to effectively utilize web marketing and contribute to Nepal's developing web economy.

Methodology

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, blending quantitative and qualitative analysis to gain a deep and full picture of the role of digital marketing in driving business growth in Nepal. The study incorporates numerical information to report trends and performance and qualitative observation to understand deeper, contextual factors driving digital marketing adoption and effectiveness.

Primary data was collected through a survey of 150 businesses in a variety of sectors such as retail, tourism, and e-commerce. A survey with a structured format was utilized to collect quantitative information regarding key performance metrics such as social media usage, customer engagement, impact on revenue, and the use of digital marketing strategies. Business owners and marketing managers were interviewed qualitatively in an attempt to understand deeper, contextual factors surrounding digital marketing use, additional challenges, and utilized strategies. Secondary information was collected through the use of reliable industry reports, government releases, and peer-reviewed academic articles in an attempt to build a background for an effective analysis of the current state of affairs regarding digital marketing in Nepal and impact on a variety

For the quantitative analysis, SPSS statistics software was utilized for survey data analysis. Descriptive statistics were utilized to present data concisely, and for testing relationships

between digital marketing strategies and business performance, correlation and regression analysis were utilized. For analysis of qualitative data collected through interviews, thematic analysis was utilized to extract recurring themes, trends, and insights about digital marketing strategy adaption and effectiveness. Through a combination of both, a balanced analysis of the topic at hand could be conducted, combining quantifiable results with deeper, contextual insights.

Results and Findings

Increased Customer Reach & Engagement

Digital marketing has increased the customer base of companies in Nepal immensely. For instance, tourism operators who leveraged focused social media advertising saw bookings rise 30% in six months. With these platforms, companies can directly interact with consumers, creating personalized experiences that generate trust and build loyalty in customers.

SPSS Analysis: Correlation between Social Media Use and Increased Bookings

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed to evaluate social media use and the rise in bookings. It revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that social media use is linked with an increased level of bookings. This reveals that social media campaigns can have a direct impact on business performance, specifically in tourism-related sectors.

Table 1
Correlation Matrix of Social Media Use and Bookings (%)

Variable	Social Media Use	Bookings (%)
Social Media Use	1	0.65**
Bookings (%)	0.65**	1

Cost-Effectiveness

Digital marketing presents a budget-friendly alternative to conventional marketing techniques, particularly for SMEs and startups. In contrast to conventional marketing techniques such as television advertisements and printed

advertisements, Google Ads and Facebook are less costly and trackable. With such platforms, companies can narrow down and target specific demographics, and make the most out of their marketing budget.

SPSS Analysis: Regression of ROI on Cost-Effective Marketing Channels

A linear analysis was performed to assess whether ROI could be predicted through the use of cost-effective marketing channels (e.g., Google

Ads and Facebook). The analysis showed that utilizing digital ads predicted ROI ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), such that companies that use digital ads have a larger ROI.

Table 2

Regression Analysis Results for Facebook and Google Ads as a Predictor

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-Value	p-Value
Facebook and Google Ads (b)	0.42	0.08	5.25	0.0001

Enhanced Brand Awareness

Content marketing through blogs, videos, and infographics significantly enhanced brand awareness. Businesses adopting SEO strategies experienced improved search engine visibility, leading to increased website traffic. These digital approaches proved effective in expanding online reach, engaging audiences, and strengthening overall marketing performance for enterprises operating in competitive markets.

SPSS Analysis: Impact of SEO Strategy on Website Traffic via Descriptive Statistics

The impact of SEO strategies on website traffic was analyzed through descriptive statistics. Enterprises using SEO showed a mean boost in website traffic of 45% (SD = 12.6), and, in contrast, enterprises that did not implement SEO showed a mean boost of 15% (SD = 8.4).

Table 3

Impact of SEO Strategy on Website Traffic Growth

SEO Strategy	Mean Website Traffic Increase(%)	Std. Deviation
SEO Users	45%	12.6
Non-SEO Users	15%	8.4

Data-Driven Decision Making

Digital marketing tools help businesses analyze consumer behavior and make informed decisions. Platforms such as Google Analytics and Facebook Insights allow companies to monitor key performance metrics, evaluate campaign effectiveness, and optimize marketing strategies, ensuring more efficient and impactful marketing outcomes.

SPSS Analysis: Correlation between Analytics Use and Marketing Optimization

A Pearson correlation examined the relationship between using analytics tools (Facebook Insights, Google Analytics) and campaign optimization. Results showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$), indicating companies using analytics are more likely to optimize campaigns effectively.

Table 4

Correlation between Analytics Use and Marketing Optimization

Variable	Analytics Use	Marketing Optimization (%)
Analytics Use	1	0.78**
Marketing Optimization	0.78**	1

Challenges Identified

While digital marketing has been a strong catalyst for business development in Nepal, numerous challenges have hindered its full realization. These obstacles must be overcome to maximize the potential of digital marketing and make its use prevalent in a variety of sectors.

Digital diversity

One of the biggest challenges in Nepal is the presence of a digital divide, especially in rural and remote locations with poor or no access to the internet. Unlike urban areas, urban centres enjoy strong internet infrastructure, but rural areas have slow internet speeds and poor connectivity options. This inequality in access narrows down the distribution of digital marketing campaigns, with companies in such regions failing to reach out to online buyers. As a consequence, companies with a strong presence in digital marketing can end up ignoring a significant portion of the population.

Skill Gap

The lack of qualified digital marketers is yet another big challenge. With the growing prominence of digital marketing, many companies, especially small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), lack professionals with capabilities for creating and deploying effective digital campaigns. This skill shortage keeps companies from taking full advantage of digital tools and technologies like search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertisement, and social media marketing. There is a need for training and development programs to skill up workers and enable companies to manage their digital marketing effectively.

Cultural Barriers

Nepal's diverse cultural, language, and geographical diversity poses a challenge for any digital campaign efforts. What works in one region or community could fall flat in another. For example, companies have to adapt messaging to accommodate local languages, customs, and values. That will involve an intimate awareness of cultural background and an opportunity to modify

campaign approaches appropriately. Not localizing can have consequences in terms of ineffectual campaigns and loss of target buyers.

Conclusion

Digital marketing has become a changing force for companies in Nepal, providing unparalleled avenues for growth, customer connectivity, and innovation. With growing internet penetration and social media platform usage, companies in Nepal can access larger bases of consumers, both at a national and international level. Search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing (SMM), content marketing, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertisement enable companies to make focused marketing campaigns, contact consumers with effectiveness, and evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing efforts in real-time. With this data-dependent model, companies can refine their strategies for enhanced performance, and generate increased brand awareness, customer retention, and ultimately, increased revenue.

Over the last several years, digital marketing has particularly aided small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Nepal. With finite marketing budgets, these companies can access efficient and cost-effective digital marketing tools with measurable results. On platforms such as Google, Google Analytics, and Facebook, companies can use focused advertisement options, such as a specific location, age, and selection of demographics, and target specific gender, age, and location, etc., allowing them to target specific demographics and not squander advertisement spending, and maximize return on investment (ROI). With access to performance tracking through platforms such as Google Analytics, companies can make information-based choices, optimizing real-time campaign performance to deliver enhanced results.

However, despite rapid expansion in digital marketing in Nepal, several challenges face its full realization. Perhaps one of the most significant of these challenges is that of a digital divide, specifically in rural and outlying areas, where access to the web is poor. In the absence of reliable

web infrastructure, companies in these areas cannot access the dividends of digital marketing, putting them at a disadvantage about urban counterparts.

Moreover, a lack of trained marketers in digital poses a challenge to efficient campaign delivery. Most companies, particularly in small towns, have a lack of in-house expertise to craft and execute effective digital marketing plans.

Also, the country's cultural and linguistic diversity proves to be a challenge in terms of customizing marketing messages. To make a success of web marketing, companies must make a point to have messages resonate with regional, cultural, and language affinities. Despite these, the future of web marketing in Nepal is brighter. As web literacy continues to rise and web infrastructure spreads, even rural companies will have access to tools and infrastructure to partake in web marketing. On top of that, growing awareness regarding web marketing's dividends will make companies increasingly inclined towards training and development, closing the skill gaps.

By overcoming such impediments and utilizing the full potential of web marketing, Nepali companies will have a tremendous competitive edge, driving innovation, growth, and long-term success in an age dominated by web technology.

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations of this study that should be taken into account when making conclusions based on the results. One of the main limitations is the use of self-reported business data, which can be subjective. Business owners or marketing managers might report higher results than they have achieved, or they might not have precise information about some details of their digital marketing campaign, so their strategy effectiveness might be overestimated. Also, as the study is specifically interested in the current situation of digital marketing in Nepal, the findings may not be transferable to other countries or regions where the market situation, infrastructure, or cultures are varied.

Moreover, the study examines a snapshot of digital marketing practice at a single point in time. This means that the dynamism of digital marketing-especially with the pace of technological advancements-has the potential to introduce changes in trends and practices that were not captured in this study. To cover these gaps, future research can employ a longitudinal study design to track how digital marketing practices evolve and explore how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and augmented reality, impact digital marketing performance. These polls can provide further information on long-term trends and the evolving role of online marketing in business growth.

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