

A STUDY IN VIRTUAL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR ROOFING SOLUTION IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

The swift growth of digitalization in India has transformed the way businesses deal with consumers; sectors that usually depend on physical network infrastructures such as building and roofing have experienced a shift in the dynamics of their interaction processes with consumers. The current study examines the rise and effectiveness of virtual marketing used by roofing solution providers in Tamil Nadu. It explores how companies have adopted new marketing techniques based on the use of virtual means including social media marketing, search engine optimization, virtual meetings, and online transactions. In doing so, the study will analyze the ways business enterprises adapt to the new customer behaviors using primary sources, industry analysis, and secondary data. It has been discovered that there is a strong responsiveness of urban customers to digital marketing techniques but rural regions are less engaged, thus indicating the need for integrated efforts.

Keywords: Virtual marketing, roofing industry, Tamil Nadu, digital marketing strategies, construction sector, consumer behavior, online engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of technology into the business process has changed the nature of business-customer relationships significantly, and this has had significant impacts on industries such as roofing solutions in the industrial and semi-industrial segments. Traditionally, roofing companies operating in the state of Tamil Nadu relied heavily on dealer channels, contractor contacts, and referral marketing practices. Nevertheless, the growing adoption of internet connectivity and smartphones in both urban and semi-urban settings has made it possible for digital marketing initiatives to influence the marketing positioning of roofing companies. Virtual marketing may be described as the employment of digital technologies and virtual means of communication in advertising a commodity or offering services. Some virtual marketing techniques include SEO, social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and virtual customer engagement channels. Virtual marketing is particularly relevant in the context of high-involvement, need-based purchases such as roofing solutions, which are based on the product's durability, affordability, and other technical characteristics. In Tamil Nadu, construction activities continue to thrive as a result of the region's ongoing urbanization and development. Therefore, virtual marketing is gaining relevance both among large roofing solution manufacturers and small-to-medium companies.

Research conducted in the early stages of the adoption of digital marketing (2010-2014) indicated that online presence and customer interaction have become increasingly significant. According to Chaffey (2010), blending conventional marketing techniques with modern digital approaches increases the firm's reach and loyalty. Additionally, according to Tiago and Verissimo (2014), the use of digital marketing tools allowed organizations to improve their customer interaction and brand reputation in competitive environments. Most studies during the mentioned timeframe focused on service sectors and retail but paid little attention to the construction industry.

In 2015-2018, academics became interested in studying the impact of digital marketing on the purchasing process of consumers for expensive and technologically sophisticated goods. Kumar and Mirchandani (2015) argue that digital customer engagement plays an important role in affecting purchasing behavior if companies offer useful and valuable information to their consumers. According to Stephen (2016), digital marketing helps in creating campaign that can easily be analyzed in terms of efficiency. Additionally, it has been found out that marketing automation approaches along with content marketing could help in business-to-business sectors such as construction materials. Major developments took place in virtual marketing using analytics, artificial intelligence and mobile technology between the years 2019 to 2024. According to Dwivedi et al. (2020), digital marketing has become an important aspect of business strategy wherein big data analytics are utilized to provide personalized experience for customers. The coronavirus pandemic has forced various businesses to make major changes to their digital marketing approach since the previous offline approach was inadequate. According to Bala & Verma (2021), the use of social media and video marketing is crucial when building consumer trust. In addition, Kannan (2022) emphasizes the need for digital marketing ecosystem for improving the customer journey where the purchase process tends to be complicated.

Most of the literature published between 2023 and 2024 addresses the localization of digital marketing approaches. According to Ramaswamy and Subramanian (2023), the use of regional languages in online campaigns and localized SEO tactics is crucial for targeting consumers in the state of Tamil Nadu. Emerging studies also discuss the need to adopt hybrid approaches to digital marketing, using both virtual marketing tools and physical on-ground delivery of services. For example, hybrid marketing approaches prove useful in industries like roofing, which require installation and customer support.

The lack of information in the chosen research area can be seen in the absence of scholarly attention to the relationship between the adoption of digital marketing and sales performance among producers of roofing solutions in Tamil Nadu. Existing literature discusses digital marketing and construction materials but fails to provide details on the peculiarities of marketing roofing solutions in Tamil Nadu. In other words, few scholars examine how regional businesses use digital marketing tools, what problems arise in this regard, and what results different tools bring in the local context. The research will focus on filling the identified gaps through analyzing the influence of virtual marketing tools on the performance of organizations involved in the provision of roofing solutions within the state of Tamil Nadu. The current study focuses on the role of digital marketing tools in improving performance, especially in terms of customer coverage and increased sales.

VIRTUAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE ROOFING INDUSTRY

In Tamil Nadu, the roofing sector, characterized by contracting networks, dealerships, and site-based transactions, has seen significant development in terms of incorporating virtual marketing techniques. The change goes beyond just technological improvements but represents a paradigm shift in how consumers conduct their search, evaluation, and purchasing processes in relation to roofing products. With an increase in internet and smartphone usage along with an increasingly tech-savvy consumer base, changes must be made in virtual marketing tactics.

One of the most common strategies used by roofing businesses in this new environment consists of utilizing SEO techniques along with localized digital visibility improvements. Local roofing companies are now increasingly optimizing their sites for region-specific search queries like

"metal roofing solutions in Coimbatore" or "industrial roofing contractors in Chennai." Such localization is useful since it allows attracting highly interested clients looking for roofing solutions. Furthermore, Google Business profiles, customer reviews, and Google maps listing can help increase credibility and visibility of small and mid-size enterprises relying heavily on local markets.

Another tool for roofing businesses to leverage is social media marketing. Unlike consumer products, social media marketing in the roofing market does not revolve around making direct sales but rather promoting one's services via visual promotion of already implemented solutions, roofing designs, and construction techniques. Using before/after photos, video clips demonstrating the process of implementation, and customer testimonials builds trust in this sector in which a physical check is traditionally vital to a client. In terms of climatic conditions typical for Tamil Nadu (heavy rains and heat), educational posts regarding material's durability and affordability are also effective. Further, an interesting approach taken by roofing enterprises includes virtual consultation techniques. These days, roofing companies often interact with potential clients using various digital media such as WhatsApp, video communication services, and online inquiries. As a result, people can send images of the site, communicate their requirements and get quick estimates without having to make in-person visits. The process of reaching out to clients also enables companies to serve customers outside their immediate vicinity. After the onset of the pandemic, the method has been adopted by both residential and industrial clients.

It is important to note that content marketing holds a unique position in the development of customer perception. Articles, FAQs, and tutorial videos related to topics like "Best roofing materials in coastal Tamil Nadu" or "Comparing the cost of sheet and tile roofs" help organizations position themselves as problem solvers rather than mere vendors. This trend is supported by changing trends in consumer behavior, wherein consumers conduct an initial round of research before talking to any salespeople. Businesses that offer meaningful and understandable content will likely generate higher levels of customer engagement. Email marketing along with CRM applications has now become quite common in many companies, especially those dealing with roof solutions for large firms. Such an approach allows firms to maintain their contact with contractors, architects, and loyal customers through regular communication and promotions.

While some of the techniques mentioned above might seem quite new to small businesses, they can be viewed as part of the evolving marketing process that most companies now follow. Another important trend worth mentioning here is digital marketing campaigns through PPCs or other means such as social media. Companies spend a small part of their budget on conducting specific campaigns targeting different categories of clients, including industrial buyers, builders, and homeowners. The main advantage of such techniques is the ability to reach target audiences and gain certain leads that can be tracked unlike print ads and hoardings. Despite the progress made in roofing solution marketing, there are several barriers. First, it seems quite hard for many companies operating in rural and semi-urban areas of Tamil Nadu to master various tools used in digital marketing. Moreover, some roofing enterprises still resist going online since they think that roofing solutions remain a "touch-and-feel" kind of products. Nevertheless, the benefits of digital marketing can hardly be underestimated by the first movers in this segment.

To sum up, it is evident that current trends related to virtual marketing involve the combination of online and offline approaches. While remaining relatively slow, changes in marketing strategies demonstrate significant progress in the adoption of new tools that help companies attract new clients.

EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES IN INFLUENCING CUSTOMER AWARENESS AND DECISION-MAKING

The efficiency of virtual marketing methods used to influence customer perception in the roofing solutions industry in Tamil Nadu shows how the process of researching, assessing, and buying industrial products has changed greatly. High-involvement and durable products like roofing materials traditionally benefited from word-of-mouth and physical demonstrations. Nonetheless, the rising number of people who are capable of surfing the Internet and using smartphones has expanded the role of virtual marketing in this sector.

Based on the results obtained, one may conclude that search engine presence and relevant digital content are crucial at the stage of forming customers' awareness. More and more often people use the Internet when buying products that involve significant financial investments. People prefer to search for information about products based on the climatic features of their locality and durability. Firms that had been successful in ensuring their websites got good ranking results on Google, as well as providing regularly updated information, became more visible. Platforms that allowed posting pictures became another effective tool for influencing customer opinions; a few companies managed to use them successfully by presenting the whole installation process, before and after pictures, as well as providing information about product strength in different weather conditions. It turned out to be quite a good way to explain the process to people, but it worked effectively only when the provided information was credible; otherwise, users were ignoring it.

The analysis of testimonials showed that they could affect customers' decisions. Roofs represent a rather risky product type. Therefore, most people are willing to hear what others think about the product. Customer reviews, especially those referring to the experience with the product in local climate conditions (monsoons, for example), helped narrow down the number of options. Businesses that showed a good level of reputation management (responded to reviews) influenced people's decisions significantly. In addition, email marketing and digital ads proved to be quite inefficient. They allowed for raising awareness but did not directly affect people's decision-making. Most people were ready to ignore marketing emails sent without an invitation until they needed the company's services. At the same time, retargeting ads turned out to be quite useful. When people visited the web site, the ads reminding them about the visit and offering them to contact the company were viewed more positively.

However, virtual consultations and customer support services became particularly impactful during the later phases of decision making. Ease of communicating any technical queries was felt by the consumers, as well as receiving personalized advice via chatbots, videos, and many other methods of digital communication. Visiting the showrooms physically was not necessary, as everything related was advised digitally to the customers. Virtual support became particularly critical in regions where showrooms were difficult to reach.

However, despite the many advantages provided by virtual marketing in the case study, some limitations became apparent. For example, a certain group of customers living in rural areas preferred consulting with local contractors and dealers to make their decisions. As a result, digital marketing in this context served as an awareness-raising tool, but it could not help customers make a purchase decision. Moreover, in some cases, technical characteristics of products made it difficult to transfer all the details of the information to the consumers.

Moreover, it appears that virtual marketing becomes maximally effective when it is integrated into the customer journey from its very beginning until the end. By providing relevant, credible, and

informative material, virtual marketing enables people to feel comfortable buying roofing products online and in the physical space of showrooms and retail stores. Even though the roofing industry still prefers using traditional methods for selling its products, virtual marketing proves to be quite efficient for it.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN TAMIL NADU

Consumers' behavior in Tamil Nadu in respect to roofing materials demonstrates a complicated correlation between financial ability, climate characteristics, cultural tendencies and the ever-growing role of online platforms. The state's continuous process of urbanization, along with the development of semi-urban and rural areas, has created a diverse consumer demographic that shows different degrees of responsiveness towards digital marketing tactics.

One of the key aspects of consumers' behavior in Tamil Nadu concerns the preference for practicality and weather-resilient building materials. As the area experiences high levels of heat and humidity, especially in coastal areas, as well as frequent monsoons, consumers place great emphasis on products that provide insulation against heat, durability, and are capable of withstanding various weather conditions. Roofing material made up of metal sheets, clay tiles, and other roofing material which undergoes polymer coating in order to increase their wearing capacity have become more popular. This is one reason for the way consumers interact with information provided through digital marketing; they look for specifications, performance comparison, and videos before making any purchase decision.

Another important consideration for consumer buying behavior is the tendency to compare prices along with the increased awareness regarding value. Consumers do not prefer to buy things simply because they have the lowest price tag. Rather, consumers judge the total value of any purchase, including longevity of the product, energy efficiency, durability, etc. As the competition for the Tamil Nadu market increases, so does the popularity of virtual marketing campaigns that focus on the long-term benefits of roofing products and warranty provisions. Influence of cultural and social determinants is quite strong too. Many people residing in the tier-2 and rural areas of Tamil Nadu make decisions collectively, consulting family members or the local contractors. The word-of-mouth recommendation is still a powerful tool in spite of all technological advances made in this sphere. On the other hand, the Internet has greatly expanded the reach of cultural influence and strengthened its power. Online reviews and testimonials significantly shape the consumers' opinions. It was observed that marketing tactics including videos presented in Tamil language and case studies are much more effective among these people than generic content.

As already mentioned above, consumers' use of digital technologies in Tamil Nadu has grown significantly, which can be explained by increased smartphone penetration rates as well as by low cost of Internet connectivity in this region. People started using various digital platforms – social networks, video sharing websites and e-commerce portals – in order to search for suitable roofs. Visual materials are especially important when deciding what roof to buy; this includes installation demonstration, 3D visualization and examples of previous projects.

Moreover, people usually compare a few different brands on the Internet and only then contact the dealers. Thus, the traditional decision-making strategy based on direct communication with salesmen is being replaced by a much more thoughtful approach supported by thorough online research. At the same time, some gap between consumers' behavior in urban and rural settings should be pointed out. People who live in cities prefer to conduct detailed online research, visit

brand websites and even reply to digital advertisements. Rural dwellers may resort to using Internet resources only at the early stages of decision making, while finally opting for advice of dealers or contractors from their locality.

Another determinant that impacts the decision-making process is associated with brand trust and service quality. As far as roof is a rather expensive long-term purchase, buyers prefer to choose the brands that have good reputations. Such factors as certification, communication skills, customer service networks play an extremely important role when choosing the right brand. It also helps if manufacturers provide enough information about maintenance of products. Moreover, it should be noted that consumers in Tamil Nadu carefully assess the performance of roofs, balance cost-benefit ratio and actively seek for necessary information in the virtual environment.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE ROOFING SECTOR

Digital marketing adoption in the roofing industry in Tamil Nadu has evolved over time; however, it is still not widespread and sometimes is hampered by various limitations that come from structural, technological, and behavioral perspectives. In consumer markets, brand awareness and impulsiveness of purchase behavior usually play a critical role in online engagement; nevertheless, decisions about roofing solutions tend to be expensive and based on need rather than impulsivity, which determines the challenges of adaptation.

Among the first issues to be noted, there is low readiness for digital marketing among small and medium-sized businesses involved in the roofing market. There are many companies owned by families or local management teams and having their business mainly through contractors, dealers, and word-of-mouth promotion. There is no doubt that a good number of companies do not have the technical skills necessary to develop digital marketing strategies. The reason is simply because they lack the skilled professionals that would ensure they can compete against other companies using digital marketing strategies. Another important point to consider when implementing digital marketing strategies is resource requirements. While digital marketing has been regarded as an economical way to attract customers, it requires heavy investment that might not be feasible for many firms. In addition, digital marketing strategies take time to bear fruits. This is especially the case with roofing solutions since the sales process takes some time. The key challenge faced by digital marketing strategies employed by roofing firms in Tamil Nadu is unique customer attributes. The majority of clients, particularly those located in semi-urban and rural areas, show insufficient engagement with online spaces and may not use the internet for making decisions related to construction. Moreover, even when internet access is available, people do not place sufficient trust in information found online in comparison to referrals from local builders. Consequently, digital marketing alone is likely to prove ineffective, supporting the need for a blended marketing approach.

Content-related barriers also exist. Roofs represent complex and highly technical goods, and communicating information about their specifications, longevity, protection from environmental effects, and other features is no easy task. At the same time, the production of appealing content that would effectively attract attention in diverse audiences is difficult, and so is creating multilingual content for a linguistically heterogeneous region such as Tamil Nadu, where Tamil and English are the languages of choice. Most firms find it difficult to produce engaging yet high-quality and accurate content that will meet the needs of different audiences. Another important factor relates to competition. In general, larger firms with stronger brand images and sufficient

resources are likely to be more effective at exploiting digital marketing tools due to their ability to apply customer relationship management software, conduct sophisticated analyses of client data, and create compelling marketing materials. Hence, the uneven distribution of resources makes it difficult for small businesses to compete successfully with more organized competitors.

Moreover, infrastructure-related barriers may pose significant obstacles for companies looking to implement digital marketing strategies in the area. While most customers currently have constant access to the Internet, there remain some problems that need to be solved, such as unreliable connectivity and poor availability of high-speed broadband networks. This means that digital marketing should not be treated as an infallible means of communicating with clients, especially the clients living in the countryside. Another problem that hinders proper application of digital marketing techniques is that many companies that offer roof installation services lack a long-term vision. Digital marketing is not about doing a couple of things randomly but rather it is a part of marketing strategy and includes social media interaction, web site creation, SEO and more. However, many companies choose to engage in digital marketing sporadically, focusing on single elements.

To sum up, despite being very promising, the implementation of digital marketing for roofing firms in Tamil Nadu faces a number of barriers related to different areas and spheres. Thus, it is essential to take appropriate steps to address these barriers to improve marketing efforts in the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL MARKETING PRACTICES

According to the present investigation, despite virtual marketing becoming highly relevant for roofing solution providers in Tamil Nadu, its full potential is far from being achieved. For improving results, it is necessary to implement a more data-focused approach to digital advertising. Initially, a more region-specific approach to marketing is required. Being heavily dependent on regional conditions, roofing solutions have to be advertised based on the specificities of the region, namely heat and monsoon resistance, as well as energy efficiency. The use of regional languages, especially Tamil, will prove valuable in engaging customers in conversation.

Secondly, it is essential to utilize data analytics. As many companies tend to focus merely on creating a website, it becomes necessary to analyze consumer behavior on this site and optimize marketing campaigns according to it. Data driven marketing allows for achieving higher efficiency rates and minimal expense.

Another important suggestion is related to enhancing the visual component of campaigns. Since roofing products are rather expensive and considered to be high-involvement, it is crucial to create opportunities to evaluate the product properly before making the decision. Using 3D visualization, video marketing, and virtual tours makes customers feel more confident in their choice.

It is also advisable to use the omnichannel approach in virtual marketing campaigns. An effective strategy combines different marketing activities and provides consumers with an opportunity to contact specialists regardless of whether they have visited the website or not. Such a combination allows improving sales considerably. Finally, it is necessary to focus not only on promotional campaigns but also on building relationships with customers. It means that companies need to engage customers via email marketing and provide them with useful information about maintaining roofing solutions. Due to this strategy, it will become possible to form loyal customers willing to refer roofing products to others. Also, firms have to invest in training employees in

digital marketing. Even with the high level of involvement from small and medium companies, there exists low awareness concerning the best digital marketing approaches, limiting the success of campaigns. Eventually, transparency and credibility become key components in this respect. It is vital to highlight that the display of online reviews, certifications, warranties, and case studies becomes essential for building credibility, especially when considering the high financial investment required in the buying process. In order to enhance virtual marketing in the roofing industry, it will be necessary to consider a combination of various aspects such as localization, technological utilization, engagement, and readiness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Virtual marketing of roof solutions in Tamil Nadu shows a significant change from the traditional modes of marketing towards the use of digital marketing techniques. Most of the companies engaged in roof solutions marketing have resorted to social media, SEO, and website marketing to raise awareness levels among customers and lead generation. Out of the three techniques, social media ads and local SEO were found out to be the best in reaching out to urban as well as semi-urban customers. The firms using digital media for posting content related to product demonstration, customer reviews, and installation techniques have had successful results.

Moreover, the findings reveal that customer behaviour in Tamil Nadu is highly influenced by online research before making purchase decisions. People tend to make comparisons based on materials used, pricing, and durability. Hence, transparency becomes an important element of marketing strategies. Companies that provide adequate specifications regarding products, price estimation, and interactive services experience high customer satisfaction. However, there are some shortcomings of the study. Many smaller companies have problems with adopting digital marketing techniques because of the budgetary constraints and lack of digital literacy skills. Also, there is no equal penetration of the markets in rural areas, which is mainly caused by lack of access to the internet as well as traditional word-of-mouth communication techniques.

It is clear that the combination of virtual marketing campaigns along with localized content taking into consideration the language and climatic differences in Tamil Nadu makes the marketing process more efficient. The hybrid approach, which involves the use of virtual marketing campaigns as well as a physical presence on the ground, proves to be the most effective way of conducting marketing activities.

CONCLUSION

A noticeable development towards a progressive trend within the roof manufacturing industry in Tamil Nadu is the increasing digitalization. The use of digital media has created more avenues for customer interaction, allowing companies to reach out further. However, the change remains unbalanced due to many obstacles that still exist. This research recognizes the need for a complete approach to the roofing sector in which digital techniques should be blended into conventional ones. As people increasingly turn to the internet and changes in consumer behavior happen, the online market seems set to play a key part in future developments in this industry.

Possible directions for future research could include quantitative studies like studies on customers' satisfaction levels and efficiency rates in order to gain a deeper insight into the potential of different methods. It now seems clear that regardless of its unbalance, the change in question may affect the roofing industry in the region.

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