

It's that time of the year again, when students have to make choices that will define their careers. To have many choices is wonderful but when all appear compelling, making an informed decision is a challenge. TOI's 'Mission Admission' guides students through the season. Today's focus: **Digital Marketing and Social Media**

LEARN TO SELL, WITH A SMILEY

Digital Marketing – Selling of Products, Services Using Digital Technologies – Is A Hot Trend

Ranjani.Ayyar@timesgroup.com

People are prisoners of their phones," says a meme. "That's why they are called cell phones." Much has been written about our addiction to mobile phones, and most of that is read on mobile phones. In fact, the aforesaid meme would not have become popular had it not been circulated through cell phones.

Such is the reach of digital media that an increasing number of people shop, bank, do business and entertain themselves on digital platforms. As this compels companies to revisit their marketing strategies, a career in digital marketing and social media could be rewarding.

"Companies are going through a digital transformation. Digital first companies like Ola, Paytm and Flipkart are pushing the envelope, connecting industries to consumers. Watch the next decade," says Arjun Shankar, chief delivery & operations officer, skills and career group, NIIT Limited.

For the uninitiated, digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital technologies with the objective of promoting brands, engaging with customers and increasing sales. A career in digital marketing would encompass several sub areas including search engine optimisation (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), social media, email, mobile and web analytics. SEO entails maximising number of visitors to a website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine. SEM is about building visibility through advertising.

While digital marketing is included as a sub topic in mass media and management courses of-

fered by colleges, a host of institutes offer online certificate and diploma courses too. From a basic course in digital marketing, they offer certificate courses in specific areas such as social media marketing, pay per click (PPC) and mobile app marketing.

Deepak Kanakaraju, digital marketing manager at RazonPay says, "A digital marketing course teaches you setting up websites to building online presence and creating web content. It entails using SEO and SEM to reach out to prospective visitors and harnessing the power of social media tools and tapping into online advertising, email and mobile marketing."

Kanakaraju suggests starting one's own blog. "Keep a minimal budget and carry out SEO and SEM for your blog. It will test your marketing capabilities," he says. While basics of advertising and marketing are a must, one has to choose his sub area according to his penchant, says Vedanarayan Vedanatham, senior director-marketing, Simplilearn. For those with a flair for writing, there is content writing; web analytics could suit those who love numbers.

Adapting to the latest technologies is vital. "With consumers using such forums to discuss everything from personal issues to product complaints and reviews, companies need to keep a watch and respond in an agile manner," says Saurav Gupta, digital marketing executive with an ad agency. One can choose to work with a digital marketing agency or in the industry within the marketing team. Kanakaraju suggests working with startups for maximum exposure. "Startups are not reliant on traditional methods and are tech savvy. So there is plenty of scope to experiment," he says.

IT'S A 'NET'WORK Increasing number of people shop, bank, do business and entertain themselves on digital platforms



ADMISSION PROCEDURE

Eligibility | Class 12 pass (aggregate 50% required in most courses, may vary across institutes)

Fees
₹15,000 – 60,000

WHAT STUDENTS LEARN

Creating website, content
Planning online marketing strategy, determining the target audience, measuring results

Building online presence for the company, tapping into social media tools

Using web, email and mobile as primary tools for marketing

SCOPE AFTER COURSE

- > Digital marketing manager
- > SEO (Search Engine Optimization) executive/manager
- > SEM (Search Engine Marketing) executive/manager
- > Social media manager

For tips on courses and career guidance, students can email queries to missionadmission.toichennai@gmail.com

Companies that are active in digital marketing

Flipkart
Amazon
L'oreal
Accenture

Starting pay scale
₹2,50,000- ₹3.5 lakh

COURSES OFFERED
Course duration varies from one-day courses to 6 months; includes online courses

INSTITUTES	COURSES
Simplilearn	Digital Marketing Certified Associate Training
Digital Vidya (Government certification)	Certification in Digital Marketing
NIIT (in partnership with digital management institute, Ireland)	Professional Diploma in Digital Marketing
Manipal Prolearn	Digital Marketing Professional Program
All India Management Association	Professional Certificate in Digital Marketing And Analytics
Digital Marketing Academy	Digital Marketing Training Program

DID YOU KNOW?

On an average, 60% of a marketer's time is devoted to digital marketing activities, fuelling demand for digital marketing skills



First ever tweet was from the founder of Twitter himself – Jack Dorsey in March 2006

First registered domain was Symbolics.com in 1985

71% of companies have planned to increase their digital marketing budgets in 2016

78% of firms say they have dedicated social media teams in 2015, up from 67% in 2012

As per a study by digital marketing company Adestra, 80% of consumers unsubscribe from emails they no longer want to get

15% of Google searches have never been searched for before, i.e. they are unique searches

Source: Smart Insights and Ecommerce Exp, Webbiqity, iScope

Digital first companies like Ola, Paytm & Flipkart are pushing the envelope, connecting industries to consumers. Watch the next decade

Arjun Shankar | CHIEF DELIVERY & OPERATIONS OFFICER, SKILLS AND CAREER GROUP, NIIT LIMITED



Roll up sleeves, get your hands dirty

Today we spend more time on our phone than watching TV, listening to the radio or reading a newspaper. This means there are more people available on the digital platform. And marketers need to start meeting their customers where they are.

Now working in digital marketing, I started my career with a US-based bank, only to realise that I liked advertising and marketing better. When I first decided to learn digital marketing, there were a few formal courses, and most of them were too expensive and inflexible.

So I stumbled upon a blog and started with basic SEO (an activity that helps your webpage's website rank higher in the search results). After getting a hang of the

basics I dabbled in experiments (for a laundry store), spending not more than a few hundred rupees to understand how things work.

As time marched on, with decent exposure to digital media marketing, I started doing free gigs for friends and then moved to digital marketing consulting. Today I run multiple



EXPERTSPEAK

Rajeev Gurushtetty, Digital marketing manager, Stayzilla also runs multiple campaigns on various digital channels such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and Bing

campaigns on various digital channels such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and Bing.

Digital marketing in India is in its growth phase which means more and more companies are looking for people with expertise in this domain. This expertise cannot be made available through the college curriculum. To get this, you have to get your hands dirty and learn from people in the field or start small by intern-ing or experimenting. Facebook, Google and LinkedIn offer enough material for you to start.

All you need is good communication skills, a creative eye and a very curious mind. Digital is a very dynamic field, hence you need to read, research and be willing to unlearn.