Chapter 1
Digital Marketing for NPOs

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ABSTRACT

Not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) are active participants in the global efforts of making the world a better place for all. The fluctuating political climate and shrinking space for civil society in many countries worldwide, coupled with the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, have heightened fundraising woes for NPOs, making it hard for them to financially sustain their missions. Through an extensive literature review, the chapter aimed at demonstrating how NPOs can leverage the power of digital marketing to build and maintain sustainable organisations to continue providing vital impactful services. It covers the importance and the types of digital marketing strategies for NPOs. The chapter established that digital marketing has emerged as a cost-effective way through which NPOs can expand their missions and promote DEI in society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tremendous developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have significantly altered how business is conducted across the broad spectrum of industries. Due to the disruptive nature of technology in recent years Musingwini et al., (2023) opined that the world is witnessing a variety of new ways of doing things we could not have imagined a few decades ago. One such business practice which has significantly been disrupted by the changes in technology is the field of marketing.

The incorporation of ICTs and or the Internet in marketing has given birth to the field of digital marketing, a term that emerged three decades ago and has now become an established practice. To date, digital marketing tools have transformed how organizations engage with their stakeholders, allowing them to become active participants in organizational activities (Seo &Vu, 2020; Wang & Kim, 2017). Marketing is the heart of a successful company in every field including the non-commercial sector (Maxim, 2016). We, therefore, argue in this chapter that there is a myriad of benefits that NPOs stand to benefit from through the adoption of digital marketing tools. This is because marketing to NPOs has both social and economic benefits as it aids in addressing a wide range of society's problems which includes the need to promote diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Using an extensive literature review, the authors explored a wide range of refereed journals and articles in the fields of digital marketing and NPOs. The study revealed that NPOs have a myriad of digital marketing strategies at their disposal that they can utilize to enhance their brand visibility and attract more followers who can support their causes. It also emerged in the study that, for effective implementation of digital marketing campaigns, NPOs must generate relevant content resonating with their causes and consistently feed it across all their digital marketing channels. The study concluded that digital marketing, a concept that has been widely used by commercial entities, can also change the fortunes of non-commercial entities like NPOs by strengthening and cementing constituent relationships.

The chapter starts by providing a historical background on the digital marketing concept and its importance to NPOs. The authors then proceeded to examine the various digital marketing strategies that NPOs can use to promote their missions across different constituencies and the challenges they face in implementing these strategies. A discussion and reflection section follows, which seeks to synthesise the major issues that emerged from the review. The chapter ends with a section on recommendations and a conclusion section.

2. BACKGROUND, HISTORY, AND CONTEXT

Digital marketing is a term that came in the 1990s. It is often used interchangeably with online marketing, internet marketing, or web marketing. It is however important to note that online marketing and digital marketing in not the same thing, digital marketing is broader and encompasses online marketing (Desai, 2019; Uma &Simran, 2021). Digital marketing represents the marketing of products and services using digital technologies mainly the internet but also includes display advertising, mobile phones, and other digital platforms. It extends beyond the Internet to incorporate channels that do not require the use of the Internet like short message services (SMS), and electronic or interactive billboards to promote products and services. It remains difficult to credit a single person to the emergence of digital marketing as several people played a part in what it is today. However, others believe that Guglielmo Marconi who invented the radio was the first digital marketer, and another notable figure was Ray Tomlison because he was the first person to send an email in 1971. Figure 1 provides a preview of major historical developments which summarizes the evolution of digital marketing to what it is today.

As shown in Figure 1, the origin of digital marketing can be traced to the early 1970s when the first email and the first cell phone were developed in 1971 and 1973 respectively. While the term digital marketing was popularized in the 1990s the way it was conducted was by far different to what we are witnessing nowadays. The major reason for this emanated from the fact that it relied on Web 1.0 and during this time there were no real communities. Additionally, the content posted was not as captivating as

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