THE USE OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS AS EFFICIENT MARKETING TOOLS

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I.   ABSTRACT:

Increasing innovation in Technology sector has a big impact on different corners of our daily lives, to the extent of even influencing the way we conduct businesses. It became a must for different companies to adapt to this new technology in order to stay in business, or at least conquer new segments of potential customers in the large cluster of digital technology users worldwide.

In marketing, technology is widely implemented, most importantly; internet has been revolutionizing business practices. Marketers had to adjust to it and figure out new, easy and efficient ways of acquiring, keeping and turning customers into loyal ones. This process has led to more advanced online marketing strategies, and many digital tools are created to assist in its implementation.

On the other hand, Mobile marketing offers a unique opportunity for marketers to directly and instantaneously market and communicate with their potential customers. This way of marketing is said to be relatively less costly, and provides high return on investment. Since more people are constantly using their smartphones every time and everywhere, the use of mobile marketing is said to be the major source of information, an efficient tool for communication, an important tool for online shopping and cashless online transactions, enhancing customer relations etc.

This article is meant to assert the mobile applications marketingexperience in general.

KEYWORDS*: in this article, the key words include but not limited to the following: Information Technology, Mobile Marketing, Mobile applications, online shopping, Communication, Customer relations, and consumer buying behavior.*

II. INTRODUCTION

It is no longer surprising that nowadays, each and everything that we used to do using desktop or laptop can be easily done on smartphones, except some few tasks that are hard to perform mainly due to the size of the mobile device.The business sector is not left out since mobile devices and applications are widely being used as marketing tools. In this article, we are going to evaluate different possibilities by which different categories of mobile applications are used as marketing tools, and how effective they are in the eyes of business owners and consumers.

III.LITERATURE REVIEW
III.1   BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS
We will now analyze the details regarding the use of mobile applications, but we will not

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enter into details of how they are developed, or coded since we are not expert in that area. According to Cambridge dictionary (2018), Mobile applications are defined as software or programthatruns on mobile and other smart devices. These mobile applications are meant to perform certain tasks for the user, allowing him to directly accessing his smartphone and do anything he wants with it. Mobile applications have gained popularity in the Information & Technology sector due to its easy accessibility, fast to load, personalization, great designs, but mainly the tasks that they are designed to perform.

IT expert have managed to create many apps such as messaging apps, entertainment apps, web browsing, video games shopping, education, etc, and all of them have one goal in common, to make access to information easy, fast, straight forward, convenientand, timely for the users.They are meant to make the mobile experience very efficient and enjoyable for smartphone users.

According to Duckma.com (2018), Mobile applications are generally divided into the following categories:

*Lifestyle Apps:*lifestyle applications are the ones that are meant to help in enhancing and making our lives more fun and enjoyable. Examples of such applications include fitness, music, travel, dating, restaurants etc. Such applications are the ones that fit with people's lifestyles, and regularly visit them depending on what they are expecting to get from them. Such applications includes ZomatoApp for food delivery, Christian dating apps, Makemytrip app,Tripborn,Marriot Hotel app, etc

*Social media Apps:*Social networking apps are among the most popular applications, with huge numbers of downloads. These are the type of applications that people never get used to,instead they become addicted and visit them multiple times a day. Examples if such applications include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchatt, Whatsapp etc.

*Utility Apps:*these are the types of applications that are meant to offer support to the users. These includes calculators, weather, ringtones, flashlight, recorders etc. these are the apps we use for specific tasks, and not regularly or for a short period of time

Gaming& entertainment Apps: entertainment and gamming apps are also popular like social media apps, and highly addictive to the extent that most people play games on their mobile devices multiple times a day, on a regular basis. Such applications include, football, basketball, cricket, commando, car racing, boxing, piano, guitar, instrumental beat maker apps, betting apps, movie apps, etc

Productivity Apps: these are the types of applications that we need to perform other tasks efficiently and effectively, such as spreadsheets, documents, power points, note organizer, contacts saver, etc

News and information Apps: these are the type of apps that are primarily providing news and information to the app users. Examples of such apps includes BBC, Sony live, Google, yahoo, ask, CNN, National geographic, etc.

The categories of mobile Apps are many, but above are just a few for our understanding.

III.2   MOBILEAPPLICATIONS MARKETING

With the internet widely available and used by many people at a very cheap price, many people can have access to 3, or 4 G network, anytime and almost anywhere and 5 G is about to be introduced to the market. This created a boom in the internet usage, with too many activities being performed using smartphones, and this kept the users busy all the time on their mobile device. Social media and games have proven to be some of many factors that influence people to have their smart devices with them all the times. Social networking and gamming have been hobbies for young and old people, and the fact that they can be easily accessed using mobile phones made it popular, and regularly used. This is not limited to gaming and social media apps since other types of Apps are also being used depending on the tasks to be performed by the users.

This popularity was a golden opportunity for marketers who are constantly looking for new ways of acquiring and keeping new customers. They immediately jumped on this opportunity, and started marketing different products and services using social network and advertising in different

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apps to reach broad audiences. That is an effortless and low cost marketing campaign compared to other forms of marketing like Tv, Radio, newspaper, banners etc.

To maximize the outcome of mobile marketing, companies advertise their brands using different applications by incorporating advertising videos, banners, popups, coupons, new deals& promotions, push notifications etc. This is meant to create awareness and triggers the viewer attention, and interested users will make a step toward purchasing the advertised products and services. All types of applications present different opportunities for marketing purposes, whereby users are targeted audience, and segmented according to the company's marketing objectives. For example, many businesses nowadays advertise on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and many other social media platforms. Most of the digital advertising activities like brand personalized pages and channels are free, with an opportunity of paying a certain fee to push and share the information to many users.

III.3   MAIN ACTIVITIES PERFORMED USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS
According to statistica.com (2019), the graph below gives us a summary of the activities that Indians mostly do through smartphones:

Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/309867/mobile-phone-activities-india/
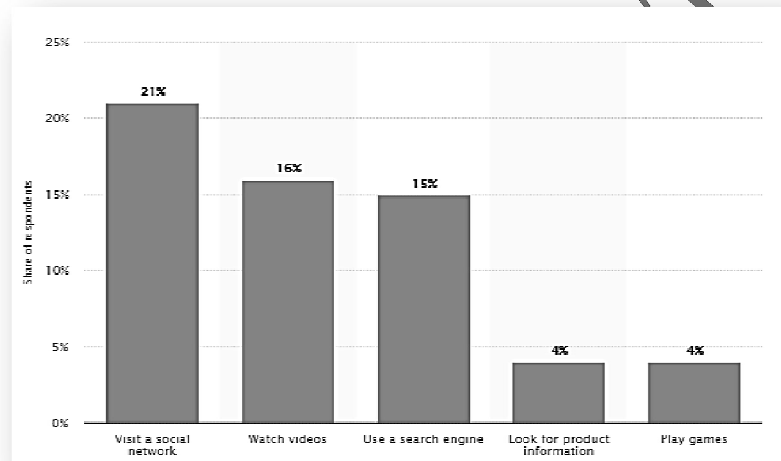
Most of people in India, precisely 21% of the internet users use smartphone mostly in social network activities, 16% uses it to watch videos, 15% uses search engines, 4% uses it for products information search and 4% uses smartphones to play games. This shows us that Indians uses smartphones for different purposes, and as we will explain in this article, mobile applications play an important role in this. One thing that differentiates a smartphone and a normal cellphone is its capabilities and abilities of performing important tasks with it, it can be texting, it can be video calling, and use of internet, visiting different websites, online shopping etc and all of this are made possible through mobile applications.

Marketers have understood that the mobile marketing is going to takeover, compared to other forms and ways of doing marketing, and so many efforts have been deployed to do marketing through mobile Applications.

III.4   POPULARITY OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS
Many users have choices, choosing from directly accessing a given application or using different browsers to look up something, just as they could do it using a laptop or a desktop. For example if I want to visit amazon website, will it be easier and convenient for me to go to my smartphone, open a

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browser, search for www.amazon.in and starts using it as I want or it can be straight forward to open amazon.in application and directly start looking up whatever I am looking for?

For many people, a frequent user will prefer to install an application on his mobile device for fast, timely, accurate, instant, information. The popularity of mobile applications goes hand in hand with the brand it represents, and its marketing efforts in the eyes of the consumers. The consumers judge and if the benefits of using an application are significant, many will probably download it and in some cases pay for it depending on how bad they really need it.

In addition to that, mobile applications have another added advantage including personalization: using mobile application have tremendous benefits such as account login, where the user's information are stored and no need to keep entering his credentials each time he wants to use the application. Even if he doesn't create an account, his search history is saved and used to create more meaningful advertisements based on the type of products and services that interests him.For example the banners he will see will be related to his recent products and services searches, and will reflect the available discounts, promotions, alternative products, new deals, new models etc.

Whether those products are advertised thought banners, pop-ups, in game breaks, in video adverts etc, the overall experience of using a mobile applications seems to be greater that using the website.

According to (Burnet,2008). Mobile marketing is defined as a way of directly marketing products and services to individual consumers using modern technology and internet on a portable mobile smart device. This definition is straight forward and explains mobile marketing in a comprehensible manner. Use of smart device, generally a smart phone that is connected to the internet, can serve as a marketing tool since the users constantly receive different adverts.

On the other hand, according to(Dave, 2006), he defines it differently. He argues that electronic marketing is not done randomly. It is a carefully planned and controlled process by which companies interact with their existing and potential customers for business purposes using a smart device.

This is true as well since, the primarily objective is to make profits, but also make sure that their customers are satisfied.

The benefits of mobile marketing seem to be a two way process, since both the companies and the customers are benefiting from it in many ways.People are using smartphones more than ever before. Smartphones are helping different consumers to access information, and communicate much more easily and efficiently with their respective brand but most importantly find different alternative products that can satisfy their needs and wants, make the purchasing decisions, make transactions, etc.

According to Sam Del Rowe (Sam, 2016), in his article titled "*It's a fast-paced, Mobile first world, and Marketers need to deliver something of value to customers and prospects*" he argues that the marketers should prioritize the mobile marketing, and other tools like a laptop or desktop should follow. And if they are not prioritizing it, he says that they are "lagging behind" due to its instant, easy sharing and access of information.

Nowadays, we can use our smartphones to do each and everything that we used to do with laptops in the past. In addition to that, someone can access the web anytime, and anywhere, which make it super easy and instant to access information.

As described (Kotler& Garry, 2014), Marketing is defined as the art and science of exploring, creating, communicating and delivering value to satisfy the needs and desires of both individual customers or organization, in a manner that leave a satisfying margin of profit.

It won't be wrong to mention that marketing is so essential for each and every business regardless of its nature. The primary objective of any business is to make profits, and the profits cannot be made without making sales by acquiring and keeping customers. That is the reason why, the focus is always on how to sale more and more products to the consumers.

It is not an automatic process though, since companies have to figure out which are the customers' needs wants and desires, identify the target markets and segmentation, communicating with them, making sure that the quality of the products matches with the prices, making sure that the customers have easy ways of purchasing and transacting, etc, but above all, marketers are in charge of

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making sure that the customers are happy with the offered products and services to ensure their loyalty in the future.

III.5   MARKETING MIX IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

According to (Kenneth & Donald, 2013) the marketing mix consists generally of four elements: product, price, place and promotion.

Product: each business has its own type of products or services to be sold to the consumers. The offered products and services shall take into consideration the targetedcustomer's needs, wants and desires. The offered products and services shall be efficient and match the customers' requirements. The products and services manufacturers shall bear in mind that what they are offering will present expected benefits to the customers, if not, customers will not be interested at all.

Through mobile applications advertisements, marketers inform different customers about the available products and services, and how they might be highly recommended to satisfy their needs wants and desires. This is a way of creating awareness, and by constant repetition and other marketing techniques, customers end up recognizing the needs that can be satisfied by the advertised products and services.

Price: pricing strategy is so essential for businesses. Customers are willing to pay the right price, for the right and matching quality of products and services. Price is one of many essential components that influence the choice of a customer from of a cluster of different substitute products available on the market.

Through the use of mobile applications, and its advertisement content, customers are informed about the prices of different products and services that they might wish to purchase.

Place(Distribution): After creating products and services that matches with the customers' needs and wants, and efficiently pricing them, the following step is the distribution channels and places whereby, customers will find and purchase as they wish too. Some businesses choses the direct selling to customers by owning their own retail shops, others choses to uses distributors, wholesalers and middle men, or chose to sell online with Ecommerce. It is very important to get this step right, and make sure that the customers willing to buy have many channels of acquiring the offered products.

The use of mobile applications facilitates Ecommerce. Someone can purchase a product or services online, trough different applications, select, pay, and receive the bought packages without moving out of his home, or visiting a physical store.

Promotion: when all the previous stages are fulfilled, promotion comes in as a set of different activities that are meant to create awareness, to stimulate customer's attention, advertising; driving sales, discounts, etc. With the use of mobile applications and the time users spend using them, through in app advertisement, they are informed about price drops, discounts, clearances, etc.

IV. MOBILE APPLICATIONS AND MARKETING

With the incredible increase of innovation in the technology sector, digital technology has been dictating how we operate in our everyday activities. With the use of internet, many people have been switching their activities online, engaging themselves in online marketing and efficiently transacting through E-commerce. There are many digital tools used in this process, but in the following part of this article, the focus is on mobile applications, and how they are being widely used for marketing purposes in this recent modern technological era.

Mobile phones are replacing other forms of advertising overtime. Back in the days, the most popular ways of advertising different products and services were through TV, Radio, Newspapers, billboards and road panels advertisements etc. people have had different preferences over time, but in this recent digital technology era, people are more involved with the use of smartphones than ever before.

On the other hand, smartphones cannot operate without mobile applications. Mobile applications are software that runs on mobile devices and allow them to perform tasks as desired by

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the users.It has become easy for each business to own a mobile application that can be found on play store, Google play, iTunesetc, and can be downloaded by the users who wish to use it for different reasons and benefits.

The following are some of many benefits of using mobile applications to fulfill marketing objectives:

Interactive communication: Smartphones and its mobile applications have a reputation of connecting the customers to their products and services providers, and ensure a two ways, and instant communication. The list of communication apps is very long, and many businesses have understood that they can use as many as they can to stay in touch with their customers. These apps includes for example, whatsapp, Facebook, linked in, Gmail app, Skype, etc. through such applications, consumers can communicate with their preferred brands 24/7 with relatively very low costs. Marketers and companies have understood the benefits that they can get from this interactive communication. They can eventually get to know what their clients really wants, what are their desires, ambitions, needs, new ideas, comments, advices, complaints, etc.

On the other hand,a customer doesn't need to visit a web page of his preferred brand. By visiting his preferred brand mobile application, he can get all the information he is looking for, he can get in touch with the company through instant messaging, Email,direct calling etc, all of this can be done with relatively low costs and efforts.

By ensuring this instant and interacting communication, mobile applications are being used as efficient marketing tools, meant to ensure efficient and interactive communication.

Instant and fast transfer of information: mobile applications helpsa lot in making sure that the information reaches the target audience in a matter of seconds, and also, be viewed anytime, anywhere, as long as the mobile internet connectivity is on. It is no longer required to open a laptop or a desktop, to surf on the internet. Someone can use his smartphone for the same tasks. With manypeople developing a habit of visitingtheir favorite mobile applications more often, marketers have discovered that any marketingcampaign involving mobile applications will reach the larger audience very fast. This includes viral marketing, whereby information is shared and spread very fast to reach a huge audience. This is done through communication, social media and entertainment apps like Facebook, twitter, whatsapp, instagram, Youtube, etc. since many people are constantly using different applications for different reasons, it won't take long for them to receive the spreading messages since they all getting all sorts of notifications regularly.

Build a strong relationship & loyalty with potential customers: only interested individuals will download an application, depending on what they want to do with it, or what theyexpect to get from it. This implies that they are alreadyinterested by the products and services offered by that brand or want to benefit from it.

This is a very huge and interesting opportunity for marketer, since they have a large audience of interested and potential customers, and this makes it easier to market to them respective products and services. The response is very high because those who download a certain brand's application have already bought products and services before, or they are willing to buy in the future. Nothing sound so great for a business than having a large database of potential customers, who are more likely to buy anytime soon as long as the marketing strategies have been applied efficiently enough.

In App advertisements: mobile phones have provided another efficient opportunity of marketing different products and services. Different applications have different levels of popularity, depending on the users' appreciations. For example, gaming, social media or entertainment applications cannot have the same number of users as the utility apps. Therefore, marketershave understood that advertising within popular applications provides a unique opportunity of reaching a very large audience that includes potential customers for the advertised products and services.

In app advertisement is done by interrupting the user by displays and banner adds, video adverts, level up adverts in gaming apps, apps designs using advertised products as icons , level unlocking adverts etc. In additional to that, social media apps plays a key role in marketing nowadays

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for example Facebook, Instagram or YouTubeadvertisement are becoming widely used by many marketers and have proven to be effective in different circumstances.

It is so easy, simple and accurate to advertise on YouTube for example. ***The content advertising*** is proving to be so efficient and effective. But instead of opening a laptop, connect to the internet, open a browser, search youtube.com, go to the results lists, click on youtube.com , and start searching the content, the process has been simplified, someone can just download a YouTube mobile application, just by clicking on it, someone can start using it as he wishes. Not only applications perform the job that has initially been performed by websites, most of them are costless and allow users to freely advertise their products and services.

In app advertising have a huge number of target audiences, which makes the information available to different potential customers, and make mobile applications very effective as a marketing tool.

Large audience& mass marketing: with the traditional way of marketing, market segmentation is done based on different criteria, and based on chosen traits.We can have geographic, psychological, demographical, sociocultural segmentation, etc. with the use of mobile marketing; less emphasis is put on the above segmentation criteria. The mobile applications are used by people of all ages, from different geographical locations worldwide, earning different salaries, different social classes, etc. with mobile applications, marketers target a very large audience, both young and old, and who ever fells interested in the offered products and services becomes a potential customer. It is another way of doing mass marketing, but the customers are individually involved in the process, and the content can be accessed anytime.

Another example her is the people who use Facebook. Social media has proven to be very effective in matters concerning advertising and marketing. With a huge audience, millions and millions of people who use Facebook on a regular basis, users who download Facebook applications have many benefits including, instant messaging, immediate notifications, password savings, easy usage and access, convenience, etc. With this large number of Facebook users, it is very easy for a company to advertise on Facebook, and instantly reach the potential customers in a matter of seconds, by creating a brand page, constantly updating followers, using paid advertisements, etc.

An efficient advertising tool: Mobile applications have proven to be an efficient advertising tool due to its instantaneous and direct connection with potential customers. Advertising that uses mobile applications, provides accurate and good results over time. Marketers have understood that the future of advertising is going digital, and smartphones are key players in this new era of technology. The fact that people have and can access their phones any time anywhere, make this digital device an incredible marketing tool. The marketing strategies are developed and communicated to potential customers, who instantly receive them wherever they are at, anytime of the day. Mobile phones and its applications offer a 24/7, immediate and interactive marketing opportunity.

Electronic business: E-commerce is revolutionizing the way we conduct businesses nowadays, and mobile applications are proving to be very essential in this process. With the customer's favoriteretailer's mobile applications, someone can buy different products and services anywhere anytime on his mobile phone, and pay using payments applications or usepaytime, bank transfers, net banking, debit/credit cards, or even cash on delivery.

One of many roles of marketing is to sell more products to different customers. Mobile applications and E- commerce are becoming very essential in fulfilling this marketing objective for many businesses.

Costless: back in the days, business owners were worried about the marketing budgets that were generally high, and very slow in providing results.Mobile marketing is relatively less costly since it is done based on the internet connectivity, which is easy and cheap for anyone to use. The marketers have an opportunity of cutting their expenses, since it doesn't cost them really much to advertise online, exceptsome few strategies that requires a certain type of payments such as pay per click, in apps adverts, or social media add promotions. Except from that, it is quite inexpensive to advertise on own'smobile applications, or social medias apps and business pages.

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Data collection: the use of mobile applications provide an opportunity to the application owners to collect data about the users activities, and search tendencies, to be used in analyzing and forecasting the future course of action in terms of marketing strategies.

The benefits of using mobile applications as marketing tools are too many, but above are just a few for us to get an idea of how they are playing a key role in modernizing marketing practices.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Due to many benefits that come along with the effective use of mobile marketing, we have no doubt that it has become an effective marketing tool. Marketers and business owners are using it quite often to the extent that it might become the primarily way of doing marketing in the future. The benefits of using mobile applications as a marketing tools include the fact that it offers a direct and interactive communication, very inexpensive, mass marketing with a high probability of potential customers, no geographicboundaries, access of global market, enhancing customer relationship and loyalty, personalization of content, data collection, a variety of ways to proceed with marketing activities, etc.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a descriptive article, and we recommend that further analysis shall be done, more literature to be reviewed, and also a primary research can be conducted to prove our arguments.

VII. CITATION

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