Innovation Marketing in the Digital Era: Adapting the Marketing Mix to the Online Environment - Insights from Leading Companies -.

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Abstract:

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, businesses encounter new challenges arising from the rapid advancement of digital tools and information technology, as well as the intensifying competitive environment and the diverse needs, lifestyles, and consumption habits of customers. Merely offering a superior and highly useful product may not suffice for a company to remain competitive in such a dynamic market without the right marketing strategy.

Successful companies are those that embrace rapid change, prioritize innovative marketing as a core strategy, and consistently innovate to enhance brand awareness and shape consumer perceptions.

This paper aims to showcase examples of three leading companies across different sectors that have effectively responded to these challenges by embracing digital channels, leveraging innovative technologies, and continuously evolving their marketing approaches. By tailoring their marketing mix to the online environment, these companies have successfully navigated the digital era and maintained a competitive edge.

Keywords: E-Marketing, Marketing Mix, E-Marketing mix, Online environment, Innovation marketing.

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I- Introduction:

Peter Drucker's famous quote, "A business enterprise has two and only two basic functions: marketing and innovation," emphasizes the fundamental importance of these two functions for a company's success. Marketing involves a range of institutional activities centered around the buying and selling of products or services to address the desires of individuals. A concise definition that encapsulates the essence of marketing is "meeting needs profitably" (Kotler & Keller, 2012, p. 5). A proficient marketing approach involves creating value propositions that offer benefits to customers (Kaur & Singh, 2017, pp. 253-258).

In this era of rapid technological advancements, marketing practices have undergone significant shifts. The digital revolution has transformed the way companies engage with customers and promote their products and services, presenting both opportunities and challenges across industries. Among the challenges faced by companies are the rapid evolution of customer needs and the nature of the market (Grimpe et al., 2017, pp. 360-383). Philip Kotler's statement, "Markets always change faster than marketing," highlights the need for companies to stay updated on the latest market developments (Aramendia-Muneta, 2012, pp. 289-298).

Additionally, there remains a significant untapped or yet-to-be-created market. As Kotler said, "good companies will meet needs; great companies will create markets" (Crainer, 2002, pp. 1031–1038). Companies can seize this opportunity by employing new and innovative marketing strategies for existing and new products and services. By staying attuned to market trends and adapting to change, companies can either adopt these marketing ideas or develop their own to create a niche within the crowded marketplace.

Another challenge arises from the exponential growth of the internet and IT, which has exposed customers to a multitude of alternative products, leaving them with limited time and attention for any specific brand. To overcome this, companies must effectively capture their target audience's attention and deliver their message (Kotler et al., 2016). Hence, the concept of innovation in marketing has become increasingly crucial for a company's success (Ungerman et al., 2018, pp. 132–148), not only for developing and maintaining a competitive advantage but also for enhancing overall business performance. Entrepreneurs can drive growth in specific sectors by developing innovative products or production processes (Cruz-Ros et al., 2017, pp. 1031–1038).

Furthermore, the existence of a wide array of digital marketing tactics on platforms such as websites, search engine optimization, social media, and mobile marketing offers a global online presence and enables the implementation of highly effective marketing strategies. The pervasive influence of digital communication technologies is evident from the fact that there were 5.3 billion active internet users as of 2022 (Petrosyan, 2023), highlighting the widespread impact of digital marketing on people's daily lives worldwide where traditional marketing methods are no longer sufficient, which leads companies to turn to crowdsourcing as one of the solutions for generating new ideas for products, advertising campaigns, and sales promotions (Kotler et al., 2016).

In this rapidly changing landscape, marketers face the pressing need for continuous marketing efforts to increase brand awareness. Furthermore, entrepreneurs can drive growth in specific sectors by developing innovative products or production processes (Cruz-Ros et al., 2017, pp. 1031–1038).

Moreover, in the digital era, the impact of digital marketing extends to every aspect of the traditional marketing mix. Companies must embrace this paradigm shift and tailor their marketing mix to suit the online market. By leveraging the power of digital platforms and tools, organizations can effectively reach their target audience and maximize their marketing efforts.

In light of these considerations, this article aims to explore the role of innovation in marketing in the digital era and its impact on overall business performance. It will highlight how organizations can adapt their marketing strategies to leverage digital channels and technologies effectively. By examining successful examples from leading companies in different sectors, we will gain insights into how these organizations have tailored their marketing mix to the online environment, enabling them to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

1. Innovation marketing in Digital Era.

According to Philip Kotler and Keller (2008) in their book Marketing Management, e-marketing refers to the constant communication with buyers and the sale and promotion of various products and services over the Internet. It involves the use of electronic data and communications technologies, particularly the internet, to achieve marketing objectives and effectively market a business. While terms like digital marketing, online marketing, internet marketing, and social media marketing are often used interchangeably by academics and practitioners, the conventional term is e-marketing, although digital marketing is gaining popularity (Shaltoni et al., 2018, pp. 272–284).

Chaffey and Ellis (2012) define e-marketing as the application of the internet and related digital technologies, combined with traditional communications, to accomplish marketing objectives.

Antony Puthussery (2020) describes digital marketing as the marketing and promotion of products or services using digital technology via the internet, mobile phones, visual advertising, and other electronic media.

In today's digital era, integrating digital strategy and expression into marketing strategies is essential. Consumers are active participants who can publish, edit, and comment on content. Conversations are multi-directional and often initiated outside the control of the brand.

Digital marketing offers two key advantages. Firstly, companies can accurately segment their audience based on various factors, enabling personalized messaging tailored to their preferences. Secondly, the digital realm allows for precise measurement and tracking of customer actions, enabling companies to evaluate campaign performance, identify valuable channels, and focus their efforts accordingly (Stokes & Quirk, 2013).

E-marketing has emerged as a prominent and powerful technology in the IT and e-commerce sectors. It is a new philosophy that attracts intention from researchers in the marketing field. With the utilization of the internet and various electronic means, it has become a significant commercial tool for marketing products, services, and information globally to targeted markets (Kaur & Singh, 2017, pp. 253-258). Additionally, it encompasses innovative activities that create superior value and benefits, enabling companies to differentiate themselves from competitors (Aksoy, 2017, pp. 133–141). The rise of globalization has fueled international competition; companies participate in global markets, no longer limited by factors such as size or country of origin (Kotler et al., 2016). The business environment is unpredictable and subject to rapid change, necessitating product diversification and differentiation (Utkun & Atilgan, 2010). Companies must be innovative to increase their competitiveness (D'Attoma & Ieva, 2020, pp. 64–81).

Innovation is the concept of expressing creativity and novelty through the centuries. Many definitions can be found in the innovation literature.
The concept of innovation has persisted throughout history as a means of expressing creativity and novelty. Numerous definitions can be found in the innovation literature. Innovation derives from the Latin word "innovatus," which signifies the beginning of applying new methods in social, administrative, and cultural contexts. Innovation emphasizes the outcome rather than the mere novelty, as socio-economic systems depend on change and diversification. Within the discipline of marketing, innovation is defined as the creation of new marketing methods that bring about positive changes in product design or packaging, placement, promotion, or pricing (Utkun & Atilgan, 2010).
The ultimate goal of marketing innovations is to align with customer needs, expand into new markets, or effectively position and market a company's product with the aim of increasing revenue. What sets marketing innovations apart from other changes in a company's marketing tools is the implementation of previously unused marketing methods (Wessel et al., 2019).

Marketing innovation can take various forms, including the implementation of new concepts or strategies that differ from a company's existing marketing approach. It encompasses changes in product design, packaging, distribution, and promotion or pricing policies. Some authors define marketing innovation as innovation in marketing programs or methods, including the traditional four Ps of marketing, while others see it as introducing new elements into the marketing mix to bring clear benefits to businesses (Moreira et al., 2012).

2. Adapting the Marketing Mix to the Digital Era (4Ps Innovation):

The advent of the internet has revolutionized the way businesses operate, particularly in terms of marketing. In the past, the internet was primarily used as a tool for direct marketing, aiming to elicit direct responses from customers. However, websites and online platforms have now emerged as independent marketing tools for businesses to reach customers and promote their brands, products, or services, attracting interested leads.

Businesses have come to realize the immense power of the internet and social networks, as people use these platforms daily to interact and stay connected using new technologies. Consequently, businesses recognize the opportunity to provide added value to their customers and foster new business relationships.

Nevertheless, the rapid growth of online tools and networking technologies has given rise to collective consumer innovations that are reshaping buying behavior, work dynamics, and society as a whole, ultimately influencing marketing strategies (Aramendia-Muneta, 2012, pp. 289-298).

Considering these changes, businesses must prioritize innovative digital marketing strategies that can quickly adapt to evolving trends. By embracing this innovative approach, businesses can position themselves as pioneers in their industry, reaching a broader client base, and achieving a more effective marketing strategy. It is important to note that the internet has also significantly impacted the traditional marketing mix, commonly known as the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion (Stokes & Quirk, 2013). Initially introduced by Neil Borden in 1964, the marketing mix comprised 12 elements, including product, pricing, planning, personal selling, branding, distribution channels, promotions, advertising, display, packaging, physical handling, servicing, and fact-finding and analysis (Borden, 1964, pp. 2-7). Jerome McCarthy later simplified it into the well-known 4Ps model (McCarthy, 1964), which Philip Kotler defined as "the set of marketing tools a company uses to pursue its marketing goals in its target market."

As the field of marketing has evolved, various proposals have emerged to enhance the classification of the marketing mix. With the rise of the internet, social media, and digital marketing, alternative models such as 4C, 4S, 5P, 7P, ICDT, and three "flow" models have been proposed to better reflect the digital marketing environment (Wang, Wang, & Yao, 2005, pp. 660–669).

The focus of this paper is to present and delve into the impact of digital innovation on the traditional marketing mix 4Ps. In the dynamic landscape of digital marketing, each element of the marketing mix has experienced significant transformations. These transformations have opened up new avenues and opportunities for businesses to enhance their marketing strategies .

Here's an overview of digital innovation within each element:

2.1 Product Innovation:

The product, as an integral component of the marketing mix, encompasses a combination of tangible or intangible goods or services that a company offers to its target market (Talpau, 2014, p. 53). According to Philip Kotler, a product denotes anything that can be offered to a market in order to fulfill customer needs.

Hill and Sullivan defined the product as "what the seller provides to the buyer in the exchange process to meet his needs and wants".

The integration of technology induces a global transformation in the behavior and competitive strategies of market participants (Wang et al., 2005, pp. 660–669). Additionally, the online environment instigates significant changes in the market landscape and product characteristics, while facilitating the accessibility of various goods and services. Within this context, e-marketing products are identified by researchers as items available in a virtual realm, with numerous digital offerings now conveniently obtainable

through service providers' websites. These products or services can be classified into three categories:

- Physical products: These tangible items include books, mobile phones, etc.
- Intangible products or services: This category encompasses offerings such as travel insurance or virtual games.
- Digitized products: These are digitized forms of goods, such as e-books, downloadable music, images, etc. (Talpau, 2014, p. 53).

Furthermore, the Internet exerts a dual influence on products. On one hand, there is a loss of certain essential attributes, such as tangibility, taste, and smell, when products are purchased online. Consequently, companies strive to overcome this shortcoming by providing prospective customers with enhanced informational content, visually appealing images of superior resolution, and comprehensive product views from multiple angles. They are compelled to furnish thorough information to compensate for these limitations (Bin Abdoul Lasi & Salim, 2020, pp. 40-48). On the other hand, the Internet presents a novel avenue for swiftly collecting customer feedback and expediting the process of new product development as the testing phase for innovative products becomes more efficient (Kaur & Singh, 2017, pp. 253-258).

Moreover, companies are obligated to employ marketing innovation, which plays a pivotal role in enhancing market performance through product innovation (Aksoy, 2017, pp. 133–141). The Internet brings forth several implications for the product element within the marketing mix, including the provision of opportunities to modify or alter core products, the availability of digital offerings and avenues for their expansion, as well as facilitating online research and expediting new product development or dissemination (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016).

2.2 Price innovation:

Digitization encompasses more than just technology; it fundamentally revolves around a company's revenue generation and exerts a significant influence on pricing strategies (Kaur & Singh, 2017, p. 253-258). Within the marketing mix, pricing strategy emerges as a vital element (Davcik & Sharma, 2015, p. 760-781). Price denotes the monetary value customers are willing to pay for products or services and stands out as the most adaptable component of e-marketing, allowing swift adjustments to align with market demands (Kaur & Singh, 2017, p. 253-258).

Moreover, in the digital age, price assumes a prominent role within the online environment, enabling lower pricing due to reduced costs in advertising, storage, and other related aspects (Talpau, 2014, p. 53). The internet facilitates decreased expenditures for commercial activities, resulting in reduced prices, diminished reliance on personnel, and the elimination of venue rental and maintenance expenses.

Additionally, companies operating in this environment must recognize the influence of comparative price platforms on customer behavior. The internet empowers shoppers with instant access to a wealth of information, encompassing selling prices, delivery terms, return policies, and consumer reviews of various retailers offering the same product. This abundance of data, easily accessible with a single click, enables buyers to select the most favorable price. Internet pricing benefits end customers as they exert influence over prices

within the online realm, which often fluctuate dynamically in response to supply and demand dynamics (Talpau, 2014, p.53).

The internet has profoundly impacted pricing strategies across multiple sectors. Initial research revealed two common approaches to internet pricing: startups typically employ lower prices to attract their customer base, while established companies often port their existing pricing structures onto the online platform (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016).

Given the intense competition, marketers leverage online advertising channels, such as online display ads and social media ads, to effectively reach their target audience. Concurrently, these advancements have paved the way for the development of diverse payment methods. Online payment options eliminate the constraints of time and location by facilitating the use of credit cards or other electronic payment mechanisms, presenting an efficient, convenient, and flexible solution for both companies and customers (Kaur & Singh, 2017, p. 253-258). Online shoppers can make purchases from any global market at their preferred time, unrestricted by geographical boundaries.

2.3 Place innovation :
According to Philip Kotler, the place or distribution aspect of the marketing mix encompasses the activities undertaken by a company to make its product accessible and available to its target customers.
Ensuring timely and efficient delivery of products to customers is a primary responsibility of marketing-oriented organizations (Brassington & Pettitt, 2003).

A promising product, even with a compelling price and marketing campaign, can be hindered if it fails to reach the intended customers. However, with the advent of digital technologies, product distribution and marketing are no longer limited to specific locations. Brands can now enter the global market by showcasing their products online through websites or social media platforms. It is crucial to engage customers on the channels they use, making a digital strategy essential (Stokes & Quirk, 2013).

The internet has transformed itself into a marketplace, enabling customers to engage in online shopping from anywhere and at any time. This has significant implications for the distribution aspect of the marketing mix. The internet has unlocked opportunities for companies to expand into new markets, from local to national or even international, with benefits such as cost-effective international advertising and the elimination of the need to establish sales infrastructure in different countries (Kaur & Singh, 2017, 253-258).
As a virtual space, the internet has reshaped the distribution process, eliminating inefficient intermediaries and altering the role of distribution channels. Location and distribution channel strategies now incorporate new elements, including remote hosting. Remote merchant hosting allows portals to host mirrored versions of websites, where sellers can rent space and portals receive and forward orders on their behalf. This technological shift has redefined the distribution landscape and opened up new possibilities for companies (Bin Abdoul Lasi & Salim, 2020, 40–48).

2.4 Promotion innovation:
Promotion encompasses a range of marketing communication activities aimed at informing customers and stakeholders about a company and its products or services (Talpau, 2014, p. 53). It is synonymous with "business dynamics" and means any research

that can drive sales growth. The effectiveness of promotional activities increases in markets saturated with advertising when they demonstrate flexibility and innovation (Alexandrescu & Milandru, 2018, p. 268-274).

Digital technologies are transforming communication between individuals and businesses, influencing communication channels and the number of touchpoints. Modern businesses are adopting integrated approaches to maximize their message delivery using various communication tools (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016).

In the realm of new communication methods, online advertising has significantly reshaped advertisers' services. The web allows for highly targeted ads tailored to individual users, facilitating efficient reach and feedback collection. Moreover, the internet has fostered the development of efficient intermediary markets for advertising, as exemplified by the keyword bidding system. Traditional publishers have also leveraged content delivery and ad space sales, leading to specialization on the internet (Evans, 2009, p. 37-60.).

The field of marketing communication is in a constant state of evolution. Traditional advertising methods on television, radio, and newspapers coexist with new tools, theories, techniques, and cultural dynamics. The emergence of digital channels like content marketing, social media (both paid and organic), Google Business Profile, email automation, and native ad platforms has transformed how marketers convey information to their target audiences (Bertram, 2022).

The internet serves as an ideal platform for product promotion, offering an additional communication channel for customers to understand product benefits and make informed purchasing decisions. The online promotional mix extends beyond offline strategies, with notable differences. Online ads can be tracked, measured, and targeted in a more sophisticated manner. However, promotion extends beyond advertising and online communication—it also involves active participation, collaboration, and engagement in internet discussions. Interaction with customers builds relationships, and the internet facilitates such communication (Stokes & Quirk, 2013). Marketing communications in the digital environment foster dialogue and interactivity at a high level.

It's worth noting that these digital innovations within the 4Ps are not exhaustive, and the digital marketing landscape continues to evolve rapidly. New technologies, platforms, and strategies emerge regularly, providing businesses with additional opportunities to innovate and adapt their marketing approaches.

3   Driving Success in the Digital Age: Insights from IKEA, Netflix, and Oreo on Tailoring the Marketing Mix to the Online Environment

The ever-changing business landscape, driven by technological advancements, has rendered traditional marketing strategies ineffective. In response to shifting markets and changes in consumer behavior, companies are compelled to embrace innovation in their marketing activities and adapt to the digital era (Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016).

Forward-thinking marketers constantly seek new digital marketing trends to uncover opportunities presented by evolving technologies and platforms. Successful companies are those that embrace rapid change, prioritize innovative marketing as a core strategy, and continuously innovate to enhance brand awareness and shape consumer perceptions. Innovation is a critical component of effective marketing.

Outlined below are examples of innovative digital marketing strategies used by leading companies, showcasing how they have adapted their marketing mix to the online environment.

3.1 Oreo

In today's highly competitive landscape, companies strive to stay ahead of their rivals by incorporating innovative strategies into their digital marketing mix. The snack food industry serves as a prime example, highlighting the intense competition prevailing in the market.

Oreo cookies, a globally successful brand, have managed to maintain their relevance as a century-old cookie amidst cultural shifts and changes in consumer preferences over the years. Introduced in 1912 by the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) (Ashe, 2021).

Oreo has employed innovation strategies across the marketing mix to maintain its relevance and success in the snack food industry. By examining the four Ps of marketing (product, price, promotion, and place), we can gain insights into how Oreo has innovated in each element to stay ahead of its rivals.

3.1.1 Innovation in Product :

Oreo cookies continuously innovate in their product offerings to meet changing consumer preferences and create excitement. In an interview with The New York Times, Justin Parnell, the senior director of the Oreo brand, shed light on the mission of Oreo's flavor innovation team. Their goal is to keep customers excited and drive growth by introducing new flavors. The team comprises marketers, product developers, researchers, and food scientists, who collaborate with chefs to stay updated with the latest trends and create new flavors. Parnell emphasized that these new flavors not only serve as advertisements themselves but also drive sales of the original plain cookie.

With over 85 flavors to date, Oreo has catered to diverse tastes worldwide, including unique flavors exclusive to specific markets like Wasabi and Hot Chicken Wing Oreos in China (Bromwich, 2020). Dirk Van de Put, chairman and chief executive officer, highlights the popularity of limited-edition products in the 21st century; Oreo introduced a limited-edition cookie featuring 16 different Pokemon characters, including Pikachu, imprinted on select sandwich cookies (Sosland, 2021). This edition became the fastest-selling variant of the iconic sandwich cookie in the history of the United States (Garcia, 2021).

Oreo has also introduced new product innovations like the Cadbury Plant bar in the United Kingdom, suitable for vegans, and Oreo Zero Sugar, launched in China (Sosland, 2021).

3.1.2 Innovation in place :

Oreo cookies have achieved remarkable success in terms of sales, with approximately 34 billion units sold annually (Ashe, 2021). This success can be attributed to Oreo's strategic focus on building brand awareness and expanding its distribution reach. The brand initially entered the global market by expanding from its home market in the US to countries like China and India. Over time, Oreo's global presence has expanded to more than 100 countries, including Ireland, the US, Canada, India, and New Zealand (Clements et al., 2013).

To effectively meet consumer demand in various regions, Oreo has strategically positioned manufacturing facilities worldwide. This global manufacturing presence allows

the brand to efficiently produce and supply its products to different markets. Since starting its operations in the UK, Oreo has established a network of manufacturing facilities strategically located across the globe. This enables the brand to ensure timely delivery and availability of its products to meet the diverse preferences and demands of consumers.

Oreo's distribution strategy plays a crucial role in ensuring the widespread availability and accessibility of its products. The marketing and sales team at Oreo is responsible for establishing partnerships with various retail outlets, shopping centers, supermarkets, hypermarkets, and even airports, depending on the specific market dynamics of each country. By leveraging traditional distribution channels, Oreo maximizes product visibility and reaches its target consumers effectively. This strategic approach allows Oreo to ensure that its products are readily available to consumers, regardless of their location, thus contributing to the brand's continued success in the global marketplace.

3.1.3 Innovation in promotion :

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), marketing communication serves as a means for companies to inform and persuade consumers about different products and brands . Oreo has leveraged digital platforms and social media to create buzz and engage with customers effectively. Their iconic advertising campaign "How to Eat Oreo Cookies, Twist Lick Dunk!" played a significant role in making it one of the best-selling cookies in American history. This campaign became a cultural phenomenon and enhanced the brand's uniqueness .

In January 2020, Mondelez International, the owner of the Oreo brand, organized a Guinness World Record attempt, inviting global employees to twist, lick, and dunk Oreo cookies simultaneously. This event celebrated Oreo's achievement of reaching 3 billion USD in sales and set a new record (Silver, 2020).
Oreo has successfully established itself as one of the most popular cookies worldwide, leveraging innovative communication strategies and viral marketing campaigns in internet culture. Few international companies can match Oreo's ability to engage customers effectively through digital platforms. By combining originality, intelligence, and consumer interaction, Oreo has excelled in retaining a strong presence on various online platforms (Farhan MASUD, 2020, p. 24).

Oreo's marketing team has demonstrated agility and creativity in seizing unexpected opportunities, as seen during the 2013 Super Bowl blackout when they swiftly posted a tweet "You can still dunk in the dark" that went viral, receiving over 15,000 retweets (Fernandez, 2018). Such innovative promotional tactics have helped Oreo establish a strong presence on various online platforms and become a leader in social media marketing, boasting 3.2 million followers on Instagram and nearly 1 million followers on Twitter (DWIVEDI, 2022).

3.1.4 Innovation in price:

Oreo has successfully navigated a competitive landscape by offering valuable propositions to its customers. The brand strategically adopts an average pricing policy to cater to consumers in price-sensitive markets. By providing quality products at affordable prices, Oreo has been able to secure a larger market share and retain a significant consumer base. As the brand gained popularity and expanded its presence in the market, product prices also witnessed an increase. Oreo's diverse product range and various package sizes allow for differentiated pricing, contributing to improved sales performance.

Furthermore, Oreo pursued market expansion strategies, particularly in India, by initially adopting a low-price strategy to capture a larger market share. However, as the brand's products gained tremendous success and established a strong presence, Oreo gradually increased its prices. This pricing approach enabled Oreo to penetrate new markets by attracting price-conscious consumers with affordable offerings while maintaining profitability and brand value.

By innovating across the four Ps of the marketing mix, Oreo has been able to differentiate itself, create value propositions for customers, and maintain its position as one of the most popular cookies globally. The dedication to flavor innovation, competitive prices, agile promotional strategies, and extensive distribution have contributed to Oreo's success in the digital era. Oreo's ability to continuously adapt and innovate serves as a valuable case study for marketers seeking to thrive in the competitive marketplace.

3.2 IKEA:

IKEA, a renowned Swedish furniture company established in 1943, has achieved global recognition as the pioneer of the "Ready to Assemble" concept (Ozturkcan, 2021, p. 8–13). In today's interconnected world, where customers expect seamless experiences across multiple channels, companies that fail to meet these new expectations risk falling behind. IKEA's digital transformation journey serves as an exemplary case of embracing change to deliver an enhanced customer experience while adapting to evolving competition and consumer demands. Let's delve into their approach to effectively market their products in the online realm through the 4Ps:

3.2.1 Innovation in product:

IKEA offers a diverse range of products to cater to the demands and desires of its customers. Their product portfolio includes bedroom furniture, storage and organization solutions, furniture for different areas of the home, textiles, home electronics, kitchen items, lighting, outdoor products, and more (Ikea, 2021). In line with enhancing the customer experience, IKEA has embraced augmented reality (AR) technology, which provides unique experiences and engages customers (Cehovin & Ruban, 2017). By leveraging AR, IKEA creates immersive brand experiences and allows customers to try out products in a new and interactive way (Yaoyuneyong et al., 2016, pp. 16–30; Scholz & Smith, 2016, pp. 149–161).

The IKEA Place app, launched in 2017, is a prime example of IKEA's product innovation. It enables customers to visualize furniture in their homes before making a purchase, helping them make informed decisions and avoid mismatched or ill-fitting furniture choices (Ozturkcan, 2021, p. 8-13). The app provides a vast catalog of approximately 2,000 3D products and accessories, ensuring that customers can select items that are the right size, design, and function for their needs (Joseph, 2017).

Michael Valdsgaard, the leader of digital transformation at Inter IKEA Systems, highlights how the use of augmented reality technology in the IKEA Place app simplifies the buying process. The app offers a wide range of products, styles, and colors that can be virtually placed in real-life settings with a simple swipe (Ayoubi, 2017). This feature addresses the common concerns of purchasing items without visualizing how they will look in a specific space or determining if they are the right size and dimensions. Additionally,

the app allows users to save their favorite products and share their selections on social media.

In 2019, IKEA further revolutionized the way people buy furniture by renewing its AR application. Customers can now shop for items remotely through the app, reducing the need to physically visit IKEA's out-of-town stores. The updated app incorporates artificial intelligence and augmented reality to provide personalized interior design advice, tips, and recommendations for setting up smart homes based on users' preferences, context, and behavior (Miller, 2019).

Through these product innovations, IKEA aims to enhance the customer experience, empower informed decision-making, and provide personalized solutions for its customers' home furnishing needs.

3.2.2 Innovation in price:

By embracing digital technology, IKEA aims to reach a broader customer base while keeping costs low compared to constructing new stores or facing high real estate prices (Marr, 2018). This aligns with IKEA's pricing strategy, which focuses on offering affordable furniture and home goods to its customers. The company implements various cost-saving measures throughout its supply chain, including (Shah, 2023):

- Bulk purchasing of materials: By buying materials in large quantities, IKEA can negotiate better prices and reduce production costs.
- Optimization of production processes: IKEA emphasizes optimizing its production processes to maximize efficiency and minimize waste, leading to cost reductions.
- Flat-pack shipping: IKEA's flat-pack shipping method allows more items to be transported in each shipment. This not only reduces transportation expenses but also minimizes the environmental impact associated with shipping.
- Self-assembly concept: IKEA's self-assembly approach enables customers to participate in the final construction of their purchased products. This concept saves on labor and packaging costs as well as transportation expenses since unassembled products take up less space during transportation.

Through these cost-saving measures, IKEA strives to maintain its commitment to offering high-quality products while keeping prices affordable for its customers.

3.2.3   Innovation in place:

IKEA's place innovation is evident in its digital transformation strategy, which acknowledges the significance of adapting to changing competition and consumer preferences (Henderson, 2020). To provide a seamless digital shopping experience, IKEA has developed the IKEA Place app, allowing customers to browse and purchase products remotely, reducing the necessity to visit physical stores located out of town. This app combines the advantages of both in-store and online experiences, according to Barbara

Martin Coppola (Thomasson, 2019). The digital transformation reflects IKEA's commitment to practicality, affordability, and sustainability for its diverse customer base (O'Hara, 2020).

To cater to customer preferences and enhance the overall shopping experience, IKEA offers various fulfillment options:

- In-store pickup: Customers who prefer a hands-on approach or immediate access to their purchases can choose in-store pickup. They can order products online and collect them at a designated IKEA store at their convenience. This option saves time by avoiding shipping delays and enables customers to physically inspect and transport their items personally.
- Home delivery: For customers seeking convenience, IKEA provides home delivery services. Selected products can be shipped directly to their desired location, eliminating the need for personal transportation or carrying bulky items.
- Assembly services: IKEA further streamlines the customer experience by offering assembly services for certain products. This option is particularly valuable for customers who prefer professional assistance or have time constraints. By providing assembly services, IKEA alleviates concerns or challenges related to product assembly, contributing to an enhanced overall customer experience.

By offering these fulfillment options, IKEA provides customers with flexibility and the ability to choose the method that best suits their convenience. This approach ultimately leads to higher customer satisfaction by accommodating different preferences and enhancing the overall shopping process.

3.2.4 Innovation in promotion :

IKEA's promotion innovation is driven by the use of augmented reality technology and the IKEA Place app, providing customers with a unique and immersive online shopping experience. The augmented reality feature allows customers to visualize furniture in their homes, aiding them in making informed purchase decisions and increasing engagement. Additionally, the app enables users to save their favorite products and share their selections on social media, effectively promoting IKEA's brand and products.

During festive seasons, IKEA implements various discount strategies to enhance customer affordability and incentivize purchases, including offering different types of discounts on selected products. In addition to traditional discounts, IKEA conducts multi-buy promotions in select stores. This promotion allows customers to receive free products or additional discounts when a certain quantity of products is purchased in a single transaction. For example, customers may be eligible for a free item or a discounted price on additional items after purchasing a specified number of products.

These discount and multi-buy promotions aim to attract customers during festive seasons, encourage them to explore a wider range of products, and provide added value for their purchases. They align with IKEA's goal of delivering affordable and cost-effective options for customers, making their shopping experience more rewarding during special occasions.

IKEA employs direct marketing as a key strategy; as exemplified by its widely distributed catalog. The company allocates over 70% of its advertising budget towards the catalog, which is annually mailed to approximately 200 million recipients across 28 countries, available in 17 languages. This extensive reach highlights the significance that IKEA places on its catalog as a marketing tool.

Recognizing the value of the catalog, IKEA actively promoted it through various marketing campaigns. For instance, in 2015, the company launched a smart video campaign to generate awareness and engage with its audience. The campaign aimed to capture the attention of potential customers and showcase the unique offerings and features presented within the catalog (Liaqat, 2022. P.21). By leveraging direct marketing strategies, IKEA effectively promotes its products and reaches a broad audience, strengthening its brand presence and customer engagement.

3.3 Netflix

Netflix, founded in 1997 by Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings, has revolutionized the entertainment industry and emerged as a global leader in entertainment services. The idea for Netflix originated when Hastings, burdened by exorbitant late fees for a movie rental, joined forces with Randolph, who aspired to establish an internet-based product-selling business. Together, they built the world's most successful subscription company, transforming the way people consume entertainment (Smith, 2017). By prioritizing customer needs and continuously adapting to digital disruption, Netflix has established a strong position in the industry. Their customer-centric approach, coupled with innovative marketing initiatives and personalized recommendations, has fostered customer loyalty and contributed to the platform's remarkable success.
Overall, Netflix's online marketing mix emphasizes a customer-centric approach, leveraging digital platforms to offer:

3.3.1 Product innovation:

Initially starting as a DVD rental service delivered by mail, Netflix recognized the shift in consumer preferences towards online content access. This led to their strategic decision to provide content via the internet, resulting in the introduction of their online streaming service in 2006. This transformation from physical DVD rentals to streaming high-quality movies and TV shows showcased Netflix's product innovation.

By offering a vast selection of content in a wide range of genres and languages, Netflix caters to the diverse demands and desires of its 232 million paid subscribers across more than 190 countries. Their product portfolio includes TV series, documentaries, feature films, and mobile games (Netflix, 2023). Moreover, With the transition from mailing physical content to streaming high-quality movies and TV shows, Netflix pursued further development opportunities by venturing into original content production, which quickly garnered widespread viewership (Gibbons, 2019). As a result, Netflix has become a powerhouse in the entertainment industry, boasting significant influence (Luenendonk, 2016).

3.3.2   Price innovation :

Netflix's digital marketing strategy extends to collaborations with various organizations and applications. For instance, users can enjoy a 50% discount on a Netflix subscription by having a bank account that is a business partner with the company (Tas, 2020).
Netflix operates on a subscription-based model, offering customers the convenience of unlimited streaming for a fixed monthly fee. This model eliminates the need for individual content purchases or rentals, providing subscribers with seamless access to Netflix's entire content library.

To cater to diverse customer needs and budgets, Netflix offers tiered pricing plans. These plans vary in features and pricing, allowing customers to choose the plan that aligns with their preferences. The basic plan provides standard definition streaming and access on one screen, while higher-tier plans offer HD or Ultra HD streaming and the ability to stream on multiple screens simultaneously. This pricing flexibility ensures that Netflix can cater to a broader audience and accommodate different customer preferences.

As a means to attract new customers, Netflix has traditionally offered a free trial period. This allows potential subscribers to experience the platform and its content before committing to a paid subscription. By providing a risk-free trial, Netflix not only entices potential customers but also demonstrates confidence in the value of their product.
One notable aspect of Netflix's subscription model is its ad-free environment. Unlike platforms that rely on ad-supported revenue models, Netflix remains free of advertisements, providing an uninterrupted viewing experience. This distinguishes Netflix and appeals to customers who prefer a seamless and immersive content consumption experience.

3.3.3   place innovation :

Netflix leverages the internet as its primary distribution channel, providing content to subscribers across more than 190 countries to overcome the limitations of physical distribution channels and reach a global audience. Hence, the company embraces the ever-expanding digital landscape, providing users with the freedom to watch content anytime, anywhere, on any internet-connected screen (Netflix, 2023).This approach embraces the connected world and the evolving expectations of customers seeking a seamless omnichannel experience. Additionally, Partnerships with internet service providers (ISPs), telecom companies, and device manufacturers further enhance Netflix's accessibility. These collaborations often involve bundling Netflix subscriptions with internet plans, pre-installing the Netflix app on devices, or offering exclusive deals to customers of select service providers (Tas, 2020).
To optimize streaming performance, Netflix has developed its own content delivery network (CDN) called Open Connect. This network strategically places servers worldwide, reducing buffering and latency issues by caching content closer to users.

3.3.4 Promotion innovation:

Netflix's digital marketing strategy encompasses a wide range of promotional activities conducted through various media channels, such as billboards, print media, social networking sites, and celebrity endorsements (David, 2021). This comprehensive approach takes advantage of the expanding digital landscape and the pervasive use of devices to effectively reach Netflix's target audience. Additionally, Netflix's collaborations with organizations enable them to offer discounts and incentives, further extending their promotional efforts and reinforcing customer loyalty.

The success of Netflix is significantly attributed to its innovative marketing initiatives that leverage data. Data collection and utilization play a central role in the company's achievements. Netflix employs big data technology to gain insights into viewers' habits and preferences, utilizing a robust recommendation engine to curate a unique and personalized viewing experience for each user.

In an interview with Netflix's Director of Engineering and Vice President of Product Innovation, Vanderbilt (2013) emphasized the critical role of big data algorithms in tracking customers' viewing behavior. This data-driven approach enables Netflix to understand user preferences, improve its services and feedback mechanisms, and ultimately entice users to return for more customized content (Wright et al., 2019, pp. 281–293; Madrigal, 2014).

Machine learning also plays a vital role in Netflix's operations, enabling continuous learning of its algorithms. By automating millions of choices based on user activities, Netflix optimizes its platform to cater to individual preferences. The company effectively transforms its content into data, fueling its recommendation algorithms (Hallinan & Striphas, 2016, pp. 117-137). Utilizing viewing data, search history, ratings, and contextual factors like time, date, and device type, Netflix predicts and suggests relevant content to keep users engaged. For example, if a user enjoys action movies, Netflix recommends similar titles to maintain their interest.

Personalization and algorithmic customization are paramount in various aspects of the user experience at Netflix. Leveraging the element of time, the platform recommends shorter shows when users sign in during the evening, ensuring an optimal viewing experience (Chandrashekar et al., 2017). By delivering the right content at the right time, Netflix enhances customer engagement and satisfaction, making its recommendation engine indispensable to the platform's success.

 Conclusion

The methods employed by companies to market their products and services to digital audiences and customers are constantly evolving because they cannot afford to remain indifferent; the outdated dichotomy of "tradition versus digital" no longer holds true. Regardless of their size, cyberspace offers an ideal platform for organizations to thrive (Gazi, 2020, pp. 12–23).

Online marketing presents a continuous array of opportunities and challenges in the market environment. This necessitates marketers to rethink their business approaches and devise innovative marketing strategies. Researchers have notably emphasized the role of marketing innovation in driving sustainable competitive advantages for businesses, enabling them to satisfy the market and facilitate the introduction of new products (D'Attoma & Ieva, 2020, pp. 64–81; Morgan et al., 2009, pp. 909–920).

By examining the cases of IKEA, Netflix, and Oreo, this paper has highlighted the importance of embracing digital channels and utilizing innovation in the marketing mix. In today's competitive landscape, companies must stay vigilant, adapt to market dynamics, and leverage the power of digital marketing to gain a competitive edge. The examples of IKEA, Netflix, and Oreo demonstrate how these companies have successfully tailored their marketing mix to the online space, showcasing their innovative strategies.

- Innovation in Product:

IKEA has embraced innovation in its product offerings, utilizing augmented reality technology to enhance the customer experience and provide virtual product visualization. Netflix has demonstrated innovation through its content creation and distribution model, offering a wide range of personalized content options to cater to diverse customer preferences.
Oreo has shown innovation in its product development, introducing unique and diverse flavor options to capture consumer interest.

- Innovation in Pricing:

Netflix demonstrates the effectiveness of its subscription-based model, tiered pricing plans, free trials, and ad-free environment.
IKEA emphasizes cost-saving measures, affordability, and the use of digital technology to reach a broader customer base.
Oreo's success lies in its average pricing policy, differentiated pricing, and strategic market expansion strategies.

- Innovation in Promotion:

IKEA has employed innovative promotional techniques by leveraging social media platforms and influencer collaborations to reach and engage with its target audience. Netflix has revolutionized promotion through data-driven recommendations and personalized marketing efforts, tailoring content suggestions to individual users.
Oreo has showcased promotional innovation through creative advertising campaigns and collaborations with popular brands or events.

- Innovation in Place:

IKEA has embraced digital platforms to enhance accessibility and convenience for customers, allowing them to explore and purchase products online.
Netflix has utilized the internet as its primary distribution channel, reaching a global audience through its online streaming platform.
Oreo has expanded its distribution channels to include e-commerce platforms, making its products readily available to digital consumers.

These examples illustrate how companies can effectively navigate the challenges of the digital age by embracing innovation within each element of the marketing mix. By continually exploring innovative strategies in product development, pricing, promotion, and place, organizations can position themselves for sustainable growth and long-term success in the ever-changing digital landscape.

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