

Major: Marketing
F. No. 27

**"Building A Digital Marketing Platform For
British Council"**



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Fall 2017

FINAL PROJECT/THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

Viva-Voice Examination

Date: 23/01/2018

Topic of Research: Building A Digital Marketing Platform For British Council

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The success and outcome of this project was made possible by many people who supported and guided us every step of the way and we are thankful to each and every one of them. This project would not have been possible without their help.

We owe our deep gratitude to Mr. Muzammil Sobhan, Senior Lecturer, Bahria University, who took such keen interest in our project work and guided us with utmost dedication and determination, without which this project would not have been possible.

We respect and thank Ms. Sara Qureshi, Head of MarComms, British Council for providing us with the opportunity to work with a well-reputed and something organization, British Council. Her guidance and support throughout the project was very valuable and this project would not have been successful without her.

We would like to thank Torsum Khan, for his continued help and the open line of communication he has offered us throughout the project. He has been our man on the ground and has never failed to support us, despite having to maintain a strict time schedule

ABSTRACT

Digital media is an international phenomenon that has taken the marketing world by storm. It is a means of creating, viewing, distributing and preserving vast amounts of data on digital media devices. The digitization of media in the 21st century has led many companies to move from traditional means of marketing to a new concept called digital marketing.

Digital marketing is an umbrella term used to describe the entirety of a company's online marketing efforts. Companies use digital devices and technologies to leverage digital mediums like social media, search engines, and websites to connect with both prospective and current customers. Today, it is almost considered criminal if a company does not have digital presence along with a physical one.

This project is specifically targeting at the revitalization of British Council Libraries; both physical and digital. This will be done by designing and implementing a custom digital marketing plan for British Council Libraries that will help rejuvenate the image of British Council Libraries that it once held fifteen years ago.

By using latest digital marketing techniques such as creative expressions, content strategy, content marketing and digital video ads (DVCs) etc., we will focus more on new ideas, usage patterns, behaviour analysis and other useful insights, and develop a digital marketing plan that will help develop a revenue stream, help increase organic reach, as well as increase brand awareness and engagement.

Keywords: Digital Media, Digital Marketing, Marketing Techniques, Digital Media Devices, Digital Marketing Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Background

British Council Pakistan had started its activities in areas of arts and education a year after the country gained its independence, essentially making it one of the oldest educational institutions in the country.

Fifteen years ago, British Council Libraries Pakistan was a rich and diverse source of knowledge for children and adults alike. These libraries were the quintessential access point for reading materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and other physical reference reading material. This reading material fulfilled all kinds of reading needs; for pleasure, academics, research, and the like. British Council Libraries were a citadel of information and knowledge to avid readers who needed one stop for all their reading needs. For others, it served as a sanctuary when readers could spend hours surrounded by quality reading material and students could get some quiet hours for study and work. These libraries also had English Language Centres where students as well as professionals could learn and improve their English language skills. British Council's Libraries upheld their purpose in Pakistan – *Providing access to premium quality knowledge and information to those who had an appetite for it.*

However, due to security and internal issues, these libraries officially closed in 2001.

In 2016, British Council announced that these libraries would reopen and once again become a home for readers who had the thirst for knowledge and information. As the need for information increases day by day, now is a better time than any to reopen these immense sources of knowledge.

These libraries will not just serve as libraries as they did fifteen years ago. British Council Libraries will instead become a social space where people do not only come to access reading material but also to attend various events and workshops as well as a place for social gathering and hangouts.

British Council Pakistan opened its doors to the new libraries in Lahore and Karachi in April-May 2016.

British Council realized that Pakistan needed a space to provide its customers with full access to information, and to provide a new and improved experience of modern libraries as part of revolutionizing its library. They wanted their customers to view their libraries as not just libraries but as social spaces where people can come together, hangout, and make productive use of their time while being social and having fun.

British Council aimed to bring a dynamic shift in people's perception of libraries. They wanted to change the image of libraries from quiet and calm places to fun, vibrant, social and happening places, essentially reinventing the whole concept of a traditional library into a contemporary one, integrating physical and digital libraries seamlessly and providing a vast and wholesome experience that inspires and engages a wide audience.

The British Council Libraries aims to create a cultural relations space when people can gather in social circles for some time, brainstorm, generate ideas and discussion and promote various cultures in a healthy and productive way, in a safe and secure environment.

The introduction of these new libraries will bring cultural, educational and entertainment resources, activities and events in a safe and open environment. Not only will the British Council Libraries be spaces where people can read, but also a social space where people can gather for events and workshops designed around various themes such as art, culture,

professional development etc. Competitions, exhibitions and storytelling events will be arranged that will promote and encourage literary reading at an early age and help adults appreciate the literature that brings people from all walks of life together.

The basic idea behind the British Council Libraries is to find a different way of looking at libraries. Our aim is to change the very image of libraries. Members can make use of state of the art facilities, use the libraries as social spaces where friends can meet up and explore the various resources available to them. They can choose to attend events and workshops that develop their personal and professional skills. Other events give members the opportunity to meet and communicate with well-known artists and authors who have made a name for themselves in the literary world. Each library has facilities of Wi-Fi and cafeteria. All libraries are accessible to differently-abled people. The libraries are located in high security localities, ensuring the safety of library members at all times.



Signing up as members to libraries also gives the members access to a vast database of online resources known as Digital Libraries. Members can access unlimited literary resources from anywhere around the world with no boundaries. These resources include best-selling authors'

books, award winning movies and documentaries, informative newspapers and magazines such as Business Recorder, Vogue and The Economist as well as games, audiobooks and business school resources such as Emerald research papers and JSTOR articles.

Additionally, these digital libraries will have exclusive content that is not available in Pakistan such as UK-based research and academic literature. The British Council Libraries' work with UK partners to bring the best digital literary content and make it readily available to members via mobile, laptops, PCs and tablets. The British Council Libraries mission is to provide everyone with literary and academic content in all form of media and make it accessible anywhere in the world, even in the remotest of areas. As long as there is a need for high quality content, the British Council Libraries will be of service to its members.

The British Council Libraries aim to serve an audience who is young, loves to have fun and are active users of digital and social media, who feel that there is a gap in the market for people like them who need social spaces such as British Council Libraries to feel free and unconstrained and let their creativity and ideas flow, and hang out with friends without the pressure and constraints. It is a place where they can discuss ideas, let their creativity flow, stay up-to-date with events and occurrences all over the world and be their true selves.

Literature Review

The emergence of literary material on the internet has caused a rapid decline in traditional libraries and their usage. More and more people are obtaining their information from search engines and consider them to be the complete source for all kinds of information and knowledge. Conventional libraries are becoming irrelevant and obsolete. This gives rise to the question: "How can a traditional library market itself to a consumer market that is tech-

savvy and does not recognize libraries as a relevant and up-to-date source of knowledge for both academic and literary needs?”(Cole, Graves and Cipkowski, 2010).

Before the advent of the internet, traditional libraries were the primary source of information for everyone. These traditional libraries have reaped the fruits of being the sole resource for knowledge and information, facing almost no competition as primary information providers. However, over the past twenty years technology has changed everything and has resulted in fewer visits to libraries over the last ten years (Cronin and O'Brien, 2009). Traditional libraries have been forced to adapt to the changing market trends and technology. These libraries need to reassess their position in the market and the way they attract customers. Libraries need to rethink their target market and related strategies to remain relevant and useful to customers. Libraries need to be reinvented, their image revitalised and be adapted to current needs of the people. They need to develop a completely different image in the minds of people and reposition themselves as a relevant and up-to-date source of knowledge. Various strategies need to be developed by libraries that not only retain old customers but also attract new customers to the library. Nonetheless, libraries are finding it hard to implement corporate strategies for brand building due to the intangible nature of the services they provide (Singh, 2011).

The use of technology and digital media can be expanded as far as one's imagination goes. Its usage and application is only limited by our capacity to harness the benefits. Libraries need to have an open and flexible mindset when putting in efforts to market their services, and use creativity and imagination by understanding what the customers want. By defining the purpose of libraries, it will become clearer how the services should be marketed and what strategies should be used. Marketing for libraries should be a part of their management philosophy and people from all departments should be involved in deciding how the libraries

will be marketed. This organization-wide approach helps in brainstorming and generating ideas and create a better understand of customer needs and wants. (Rowley, 2002)

Advantages of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing in an online medium has countless advantages compared to traditional marketing. First of all, it is highly cost effective and can save millions in budget, target the right audience, and avoid waste of impressions. Unlike newspaper or print advertisements online ads do not go to waste. Digital marketing helps in segmenting and targeting both current and potential customers. It has the highest reach that is not restricted by geographical constraints.

Whereas traditional marketing strategies like radio, print such as outdoor billboard ads and television ads have a very high cost. These strategies no longer are most effective because their reach is restricted. They have high wastage when it comes to viewership e.g. TV advertisements might cost you millions but it might not reach your target segment. Same goes for newspaper ads and outdoor hoardings. Digital marketing for the most part is free of cost if you are able to generate high traffic to your social media pages but if your brand is not well known you might need to boost your page by paying investing in mediums such as Facebook Paid Ads or Instagram Sponsored Posts, but if properly planned and executed, these ads have a higher reach compared to traditional tactics. Other famous digital marketing tools include Google paid ads which are very effective and almost all businesses are using this to get more customers and traffic to their site. Digital marketing is faster in terms of generating quick results, it can create spontaneous, on spot sales by influencing customers, for example, tactics like 'click, shop now and get 20% off within the next 5 hours'. These call-to-action strategies make digital marketing all the more effective in terms of engagement as well as sales. Digital marketing also allows businesses to communicate a unanimous marketing message

throughout all mediums easily using various online tools, it also allows business to change their marketing communication message at any point in time without wasting additional resources. For example, in traditional marketing, if you are to make changes to a campaign which has already been launched, you will have to remake outdoor hoardings, causing the company to incur cost. If there is an error in the TVC, it has to be reshot and aired again, same goes for radio ads as they have to be remade. On the other hand digital ads can easily be edited and reposted without incurring additional cost.

PROBLEM DEFINITION AND REQUIREMENT ANALYSIS

Before the British Council Libraries launched in 2016, there was a dire need for literary sources of information. Sources such as Google, Wikipedia and Quora were available but these resources were either unreliable and unverifiable, or too vast to give specific and concise information in a timely manner. Considering that the target market for British Council Libraries is mainly comprised of youth who is impatient, they want instant results that are accurate and reliable. Google is far more reliable than Wikipedia and Quora etc. but even the results shown by Google search are biased since some sources pay to get displayed in the top results in Google Search. It uses keywords instead of using the search criteria and context of the queries entered by people.

Another problem is that the target market often needs information regarding specific goals or objectives such as skills that they want to attain. Search engines such as Google display a load of information that is sporadic and is hard to summarise into simple, curated, step by step processes.