# Analysis of The Impact of Digital Marketing Tools on Consumers (The Case of St. Petersburg, Russian Federation)

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#### **Abstract**

The article presents the results of a field research concerning the attitude of Russian young people to the instruments of digital marketing. The authors show the correlation between different factors that may influence consumer behavior and the decision to purchase a product or service. Different elements of purchase funnel in digital marketing have been discovered. The hypothesis of a consistent follow-up of consumers in the consumer's funnel, as well as the existence of a connection between the various channels of communication, was confirmed. In order to attract customers, it is necessary to use various tools and correct approach to the setting up of advertising, which together will make the campaign successful.

Keywords: digital marketing, Internet marketing, purchase funnel.

## Introduction

The theoretical basis of the study is the scientific works of Russian and foreign authors in the field of digital marketing. In a research study by Andreeva (2015) the development of the use of digital marketing in the global economy is shown. In the books by Kotler (2016), Molchanov (2018) the main digital and Internet-marketing concepts are observed. There are some short researches in the papers by Rajeck, Kostin (2017); Nikiforova (2013), Sebring (2017), Voronova (2015) and others.

The aim of this paper is to assess the awareness and attitude of consumers to the main tools of digital marketing. To achieve this goal it was necessary to solve the following tasks:

- determine respondents' awareness of digital marketing and its main tools;
- explore consumer attitudes towards digital marketing and its promotion methods;
- check whether there is a relationship between different factors that may influence consumer behavior and the decision to purchase a product or service.

This research presents the results of a field survey that assesses the awareness and attitude of respondents as consumers (individuals) to digital marketing and its main tools. In the framework of the study, a number of hypotheses were identified and they were tested using statistical analysis. 175 respondents were surveyed by filling out questionnaires. The questionnaire used single-answer questions, multiple-choice questions, and Likert-scale questions. Data processing was carried out in the Gretl program. Data analysis was performed using the following statistical methods: frequency analysis, comparison of averages, regression analysis and Spearman's rank correlations.

# **Sampling Parameters**

Information on the distribution of respondents by sex, age, education and income level is given below (tab.1).

Among the respondents, males and females are approximately equally divided (44% and 56%, respectively). By age, the majority of respondents are at age range of 18–25 years old (84.57%). All respondents are at the age range of 18-55 years. According to the criterion of education, the majority of individuals have incomplete higher education (56.57%), and there is a group of respondents with a higher education (28.57%) in the survey. The absolute majority receives or has already received higher economic education (96.57%). By the criterion of financial well-being, the distribution of respondents is even with a predominance of 2, 3, 4 income groups. More than 10% of the sample doesn't have any financial difficulties at all.

Table 1: Parameters of the sample of respondents surveyed

Gender of respondents in the sam	ıple	
Gender	Number of respondents	Share (%)
Male	77	44.00
Female	98	56.00
Total	175	100.00
Age of respondents in the sample (ye	ars old)	
18-25	148	84.57
26-35	21	12.00
36-45	5	2.86
46-55	1	0.57
Total	175	100.00
Education of respondents in the sa	mple	
Secondary education	23	13.14
Incomplete higher education	99	56.57
Higher education	50	28.57
Few University diplomas	3	1.71
Total	175	100.00
Economic education among respondents in	n the sample	
Yes	169	96.57
No	6	3.43
Total	175	100.00
The level of financial well-being of the responde	ents in the sample	;
1. Enough money for food, but buying clothes causes difficulties	3	1.71
2. Enough money for food and clothes, but larger purchases require savings or credit (e.g., appliances, furniture)	28	16.00
3. Enough money for a major purchases, but it is difficult to buy more expensive things (such as a car)	73	41.71
4. Enough money for expensive purchases, but buying an apartment, house requires savings or a loan	51	29.14
5. No financial difficulties to buy an apartment or a house	20	11.43
Total	175	100.00

Compiled by: authors on the basis of survey data

Thus, when analyzing the data, it was necessary to take into account the specifics of the sample: there were interviewed young people over 18 years old who have or are receiving a higher economic education. The features of this group are flexibility, modernity; the possibility of obtaining new knowledge; access to numerous social media (Internet and social networks) and its active and regular use. Also, this category of individuals constitutes the country's human resources. The awareness and attitude of this group of people towards digital marketing influences their behavior not only as consumers, but also as potential employees.

It should be noted that in the group the number of respondents with a higher economic education prevails. This means that these respondents are better informed about modern technologies and trends in the economy, as well as better understand modern market processes. Thus, on the one hand, the results of the survey among these respondents may not coincide with the opinion of the average consumers throughout the country (Russian Federation), but on the other hand, it fairly reflects the opinion of the economically literate population of St. Petersburg, Russia.

## Awareness and Attitude of the Respondents towards Digital Marketing Tools

Below we show the main areas of field research and some of its results (tab.2):

1. Consumer awareness of digital marketing and its main tools.

According to the survey, there is a fairly high level of awareness of respondents about digital marketing (81.71%), more than half can distinguish digital marketing from traditional marketing (50.28%), but the very low number of respondents knows differences from Internet marketing (24.57%). Digital marketing tools have a low level of distribution in the practice of respondents (15.43% of respondents use in their work). Most likely, this is due to the fact that most of them are university students who either do not have a permanent job, or it is not related to marketing.

Thus, the sample is dominated by respondents who are well-informed about the existence of digital marketing and its tools, but most of the respondents do not know its essence, features and the main differences from traditional and, in particular, Internet marketing. Respondents don't relate these concepts to each other and can't determine which of the terms is broader and more capacious.

The results can be explained by the large-scale digitalization that takes place in the country (Russian Federation) and is "heard" by people. They often hear the terms "digital economy", "digitalization" and, probably, "digital marketing", but don't seek to obtain any additional information about this and don't learn the features of a new stage in the development of marketing.

The analysis confirmed the dependence between knowledge of the features of digital marketing, its differences from Internet marketing and the use of digital marketing tools in work. This correlation makes sense, because the respondents who are poorly aware of the basics and tools of digital marketing mistakenly associate it only with the Internet and social networks (and don't include offline channels and tools). There is a correlation between these groups of people -0.293, which means that these groups include different respondents, and there is a negative correlation between the answer to question 3 and 4 (Tab. 2, Part 1).

**Education** gives students the opportunity to get access to additional information and expands knowledge of current technologies and trends, including in economics. Consider the dependence of the respondents' awareness on the level of education in order to determine how modern education at the university provides students with information on the issues under consideration (Tab. 2, part 2). Respondents with incomplete or higher education are less aware of digital marketing and its tools than other groups. Similarly, more than 50% of respondents who graduated don't know the features and differences of digital marketing in comparison with traditional marketing, which is significantly higher than in other groups.

Table 2: Frequency analysis of the respondents' answers, demonstrating the level of their awareness of digital marketing

Part 1. The level of aware	ness	of respo	ndent	s abou	ut digital ı	narketing,%	)
Statement	To	tally agree	Rat	ther gree	I don't know	Rather agree	Totally agree
1. I haven't met the term "digital marketing" before	6	1.71	20	.00	2.86	12.57	2.86
2. I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its features and differences from traditional marketing	1′	7.14	33	.14	12.57	30.86	6.29
3 I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its features and differences from Internet marketing	5	5.71	18	.86	18.29	43.43	13.71
4. I use digital marketing tools in my work	4'	7.43	20	.00	17.14	10.86	4.57
	2. The	e level o	f educ	ation,	.% <sub>o</sub>		
Statement		Secon educa	dary tion		omplete igher ucation	Higher education	Several University diplomas
1. I haven't met the term "digital marketing" before		4.3	5		9.19	24.00	0.00
2. I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its feature and differences from traditional marke	s	34.′	78	53.54		50.00	33.33
3 I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its feature and differences from Internet marketin		69.:	57	7	79.80	70.00	66.67
4.I use digital marketing tools in my w		8.7			4.14	20.00	33.33
	Par	t 3. The					
Statement		18-	25	2	6-35	36-45	46-55
1. I haven't met the term "digital marketing" before		16.2	22	2	28.57	40.00	0.00
2. I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its feature and differences from traditional market	S	48.0	65	5	57.14	60.00	0.00
3 I know about the existence of digital marketing, but I don't know its feature and differences from Internet marketin	S	75.0	58	7	76.19	80.00	0.00
4. I use digital marketing tools in my w		15.:	54	,	9.52	20.00	100.00

Compiled by: authors on the basis of survey data

These results are difficult to interpret from the point of view of the role of education in raising people's awareness of the problem under consideration. Perhaps this is due to the fact that some people attributed themselves to the wrong group of respondents to which they actually belong. The share of respondents who have a certain level of education and do not have knowledge of the differences between digital and Internet marketing is large: about 70-80% in each educational group do not distinguish them. The most active use of digital marketing tools in their work are survey participants who have a higher education (may be not one), which may indicate the role of education in raising people's awareness of digital marketing and acquiring a profession related to it.

Another indicator that can influence the awareness of digital marketing and its tools is **the age of the respondents**. Consider the relationship between digital marketing awareness and age of respondents (Tab. 2, part 3).

When analyzing the questions studied, the particularities of the sample should be taken into account: the absolute majority of respondents belong to the group of 18-25 years. In the remaining age groups there is a small number of observations (from 1 to 6), as a result of which the values obtained cannot be interpreted as a trend for the market as a whole.

It follows from the table 2 that the younger the respondents are, the better they are aware of the concepts studied, and they are familiar with the features and differences of digital marketing from traditional marketing, which is confirmed by analyzing each of the data in the survey of statements. Survey participants from 36 to 55 years are more likely to put digital marketing tools into practice. Thus, awareness of digital marketing is generally higher in the 18-25 age groups, which is consistent with the previous conclusion about the greatest awareness of the group of respondents with secondary and incomplete higher education.

2. Consumer awareness and attitudes towards the basic principles of digital marketing (Tab. 3).

Table 3: Frequency analysis of respondents' responses, reflecting their attitude to digital marketing and its main tools, both as a whole and depending on the level of education and the age of the respondents

Frequency analysis, %													
Statement	Totally disagree	Rather disagree	I don't know	Rather agree	Totally agree								
Modern advertising only informs. The buyer makes the decision independently.	18.29	40.00	12.00	25.14	4.57								
Modern advertising can influence a person only when he/she buys relatively inexpensive goods. Buying expensive items (e.g. flat, car) to a greater extent depends on the conscious consumer choice.	16.00	28.57	11.43	32.57	11.43								
Modern companies use digital marketing tools to influence consumer choice.	0.57	1.14	13.14	42.29	42.86								
Modern advertising is too intrusive and literally pursues the consumer in both the online and offline world.	2.29	5.14	8.57	44.00	40.00								
Modern promotional offers are personalized.	0.57	13.71	15.43	42.29	28.00								

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of a survey of respondents

The results of the data analysis of the questionnaire reflect the attitude of consumers to modern advertising (which is the part of digital marketing and its main tools), the presence of misconceptions and stereotypes in judgments about modern marketing. Respondents could express a subjective opinion that didn't correspond to the actual state of affairs (for example, the respondent may be sure that advertising doesn't affect his consumer choice, but this is not always true).

Most respondents (58.29%) believe that advertising doesn't only inform buyers, it affects their consumer choice. This statement is true, since advertising performs several functions, affecting the emotions of the consumer and influencing his purchase decision. Thus, consumers are aware of the fact that their decision is not exclusively rational and independent of the impact of advertising. According to the survey results, 29.71% of respondents are mistaken in this matter, 12.00% did not form a unanimous opinion.

The second statement caused a disagreement in the opinion of consumers: 44.00% of respondents agree, 44.57% disagree, and 11.43% did not express confidence in the answer. However, this statement is incorrect, since advertising of expensive goods and services has no less influence on consumer choice than advertising of budget products. This is achieved through the use of emotional incentives that create a sense of prestige products.

Respondents clearly expressed their concerns about how companies use digital marketing tools to influence consumers. More than 85% of respondents agreed with the third statement, while only 1.71% disagreed with it. Probably, respondents' confidence in the use by companies of various advertising channels and tools, including related to digital marketing, associated with a certain level of mistrust and suspicion of business representatives, as well as an abundance of promotional materials surrounding consumers.

Similarly, the respondents had a common opinion that modern advertising is too intrusive and literally pursues them both in the online and offline world (more than 80% of respondents agree). Negative perception of advertising by consumers may be due to its sprading beyond the traditional promotion channels (TV, newspapers, street banners, Internet browsers, etc.) and the distribution of targeted advertising, which attracts more consumer attention.

Most of the respondents (70.29%) agree with the basic principle of digital marketing about the personalization of advertising messages. This means that consumers pay attention to the fact that advertising messages, as a rule, offer exactly what they need, that is, they are addressed directly to the target audience.

3. The study of the sequence of consumer behavior at different stages of the consumer funnel when using digital marketing tools.

The authors, on the basis of survey data, analyzed the hypothesis about the existence of interconnections in the actions of consumers at various stages of the consumer funnel during the use of digital marketing tools. When working on this hypothesis, the goal was to study consistently the behavior of consumers on their way to making a purchase or ordering a service. For example, is there any correlation between the facts that the respondent opens an e-mail with an advertising list and then makes a purchase? A further refutation of the hypothesis may mean that consumers either don't realize that their behavior is partly determined by the marketing tools that stimulate purchases and deny this, or this goal of marketers is not really implemented (for example, the sample under study).

However, the results are interesting not only within a single set of questions, but in general among all marketing activities: if there is a relationship between consumer responses to them, it should be studied. For the analysis correlation matrix was used. The results are presented in Tab. 4. In the block of questions about **outdoor advertising and advertising on transport** the following types of correlation are identified. There is a direct relationship between the fact that the consumer reads the advertisement, performs the target action and, as a result, considers this type of advertisement to be credible. If we consider the relationship between the attitude of respondents to outdoor and other types of advertising, we can conclude that a person who reads an advertisement on transport or on the street always reads SMS from commercial organizations, advertising messages by e-mail, makes target actions (follows the links, makes a purchase), trusts the influencers and also participates in sweepstakes in social networks. Thus, a consumer who reads outdoor advertising also pays attention to other types of advertising, and vice versa.

Table 4: Correlation analysis of the hypothesis of consistent consumer behavior when performing targeted actions (only correlation values are listed in the table, more than 0.2 modulo)

№	Statement / №	Ι1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	-11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	istatement / Viz														n transp		10	- 7		,	20			
1	I carefully consider and read	1	0.324	0.228			0.223						0.249	0.222	0.239	0.232				0.224		0.200		
2	I call the phone number or go to the site		1	0.234															0.221					
3	This type of advertising inspires confidence			1																				
											Block	<ol><li>Mobi</li></ol>	le marke	ting										
4	I download the app on my smartphone				1	0.297	0.260				0.243		0.279	0.240		0.232	0.255	0.242		0.311	0.224	0.286	0.211	0.227
5	I permit to send me SMS					1	0.512				0.504		0.236	0.332	0.317				0.203			0.200		0.447
6	I always read SMS carefully						1			0.228	0.318	0.239	0.337	0.293	0.386			0.267	0.331	0.270		0.317		0.317
7	I check the QR code							1				0.247							0.397			0.205		0.242
										]	Block 3.	Context	ual adve	rtising										
8	Contextual advertising is relevant and useful								1	0.512													0.251	
9	I click on contextual ads									1			0.207						0.316			0.293	0.254	0.231
											Block	4. E-ma	il marke	ting										
10	I agree to receive e- mail newsletter										1	0.313	0.372	0.563	0.392		0.205	0.210		0.211		0.231		0.319
11	I open all emails											1	0.640	0.294	0.401									0.225
12	I read advertising messages												1	0.416	0.420				0.279	0.256				0.214
13	I follow links in emails													1	0.474							0.249		0.246
14	I make a purchase after receiving the e- mail														1			0.226	0.303	0.210		0.240	0.219	
	•										Block 5	. Influer	ce mark	eting										
15	I trust what the influencers advertise															1	0.742	0.262	0.244	0.326	0.307	0.363	0.380	
16	I buy products that a																1	0.263	0.260	0.364	0.313	0.316	0.454	0.230

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	famous person advertises																						
	Block 6. Social Media Marketing  I ioin the community																						
17	I join the community																1	0.405	0.410	0.309	0.410	0.371	0.410
18	I participate in discussions on the page																	1	0.272	0.208	0.398	0.352	0.314
19	I participate in the sweepstakes																		1	0.314	0.370	0.328	0.320
20	Advertising in the news in social networks attracts my attention																			1	0.575	0.484	0.310
21	I carefully study the promotional offers in social networks																				1	0.539	0.438
22	I make purchases under the influence of advertising in social networks																					1	0.411
23	I allow communities to send me messages																						1

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of a survey of respondents

Researching of **mobile marketing** are mentioned in the papers of Kibirev (2018); Guseva (2016); Persi; Slepenkova (2018). If respondents download an app of a store or company on a smartphone, then they allow them to send SMS notifications, and vice versa. That is, if the consumer wants to get additional information about the product or the company offering it, he isn't opposed to using several channels. It is interesting that there is a correlation between consumer's willingness to download an application, the fact that he reads advertising messages via e-mail and that he makes purchases of a product advertised by bloggers and other famous personalities.

Respondents who allow a commercial organization to send SMS often read them and, in addition, agree to receive an e-mail newsletter, which is also read (r = 0.512, r = 0.504 and r = 0.236, respectively). These ways of communicating with consumers are similar, often present in questionnaires for loyal customers, and therefore are perceived as necessary and unobtrusive. In addition, consumers give their contacts themselves and agree to the use of personal data, which means their willingness to receive advertising messages and read them. Also there is a correlation (equal to 0.447) between the agreement of the respondents to send them SMS messages and write private messages in social networks, which also confirms the hypothesis mentioned.

The fact that consumers often use several communication channels to receive information is also confirmed by the relationship between reading SMS and e-mail from the store (r = 0.337), as well as their interest in the content of letters: those who read short SMS messages, often click on links in an email and even make a purchase in the future. Theoretically, this may be due to the fact that it is impossible to provide full information about the proposed product or the announced action in SMS, but this is often done in an e-mail newsletter, which, among other things, contains details, images and links. If, after the SMS, the consumer uses the link to make a purchase in an email, this indicates a good job of marketers.

The theoretical basis of **contextual advertising** was observed in the papers by Bogacheva (2014); Sebrant (2004); Shaltoni (2017). It is quite natural that those respondents who consider contextual advertising in search results to be relevant and useful for themselves often click on it, which confirms the rather strong correlation between these statements, equal to 0.512.

Regression analysis of the survey results also confirmed that the **e-mail newsletter** (Brody 2014; Egoryan 2015) really attracts buyers, and if the consumer agreed to it initially, there is a possibility that he will open it (the correlation is 0.313), read (0.563) and make a purchase (0.392). Similarly, in the following funnel steps: there is a strong relationship between opening a letter and reading it (0.640), as well as making a purchase (0.401). And if the e-mail has already been read, the link indicates that consumers follow the links (0.416) and make purchases (0.420). Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed that the competent preparation of the e-mail, the availability of the necessary information, links and buttons contributes to making a purchase. E-mail marketing is an effective way to attract customers and stimulate demand for a product.

In addition, consumers who trust emails from companies and perform various targeted actions from them, allow commercial organizations to send them personal messages through social networks, which again indicates consumers' willingness to interact with the company through various channels.

Despite the fact that the frequency analysis of the results of the survey didn't give significant results in the block of **influence marketing**, which is mentioned by Hossain (2017), regression analysis showed its significant relationship with marketing in social networks. First of all, if the respondent trusts in what a blogger or a famous person advertises, he buys it (r = 0.742). Also, the credibility of a person in advertising attracts the attention of consumers when they view promotional offers in the news line in social networks, encourages to read their contents and even make a purchase under their influence (correlation is 0.307, 0.363 and 0.380, respectively).

**Social media marketing** studied by Donetskova (2015); Ilyshenko (2016) is a good channel for communication and consumer engagement, which is confirmed by regression analysis. Attracting users to a community or account is associated with the manifestation of their activity: a correlation of

about 0.4 indicates a connection. If the consumer is interested in advertising in the news line (like the design, the subject of the advertising message, trigger), then he will study it (0.575), which again speaks of the importance of setting up an advertising campaign and studying the target audience.

In a research study by Solodar (2018) the concept of the consumer funnel is observed. In our research the hypothesis of the consistent following of consumers in the consumer funnel, as well as the existence of a connection between different channels of communication, was confirmed. In order to attract customers, it is necessary to use various tools and correctly approach the setting up of advertising, which together will make the campaign successful.

#### Conclusion

According to the survey, there is a fairly high level of awareness of respondents about digital marketing (81.71%), more than half can distinguish digital marketing from traditional marketing (50.28%), but the very low number of respondents knows differences from Internet marketing (24.57%).

Consumers have the opinion that modern advertising is too intrusive and literally pursues them both in the online and offline world (more than 80% of respondents agree). Negative perception of advertising by consumers may be due to its going beyond the traditional promotion channels (TV, newspapers, street banners, Internet browsers, etc.) and the distribution of targeted advertising, which attracts more consumer attention.

A significant proportion of consumers (70.29% of respondents) agree with the basic principle of digital marketing about the personalization of advertising messages. This means that consumers pay attention to the fact that advertising messages, as a rule, offer exactly what they need, that is, they are addressed directly to the target audience.

The hypothesis of a consistent follow-up of consumers in the consumer's funnel, as well as the existence of a connection between the various channels of communication, was confirmed. In order to attract customers, it is necessary to use various tools and correct approach to the setting up of advertising, which together will make the campaign successful.

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