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## **DIGITAL MARKETING AS A DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION**

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## **DIGITAL MARKETING JAKO CYFROWA REWOLUCJA KOMUNIKACJI MARKETINGOWEJ**

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**Abstract:** Today's market has been subordinated to the information which, to a large extent, reaches us in an uncontrolled way at any time. Thus the article presents the key factors resulting from the forms of communication which influenced the creation of digital marketing, i.e. the resultant soft features derived from interpersonal interactions and the technological aspects which are the channels of communication, thanks to which the transmission of information and its reception can take place through a mass recipient and sender. The aim of the article is to illustrate the relations between communication and marketing, from interpersonal communication through marketing and Internet communication. The research method used in the article was a critical analysis of literature and identification with the characteristics of technological solutions in the area of digital marketing available on the market.

**Keywords:** marketing, marketing communication, Internet communication, digital marketing, digital marketing channels, content marketing.

**Streszczenie:** Współczesny rynek podporządkowany został informacjom, które w dużej mierze w sposób niekontrolowany docierają do nas w każdym momencie. Dlatego też w artykule zaprezentowane zostały kluczowe czynniki wynikające z form komunikacji, które wpłynęły na powstanie marketingu cyfrowego, czyli wypadkowej cech miękkich wywodzących się z interakcji międzyludzkich oraz technologicznych aspektów będących kanałami komunikacji, dzięki którym nadawanie informacji oraz ich odbiór może odbywać się przez masowego odbiorcę oraz nadawcę. Artykuł ma za zadanie zobrazować relacje komunikacji oraz marketingu, począwszy od komunikacji interpersonalnej poprzez komunikację marketingową oraz internetową. Metodą badawczą zastosowaną w artykule była krytyczna analiza literatury oraz identyfikacja wraz z charakterystyką rozwiązań technologicznych w obszarze digital marketingu dostępnych na rynku.

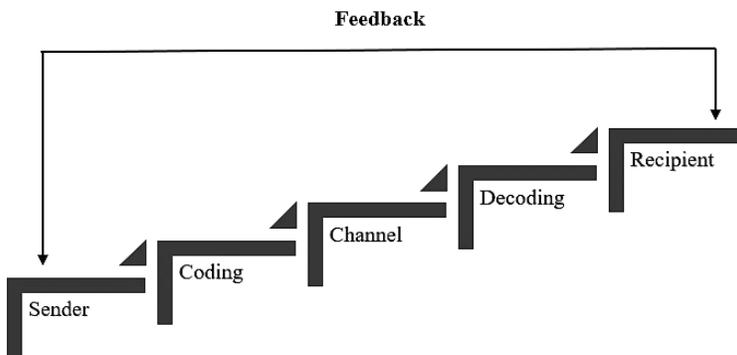
**Słowa kluczowe:** marketing, komunikacja marketingowa, komunikacja internetowa, marketing cyfrowy, kanały marketingu cyfrowego, marketing treści.

## 1. Introduction

Ubiquitous digitization and technological progress are forcing society to adopt modes of behaviour which were previously unknown in wider interpersonal interaction. Communication, which was a process derived from individual interpersonal experiences preceded mass communication as an elementary part of the everyday life of every person with constant access to media, especially those belonging to the main channels of the 3.0 marketing revolution (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2010, p. 3). First of all, the connotation plane between communication and marketing is presented on which both issues meet and find a common denominator, which accurately illustrates interpersonal, marketing and Internet communication as successive information flow processes in the current digitalized environment. Next, the topic of digital marketing is discussed as a revolutionary element in the topic of marketing communication, which is also an introduction to the area of digital communication channels. The last plane oscillates mainly on the above-mentioned channels of digital marketing itself, which are both information carriers and places where information is encoded and decoded by the recipient. The aim of the article is to show the revolutionary influence of the process of the digitalization of marketing on communication, the basis for information exchange in society, as well as to illustrate the communication channels of digital marketing used for modern interaction between sender and recipient, which take on a mass character. The article was prepared on the basis of literature research, as the first stage of one of the authors' work on the concept of her doctoral dissertation. The second part of the article was developed as a result of the identification and characteristics of the technological solutions available on the market in the area of digital marketing solutions.

## 2. The importance of communication in marketing

Communication, interpreted as one of the key processes that bring both interaction and predetermined benefits for the recipient and sender. The European Commission's proposal for the creation of a network of collaborative networks and broadcasters brings in such concepts as cooperation networks and interpersonal alliances that have a wider impact on human relations. Nowadays, the communication process takes place at every level of our lives, we receive and transmit thousands of information units every day, which translates into the quality of the benefits of the information exchange. Society, in the acts of communication, is looking not only for a solution to a given problem or for the answers to the questions, but also for the benefits, not infrequently in material form. Assuming that communication is of key importance to us and one of the highest rank, one should ask whether the process of communication through the information contained in it can bring its equivalent in the form of measurable and quantifiable benefits. Communication based on broadly understood data transmission is one of the phenomena of information exchange, where not every data exchange is a direct act of communication. Accordingly, interpersonal communication is a privilege reserved for a person functioning in a social structure (Wendland, 2008, p. 18). Communication is presented as a specific process taking place in a certain cycle and has its key elements such as the sequential ordering of activities, their flow and the roles played by participants, whereas in the case of communication they will be the recipients and senders (Drejewicz, 2012, p. 10). The idea is to provide some access to information, characterized by the benefits emerging from the content. The graph below shows the course of information between the sender and the recipient, where the subsequent steps of encoding, channel selection, decoding and feedback take place.



**Fig. 1.** Communication process

Source: own elaboration based on (Wendland, 2008).

Oscillating on the borderline between the subject of communication itself and marketing, in which the goal is to recognize and meet human and social needs (Kotler and Keller, 2013, p. 5). We are dealing with a peculiar association of issues related to the common plane of both concepts, whose aim is to generate information directly from the recipient to the sender, in such a way that the interference (noise) is as small as possible. One of the types of communication that allows us to become more familiar with the target subject of digital marketing is the concept of marketing communication, one of the most important elements conditioning the establishment and then the maintenance of the company's relations with customers and other entities in the market environment (Bajdak, 2013, p. 11). The main purpose of this type of communication is to acquire new business partners and, most importantly, to create long-term relationships with them. Marketing communication in a digitally oriented economy enables the potential consumer to go through the purchasing process with any communication message, regardless of the time, place and type of purchased product or service. An example of such a process resulting from marketing communication is product placement. It plays one of the key roles of customer communication in the 3.0 generation marketing stage, characterized by high interaction. Product placement, which takes place on the Internet, often uses well-known personalities, for example from the world of the Internet for direct promotion, most often through social media and thematic blogs, and this unquestionably fits into the canon of the revolutionary influence of the digitalization of marketing. This is now a key determinant of communication trends between business entities and the consumer, strongly focused on the value itself and the feeling that it is the customer who is aware of his/her own decisions and their effects. In the case of marketing communication, the sender takes on the character of a business entity having to provide top-down information, potentially marketing content containing data about the basket of goods it offers. The idea of the whole interaction with the recipient must be thought through at that time, because the next step determines the coding, as in the case of interpersonal communication, the information is formed and coded in an appropriate way, often encountering a situation in which the coding takes place according to a top-down scheme matching the channel selected in the next step. An example is the nature of the content used in social media, which is significantly different from the information encoded in classic marketing channels. At that point there is a kind of dissociation, because the message must be encoded top-down with a mass receiver orientation. Here one comes across a key difference, because it is in marketing communication that the recipient takes on a mass shape which must be taken into account as a target group, i.e. an averaged model of a person representing a certain group to reach, analysing it from a behavioural, demographic and geographical point of view before even moving on to information-coding mechanisms. The next step is to select the communication channel, i.e. the medium of a given information, where in the case of marketing communication it can be TV, radio, the press or the Internet as the leading representatives of the mass media. The final step,

namely decoding by the recipient, takes place in the same way as in interpersonal communication. An equally frequent and undesirable role in the process of marketing communication is played by noise, otherwise referred to as the interference causing distortion of content derived from the semantic character, divided into those on which we have influence, i.e. internal and external, and those which we do not. This brings us to the last element, the most crucial in the process, that is feedback. When analysing communication in the form of marketing, feedback must be considered in the long run, not as an immediate response. The result should be a decision-making process that passes between decoding and understanding the information and purchasing the goods offered by the sender that one can treat as the end of the process in a positive sense, where both parties have benefited from the process. The narrowing element of the consolidation of the concepts of communication and marketing is Internet communication, which is not similar to interpersonal and mass communication in a separate sense, and is characterized by having the characteristics of both at the same time, including above all the difference in the number of people involved in the process of communication, where one deals with many senders and many recipients (Wiktor, 2002, p. 120). There are also different types of interactions of the process participants and interpretation of the information contained throughout the process. In explaining the principles of the functioning of Internet communication in contrast to classic media models, one can notice that the former enables communication simultaneously in the one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many model. However, there appears a concept connected with combining the features of interpersonal and mass communication, more precisely meta-media, which include cell phones, computers, tablets and the Internet itself. With their help one can communicate both privately and publicly, personally and collectively, which allows to broaden the spectrum of both channels and the way information is encoded. Internet communication has standard elements of communication, characterized by interpersonal communication, enriched with the interactivity of new digital media and new tools of information exchange. The extraordinary thing about Internet communication is the fact that the sender and the recipient can play both roles simultaneously, i.e. the following element of bipolarity of information allows to broaden the familiarization horizons for both sides of the process.

### **3. Digital marketing – the new face of marketing**

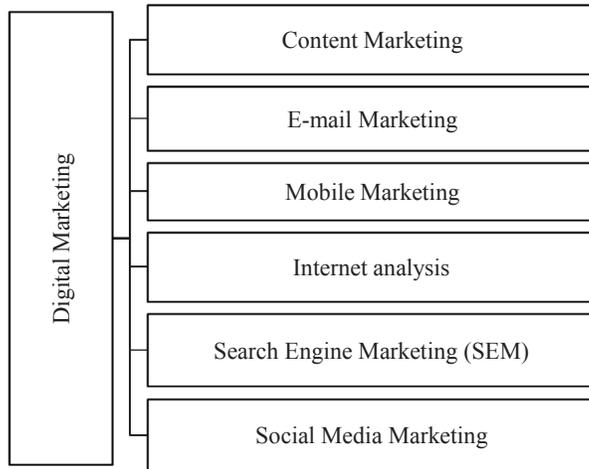
Digital marketing in semantic terms is a relatively new concept, rarely defined by the scientific literature, but often fitted into the framework of marketing 3.0. In the course of technological development and the digitalization of society, since about 2005 the term ‘digital marketing’, or Internet marketing, has started to appear. Initially the potential of marketing communication through digital channels covered the wide areas of the Western world, but it began to cover new areas in geographical terms year by year, and this was the resultant force of the idea of the network itself,

connecting societies through the Internet (Brzustewicz, 2014, p. 2). The definition of digital marketing allows to show it as a kind of marketing activities carried out using the Internet to communicate with a mass receiver. In classical terms, this form of marketing does not differ much from other varieties of marketing, however the key is the way of encoding and decoding information, as well as the channel of sending and receiving, which in this case is the Internet network and the appropriate software created for marketing communication. Taken as a whole, digital marketing draws many characteristics from global marketing, due to the often international nature of its activities whose aim is to gain a competitive advantage on the global market, and a high degree of integration and coordination on an international level (Cornelsen, 2006, p. 10). Consumers, globally, have similar needs, obviously different from the region, but the basic needs of the Maslow Pyramid do not change. This is what marketing professionals around the world, especially those working in the global marketplace, use in their actions. Looking at Internet communication from the point of view of digital marketing, it can be concluded that ubiquitous electronic channels are the fastest growing among all communications media. The Internet provides the opportunity to increase our interaction with consumers, broadens our understanding horizons, and it can reach customers both individually and en masse, and more importantly, optimizes and targets the product offers addressed to them in order to maximize profits at minimum cost (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2017, p. 55). The Internet itself is characterized by a very high degree of interactivity, which determines the building of relationships and maintaining the already established contacts, and thus giving the opportunity for building own brand, an aspect of which was the creation of digital marketing. Digital marketing has become an instrument which in the hands of entrepreneurs, when properly used, can transform information into the equivalent of profit for the company. The presence of entrepreneurs in Internet marketing made it possible to involve the person (the client) in the process of creating a product offer, which enabled the consumer to directly shape the brand of a given company in a certain way, to set trends, and in many cases forced certain types of behaviour previously not visible in a given entity on the market. This was because it was the client model created by the entrepreneur at the beginning of the journey, which gradually began to give meaning to many elements from the environment of a given market entity. Together they create the message and receive it themselves, both sender and recipient.

#### **4. Key communication channels for digital marketing**

The communication channels of digital marketing have become a kind of platform, which is reflected in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), including above all in marketing communication. The guidelines present the key channels that build digital marketing itself and are its inseparable elements, and are characterized by a wide spectrum of interactions both from the side of the content

sender and its recipient. Each of the channels also represents a different interaction with the recipient and has a different application, however, all of them have a common goal, namely to provide the service of delivering content to the recipient, allowing to draw a measurable effect for the sender. The accidental force creates synergy based on the key six channels presented below.



**Fig. 2.** Digital Marketing Channels

Source: own elaboration based on (Maciorowski, 2013).

- **Content Marketing** – a marketing strategy consisting in the regular creation of well-thought-out marketing content in order to arouse the recipient’s expected emotions and encourage him/her to interact, where in the modern world it is characterized by the creation of valuable content that will respond to the needs of recipients-customers. The content created by the company should meet specific business objectives and be measured by established indicators. Content marketing is based, in particular, on writing a blog, running channels on social networking sites or publishing articles on websites, provided that they meet the objectives set at the time. The content marketing strategy itself should always be built in accordance with the communication strategy, where the content created by the broadcaster should not be published in isolation from the main assumption of the communication brand (Stararz, 2015). Content marketing has evolved strongly in recent years, and more importantly it has become the core of digital marketing as the value of the message is built on the content. Moreover, it is the core of digital marketing itself, as it contains content that is – apart from graphic contact – the basis for communicating with the recipients.
- **E-mail marketing** – one of the oldest digital marketing channels, based on direct marketing, defined as a message addressed directly to a selected, single

recipient. Apart from creating a brand image, the aim of direct marketing is to obtain an almost immediate, expected reaction of the recipient, such as making a purchase or downloading or ordering given materials from the e-mail content. The basis for direct marketing activities are the address lists containing detailed data about current or potential customers. E-mail marketing operates primarily on several levels, where the first and key are the mailing databases, collected over time e-mail contacts of recipients, which allow to create a set of so-called 'packages' of e-mails containing user data. This is the basis to move to the next level, i.e. cyclical activities, where the most popular version of such process is the newsletter. E-mail marketing as a process of Internet communication includes strictly defined cyclical activities:

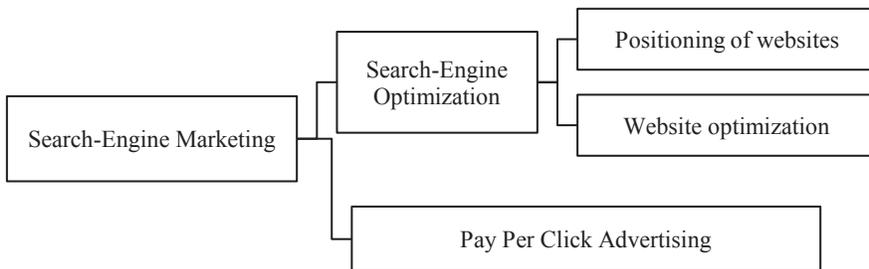
- a) collecting and creating e-mail databases,
- b) management of the collected databases of e-mail addresses,
- c) sending e-mails (e.g. newsletter),
- d) reaction to feedback e-mails or other feedback from recipients,
- e) analysis and creation of action plans.

The main task of e-mail marketing is primarily to create relationships with customers, build image and generate sales. This generates demand, not merely satisfies it, and this is one of the basic differences compared to other key elements of digital marketing.

- **Mobile marketing** – a wide range of marketing activities that use wireless communication devices to create relationships with the recipient. Mobile marketing can be considered in terms of offline activities, i.e. including activities of short content using SMS or MMS communicator, which are currently the most common offline activities and are used with the help of content marketing for loyalty programs of many companies and, as in the case of e-mail marketing, for cyclical electronic newsletters. Online activities, i.e. those operating in real time mode, include the occurrence of responsive sites, optimized for actions on phones and mobile applications. Both the sites and the applications form the base for content and marketing professionals to reach as many users as possible, hence they are the right channel for content distribution. According to PwC Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2014-2018 estimates, the revenue of the global mobile advertising market in 2014 exceeded that of the online advertising market. The often appearing definition of e-business is based largely on this element of digital marketing. This is evidenced by the fact that all websites and online stores created for desktop versions are optimized for mobile phones and tablets. Nearly 75.6% of mobile phone users use smartphones enabling mobile activities on the network, according to the 2019 study by the Office of Electronic Communications.
- **Web analysis** – relatively the youngest and at the same time the most developing element of digital marketing, which is not strictly a channel of digital communication but only a tool used to measure, collect, analyze and report data

in order to understand and optimize the usefulness of digital tools. Internet analysis helps not only to measure the effects of a marketing campaign by measuring the traffic on a website, but also to estimate the change in traffic after launching a new communication campaign (Oldak, 2010, p. 10). It is certainly an inseparable element of digital marketing in the 21st century, especially in its second decade, where data analysis, and especially its youngest field – Big Data – plays such an important role in e-marketing activities. Web analysis optimizes costs, customer targeting and market segmentation. Nowadays, one can observe a strong trend based on control and analysis of every Internet marketing software that indirectly generates profits for a given business entity, which happens both from in-built algorithms inside the program as well as external software dedicated to tracking the effectiveness of marketing campaigns in the network.

- **Search-engine marketing** – one of the most key and thus complex channels of modern digital marketing. Search-engine marketing is an activity aimed at obtaining the best positions in the search engine, engaging in work with search engine algorithms on selected key phrases entered by users in a search engine query, as well as participation in marketing campaigns of browsers created in dedicated software. Marketing in search engines can be mainly divided into two key areas:



**Fig. 3.** Marketing segmentation in search engines

Source: own elaboration.

Search-Engine Optimization (SEO) is based largely on the configuration and selection of phrases consistent with the content on the pages. These actions are long-term and time-consuming, and the positioning itself has no clear standards of conduct, it is somewhat disordered by search engines. This action is supposed to lay a solid foundation for search engine robots, which index the most valuable pages. Thanks to positioning, pages of a lower standard can also appear in search engines on high positions, because they circumvent the browser’s guidelines for ‘natural’ behaviour within the site, such as linking according to users’ interests or maintaining high standards of user experience. These activities are particularly interesting for profit-generating sites, i.e. online stores. The influence of the

position in searches is influenced by the system of internal and external links, which help the website to match the interests of customers. The linking system is also connected with metatags that determine the position in the search engine in relation to phrases. Currently, 90% of optimization operations take place in the Google search engine, which has undoubtedly dominated the market since the late 1990s. The second key pillar for marketing in search engines there are fees for the clicks of ads. This form of advertisements is based on the auction system in which modern browsers and websites contain auction elements, which offer the possibility of displaying for an appropriate fee determined in the auction process. The whole process takes place in fractions of seconds in the background of the whole site using an appropriate algorithm. This form is characterized by a lucrative billing system for both the recipient and the sender of the advertisement, because one pay for the click and not just the display of the advertisement which may not give a reliable result.

- **Social media marketing** – activities consisting in gaining attention and generating Internet traffic by means of social networking sites. Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and thematic blogs are used to promote the brand. Social media have recently been playing an increasingly important role in the marketing activities of many companies, mainly due to the fact that they are easily accessible and are intended to help build the brand and customer relations. Social media marketing enables direct access to the desired target group, defined at the time by the broadcaster, and additionally lowers the costs of marketing activities by means of optimization measures mainly focused on the behavioural and demographic differences of the recipients. The entrepreneur can freely manipulate the data collected in the process of Internet communication by means of social media and analyse them, thus selecting the most appropriate product offer directed to the client-user profile. This is because of the sensitive data in the profiles of social media users such as age, interests, background and interactions that they engage in with other users, and this allows to create patterns of certain behaviour that are needed for further analysis.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of technologies to improve communication has translated to a large extent into the defined goals of people who want to reach with the right message a designated group of recipients. The digital revolution would allow not only the recipient but also the sender the possibility of mass interaction. The article identifies the most important areas that link communication, including one of its branches, i.e. marketing communication in combination with Internet communication technologies, whose revolutionary impact was the emergence of Internet marketing, where its key channels became a plane of understanding between the business entity and the user. The analysis of the communication process, in addition to the designation

of key actors playing their roles, allowed this to illustrate and translate into marketing activities, especially those oscillating within the digital world of information. Above all, the possibilities offered by digital marketing through its own communication channels allows to quantify and measure the effects of communication resulting from the desire to provide data to recipients. In this case, it is also the recipient who has the possibility to encode for the sender of his/her information and also on a mass scale. The Internet and the digital revolution have allowed to go a step further, i.e. to popularize the process of communication, thus breaking the demographic, geographical and, not infrequently, also cultural barriers. As a result of the analysis of the state of affairs discussed in the article, further research can be recommended, regarding the specific use of marketing communication processes with the use of digital marketing channels in specific industries, with particular emphasis on Internet sales.

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