

Mastering the art of digital marketing

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Building a promising career in digital marketing will require learning the ropes of the field by industry experts says Abhishek Arora, EVP and Business Head, Skills and Careers Business, NIIT Ltd.

In our highly connected world—as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning take over our lives—the way we interact and transact has changed distinctly. In the process, for most businesses, digital marketing has become a powerful game-changing tool that is applied for driving impact as well as profits. Across the globe, we are witnessing a marked rise in digital marketing jobs, and in India alone, data from various job portals suggest that there is a demand for about two million jobs in the field. Not surprising then that on LinkedIn's Jobs on the Rise 2021 India list, digital marketing features second in the top career trends. This means the hot seat for jobs available across different verticals is reserved for social media and digital marketing roles including that of social media marketing manager, social media strategist, and growth hackers.

Interestingly, this increase in demand for digital marketing professionals is not restricted to agencies but is spread across different sectors and industries. Delving deeper into the markets, currently, India has the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world. However, as per a study conducted by IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV) and Oxford Economics, 90 per cent of Indian start-ups fail within the first five years. The study says that one of the prime reasons for their failure is the inability of the start-ups to acquire customers. This could be because, in the past, customer acquisition was an internal, localised affair; while today it is all about drafting and executing a digital-driven marketing strategy that has a remarkable reach. From a business point of view, it makes sense to invest in marketing efforts on online platforms because that's where the target audience for most businesses is spending a large amount of their time. That's why, it is easier to grab attention and make a connection through channels such as search engines, social media, e-mails, and websites.

Stop selling; start innovating

Having said that, it is important to understand that digital marketing isn't just a 'cool' coveted career option for the interim. According to estimates by management consultancy Redseer, India's digital ad expenditure is expected to grow 10 times over the next decade and will likely account for 70-85 per cent of the total ad market which currently stands at 33 per cent. The digital advertising market is expected to touch \$25-35 billion by 2030 from \$3 billion in 2020. This isn't a fad—the future is digital and that's why even new and aspiring entrepreneurs must acquire these skills which would help them in the long run to strategise and upsurge their businesses. We've seen how digital marketing got a boost during the pandemic with every business creating an online presence to stay in touch with their target audience. That need to connect drove concepts and campaigns on the digital platform that were far quicker and more accessible than conventional mediums. They excelled with far less investment, workforce, and assets making businesses realise that, unlike popular belief, Return on Investment (ROI) for digital marketing is indeed measurable and is far higher than their conventional counterparts.

Learning the ropes

For the uninitiated, an accomplished career in digital marketing is more than making promotional videos, creative GIFs and memes. Here, industry-readiness defines the path to success and so a deep-dive course designed by industry professionals with hands-on experience is the quickest way to excel in the field. It is about creating a brand value and maintaining its image through a spectrum of expertise that extends from drafting strategies to executing them and possessing the technical know-how of steering the brand to make a mark. Digital branding focuses on providing value and aims at inspiring loyalty and brand recognition while targeting a large group of audiences. One needs methodical training on the workings of websites, social media, e-mail marketing, and other digital promotion mediums while also developing an acumen to respond to industry trends—not steering away from the marketing goals of the brand and the organisation at large. Therefore, in addition to creating smart brand videos, campaigns, and marketing assets for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn, there needs to be a knack for identifying growth opportunities using eCommerce, creating smart marketing briefs, utilising paid marketing campaigns, and making Google work to the brand's advantage through keywords and smart work.

An interesting course to look at would be NIIT's Full Stack Digital Marketing Programme meant to make StackRoute certified, industry-ready, digital marketing experts. Designed by industry practitioners and digital marketing experts, this 20-weeks part-time program is online mentor-led and is extremely hands-on with placement assurance. The challenges shared in the modules are based on real-life case studies and make it perfect for professionals and entrepreneurs alike. By the end of the course, entrepreneurs can leverage skills to scale their businesses and job seekers can become industry-ready to work on world-class digital marketing projects and teams.

A course like this is further instrumental in building all-around skills including business and interpersonal ones that help to handle a brand's image better. In the long run, only those fuelled with passion, creativity, innovation, analytical skills, patience, and goal-orientation—and are backed with the right technical skills—will be able to soar high in the extremely dynamic and versatile field of digital marketing.