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DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS: BASIC METHODS AND APPLICATIONS

DİJİTAL PAZARLAMA KANALLARI: TEMEL YÖNTEMLER VE UYGULAMALAR

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Abstract

With the advancement of digitalization day by day, the importance of the concept of digital marketing for businesses is increasing. Businesses that use appropriate digital marketing channels within the scope of digital marketing, which is defined as all marketing activities carried out in digital environments, can successfully fulfill their marketing strategies. In this article, which was created as a review study, a narrative literature review was conducted to express the current channels that can be handled within the scope of digital marketing. The aim of this study is to express the current digital marketing channels that businesses can currently use and that can contribute to businesses. Accordingly, ten digital marketing channels, namely email marketing, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, video marketing and artificial intelligence, have been identified within the scope of the study. While digital marketing channels offer many benefits such as building brand loyalty, ensuring customer satisfaction, personalizing data, and accelerating the sales process, they also have some challenges such as competitive pressure, various security issues and unexpected technical failures. In addition, it is possible to get more contribution from these channels by integrating digital marketing channels within the scope of omnichannel marketing. As a result of the study, businesses are recommended to use a model that can be created by integrating digital marketing channels.

Key Words: Digital marketing, digital marketing channels, artificial intelligence, omnichannel marketing, influencer marketing

Özet

Dijitalleşmenin her geçen gün ilerlemesiyle işletmeler için dijital pazarlama kavramının önemi de artmaktadır. Dijital ortamlarda yapılan tüm pazarlama faaliyetleri olarak ifade edilen dijital pazarlama kapsamında uygun dijital pazarlama kanallarını kullanan işletmeler pazarlama stratejilerini başarıyla yerine getirebilir. Derleme çalışma olarak oluşturulan bu makalede dijital pazarlama kapsamında ele alınabilecek güncel kanalları ifade etmek üzere anlatsal literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı işletmelerin hali hazırda kullanabilecekleri güncelliğini koruyan, işletmelere katkı sağlayabilecek dijital pazarlama kanallarını ifade etmektir. Buna göre çalışma kapsamında e-posta pazarlaması, satış ortaklığı pazarlaması, arama motoru optimizasyonu, arama motoru pazarlaması, içerik pazarlaması, mobil pazarlama, sosyal medya pazarlaması, fenomen (influencer) pazarlama, video pazarlama ve yapay zeka olmak üzere on adet dijital pazarlama kanalı

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ortaya konmuştur. Dijital pazarlama kanalları; marka sadakati oluşturma, müşteri memnuniyeti sağlama, verilerin kişiselleştirilmesi, satış sürecini hızlandırma gibi pek çok fayda sunarken; rekabet baskısı, çeşitli güvenlik sorunları ve beklenmedik teknik arızalar gibi birtakım zorlukları da barındırmaktadır. Ek olarak dijital pazarlama kanallarını bütüncül pazarlama kapsamında birbirine entegre ederek, bu kanallardan daha fazla katkı almak mümkündür. Çalışma sonucunda işletmelere dijital pazarlama kanallarını entegre ederek oluşturulabilecek bir model kullanmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital pazarlama, dijital pazarlama kanalları, yapay zeka, bütüncül pazarlama, fenomen pazarlama

Introduction

Today, smartphones have become an indispensable part of people. In the past, house keys and wallets used to come to mind as essential items that people took with them when they left home. Today, it has turned into people who cannot go from one place to another without their smartphones in front of almost everything. Of course, this situation has contributed to the desire of marketing to aggressively meet with the consumer. Marketers are now able to communicate with their consumers regardless of location or time criteria, and mobilize them around products, services, brands, content, and so on (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Kannan & Li, 2017). While shopping used to be an action that required leaving the house, today it has turned into a routine similar to brushing your teeth before going to bed. Marketing activities designed with technological tools such as internet, computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. are called digital marketing (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Kannan & Li, 2017; Ryan, 2016; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Digital marketing aims to provide consumers with the product they want, at the most affordable price, in the fastest way possible (Ryan, 2016; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In this way, a shopping experience that is more comfortable and saves the consumer more time than face-to-face shopping is aimed. Of course, the fact that the consumer thinks that they need a product can also be considered as a marketing illusion. Because when a consumer is making the last preparations at home before going to bed, when he/she is browsing social media with his/her smartphone for the last time just before going to sleep, he/she suddenly sees a product and takes action to buy it or to gather more detailed information about that product and cuts his/her sleep time, confusing the consumer about his/her priorities can be considered as a kind of marketing illusion.

In the digital world, there are many digital marketing activities that are implemented to reach consumers and inform, guide, persuade and mobilize them about a product or brand (Strauss & Frost, 2014; Kotler et al., 2017). These activities are called digital marketing techniques,

methods, tools and channels in the literature (Hutter et al., 2013; Ryan, 2016; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). In this study, these activities will be referred to as digital marketing channels. When using digital marketing channels, businesses use the most appropriate channels for their sector and market. Therefore, the view that every business should use all digital marketing channels will not be beneficial (Kumar et al., 2016; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In the literature, many concepts are discussed as digital marketing channels (Kotler et al., 2017; Strauss & Frost, 2014; Kannan & Li, 2017; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). In order to contribute to both the literature and marketers, ten digital marketing concepts that are still up-to-date are discussed within the scope of the study. As relevant digital marketing channels; e-mail marketing, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, video marketing and artificial intelligence will be discussed.

This study, which has been prepared as a review article, is designed to shed light on how to use digital marketing to better understand digital marketing channels by bringing together the old digital marketing channels that are still current in the digital marketing literature and the new digital marketing channels that have recently started to be used. It is also believed that this research will contribute to the academics working on digital marketing in terms of giving basic ideas and guiding them.

1. Digital marketing channels

Just as people exist in flesh and blood, and these people also have their own profiles in the virtual environment; businesses, just as they exist concretely, also exist in digital media and create virtual profiles just like people (Dholakia & Kshetri, 2017, 25; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2014, 33; Järvinen & Karjaluo, 2015, 53). All marketing activities between businesses and consumers in this virtual world are considered as digital marketing (Grewal et al., 2017, 67). Since digital marketing is directly supported by technology, it is also known as a marketing method that is both accessible to everyone and constantly renewed, changed and updated (Chaffey, 2015, 22). Perhaps the most important reason for the efficiency of digital marketing is the desire of both businesses and consumers to take part in digital channels (Kannan & Li, 2017, 34). The factors underlying this desire are that it is easy to access, cheap, global and fun (Castronovo & Huang, 2012, 94). In order to interact with consumers within the scope of digital

marketing, a digital marketing process consisting of four stages is applied. These stages can be expressed as follows, respectively (Hanna et al., 2011, 14):

Acquisition: All efforts made to attract the consumer to the website, mobile application, etc. where the sale is made.

Conversion: It is realized in case of interaction with the consumer who comes to the channel where the sale is made. Accordingly, it is important for the consumer to browse the business or brand's sales environments or social media accounts before selling a product to him/her, gathering information about the product or making him/her announce it to his/her environment (Shankar et al., 2016: 122).

Measurement and optimization: It is ensured to quantify how successful the posts, comments, videos, etc. made to win the consumer are and to create a plan for future actions.

Retain and grow: In the event that the consumer takes part in the digital channels of the business in line with the efforts made, the efforts made are considered correct and it is aimed to increase the number of consumers and to make the existing consumers loyal. Various digital marketing channels are used to realize the above-mentioned digital marketing process. Within the scope of the study, ten digital marketing channels will be discussed one by one.

1.1. E-mail marketing

With e-mail marketing, e-mails containing marketing messages are sent to the target audience. It is possible to say that the return rate of e-mail marketing is high because businesses communicate with the consumer through the e-mails that the masses who want to have information about the brand or product share with the business (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010, 48). The first thing the business should do in e-mail marketing is to create a member list consisting of e-mails. It is a priority that this list is up-to-date, that the content of the message sent is correct, and that emails are sent taking into account data security and legal regulations (Järvinen & Karjaluoto, 2015, 13). E-mail marketing, which is very cost-effective compared to many marketing methods, ranks second after search engines among online marketing tools (Kannan & Li, 2017, p. 35). Determining who reads the e-mails sent and who clicks on the links in the e-mail shows the efficiency of the e-mail. Three methods are used when implementing email marketing (Sterne, 2010, 72; Lauterborn, 2017, 14):

E-mail newsletter: Sending e-mails to consumers who sign up for a newsletter with information about news and developments about the product and brand. The aim is to establish a strong bond with the consumer rather than sales.

Suggestion email: Sending e-mails to consumers who have shared their e-mail address with the business for any reason, with content about products and campaigns that may be of interest to them.

Direct e-mail: These are e-mails that mobilize a consumer to purchase a product regardless of any membership or registration and offer personalized discounts. Within the scope of relationship marketing, e-mails celebrating the birthday of the consumer and including a discount coupon at a certain rate for the birthday can also be considered within the scope of direct e-mail (Constantinides, 2004, 277).

There is perhaps only one drawback of e-mail marketing. That is that the e-mails fall into the spam folder of the consumers in the target audience. In this case, the e-mail cannot reach the target audience, and e-mails that fall into the spam folder can be interpreted as fraud (Smith, 2012, 91).

1.2. Affiliate marketing

Today, products are sold through digital channels. These digital channels may belong to the person selling the product or they may be the website of another independent person. Thanks to these websites, also referred to as marketplaces, businesses have the opportunity to sell their products outside their own websites (Järvinen & Karjaluoto, 2015, 55). While the marketplace undertakes the promotion of the product, it is the product owner business that must deliver the product upon order. Affiliate marketing is a digital channel where businesses market their products without any store, website or social media account (Hassan et al., 2020, 78). With this method, which offers great support especially to SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), the products of unknown businesses are delivered to consumers with the confidence provided by well-known marketplace brands (Vazquez et al., 2013, 124). Examples of marketplaces in Turkey include cimri.com, hepsiburada.com and trendyol, while examples in the world include temu.com, ebay.com and amazon.com. In this method, which is used as a kind of distribution method, the marketplace receives commission on the sales made. The following steps are taken to realize the affiliate marketing process (Solomon et al., 2015, p. 42):

Stage 1: Businesses make agreements with marketplaces where their products will be promoted and sold.

Stage 2: The products to be sold in the marketplace are determined.

Stage 3: The commission rate to be given to the marketplace per sale is determined.

Stage 4: The marketplace starts to promote the product that the business has given it to sell with advertisements both on its own site and outside its own site.

Stage 5: After each sale, the marketplace collects the predetermined commission rate.

Affiliate marketing, which is realized by applying these stages, has become attractive for both seller businesses and marketplaces that receive commissions, as it enables the sale of the products that the business only keeps in its warehouse without any other effort and cost (Wang et al., 2019, 82). There are three types of payment methods in affiliate marketing and they are expressed as follows (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017, 60):

Pay-per-sale: The business that sells the product gives a certain percentage of the sales price of the product to the affiliate as a commission after the sale by the affiliate.

Pay per lead: The purpose of this method is the affiliate's effort to attract potential customers for the business that owns the product. By encouraging the customer to take actions such as filling out a form or signing up for an e-newsletter, the affiliate receives payment from the business based on a pre-existing agreement.

Pay-per-click: The affiliate incentivizes customers to visit the website of the product owner through its own marketing platform. With this method, which contributes to the increase in the site traffic of the product owner, the affiliate receives payment based on a pre-existing agreement for each click that customers make on the affiliate's website to be redirected.

As long as it is applied correctly, it is possible to get efficiency from affiliate marketing. Therefore, affiliate marketing provides benefits to businesses. One of these benefits is the elimination of the time and money expenditures that marketing research will reveal in order to reveal the potential target audience (Hossain & Mollah, 2016, 205). There is also a financial benefit as fixed and variable expenses such as renting a store, paying bills for its operation, having an atmosphere that will attract customers, employing sales personnel, etc. are minimized (Li et al., 2018, 33). Finally, since it is recommended by the sales partner, it can save labor by not making an idle effort to attract customers.

1.3. Search engine optimization (SEO)

Today, people search for information on the internet. Although encyclopedias, dictionaries and libraries are still used to obtain information, search engines are mostly used to obtain information today. Thanks to search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Yandex, etc., people can access the information they want quickly and instantly. This is expressed as one of the biggest benefits of the internet (Kumar et al., 2016, 132). Marketing science is also inherently located in environments where people are present. Accordingly, it is obvious that marketing is present in search engines that people use intensively (Ryan, 2016: 79). Because businesses want to be the first preferred business by the consumer, they aim to be on the front pages and, if possible, at the top of the search engine pages. Being at the top of the search engine results page provides businesses with a significant competitive advantage (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019: 45). Search engine optimization (SEO) covers all of the actions taken by a business to be on the front pages and at the top of the pages on the results pages of search engines (Hutter et al., 2013: 85).

SEO is a digital marketing channel that is successful for businesses that regularly follow the rules that the search engine deems appropriate rather than the businesses' own choice (Zhang et al., 2019: 118). Because SEO paves the way for web popularity, which is not possible for businesses to achieve on their own. Since this popularity brings with it an increase in search engine rankings, it can be said that it is a digital marketing channel that businesses cannot ignore. This makes SEO both the most prestigious and the most profitable channel of digital marketing (Harris et al., 2015: 98). Search engines track the number of visitors to a site through various information and posts about the site. If the relevant site is becoming popular on the internet, the search engine evaluates a number of criteria related to the site in order for that site to be at the front and top of the search engine results pages. These criteria are divided into two as on-site and off-site SEO (Strauss & Frost, 2014: 111).

1.3.1. On-page SEO

On--page SEO is considered as a set of actions that enable search engines to better recognize the website of the business in a reliable way and includes the following steps (Järvinen & Karjaluoto, 2015: 53):

Keyword identification and placement: In order for customers to access the website of the business quickly through the search engine, the keywords that the customer will enter into the search engine must be defined correctly. When choosing keywords; it is necessary to try to find the words that will bring the most traffic (Lee & Carter, 2019: 23). In addition, when the quality of the keyword is considered, it is revealed that there is intense competition on the keyword that generates the most revenue. Finally, when creating keywords, words that people can easily write should be targeted, taking into account human psychology.

Keyword density and original content: The keywords used in the search engine must be in a natural position in the text in order to access the relevant website. In addition, long-tail keywords, even if the search volume is not high, can be preferred because they can capture people's specific queries for high click-through rates and conversions (Berman & Thelen, 2017: 122). The content on the website that provides access to the keyword must be unique. Otherwise, the site may face penalization.

Appropriate uses of metadata: Metadata is the HTML code that provides information about a website to both users and search engines. Metadata is divided into two parts: the title tag and the description tag (Rettie, 2021: 40). The purpose of the title tag is to enable search engines to identify the link to the website. The title tag will only appear on the search engine results page and in the browser tab information. The description text is a two-line section immediately below the title tag, which is a short and clear statement of what the page is about.

Page load speed: The opening time of the website that the consumer tries to access as soon as he/she clicks on the link he/she finds in the search engine is considered as page loading speed (Grewal et al., 2017: 50). Accordingly, the search engine, knowing that the consumer will be dissatisfied with the page that does not load quickly, can detect this situation and intervene in the ranking of the relevant website in the search engine.

URL (Uniform Resource Loader) structure: It is important that the URL, which is expressed as an internet address, is simple and easy to understand and is free from meaningless characters. In terms of SEO, authority refers to the importance and weight of a web page compared to others. Losing authority for each sub-file or sub-category created will affect the ranking of the website on the search engine results page (Evans, 2018: 98). Accordingly, it is necessary to express the web address in a clear and understandable way.

Appropriate image enhancements: Creating the name of the images in line with the keyword is part of SEO, and in addition, the use of an alt tag that provides descriptive text to describe the image contributes.

Mobile-friendly: Although search engines started their lives on computers, today they are mostly used by smartphones. In this case, in order for websites to be at the front and top of the search engine results pages, these sites must be designed in a way that can be easily used by smartphones. If this design, which is referred to as mobile-friendly, is not complied with, the search engine, which makes the necessary checks and determinations, is likely to penalize that site (Patel, 2020: 71).

1.3.2. Off-page SEO

Off-page SEO includes keyword backlinking (linking from one website to another) activities, leaving open url, commenting, providing information with sectoral articles and all business promotion activities carried out for consumers to visit the website through different sources outside the site (Chaffey, 2015: 42). In this case; blogs, social media channels, forums, dictionaries, news sites, video platforms, PDF document adding and sharing sites, as well as all advertising and promotional activities prepared with business name, products / services, keywords and slogans in all media such as TV, radio, newspaper, outdoor advertisements are called off-page SEO (Evans, 2018: 95).

1.4. Search engine marketing (SEM)

SEM is an advertising model in which businesses pay a certain amount of money to appear in the advertising section at the top of the search engine results pages, thereby increasing the visibility of websites that cannot appear on the front pages because they do not meet the SEO criteria (Chaffey, 2015: 42). It is possible to list the benefits of SEM as follows (Ryan, 2016: 58):

- It facilitates reaching the targeted audience.
- Through the information and contact form created for the products or services offered on the website, site visitors are enabled to contact the business.

- All customer-oriented analyzes can be made thanks to the demands and complaints of the people who visit the site.
- It supports the increase in sales of products and services.
- It contributes to the development of marketing strategies of the business according to measurement and statistics.

SEM is a method that is mentioned together with SEO and increases site visibility to very high levels when used together. If SEM and SEO are used together, the relevant website will be at the top of the search engine results pages thanks to both SEM and SEO (Evans, 2018: 95). This will make the consumer think that the relevant link is reliable and preferable.

1.5. Content marketing

The fact that consumers spend a lot of time on digital media brings indirect marketing methods to the agenda. Rather than advertising practices that directly emphasize the brand, product, business or campaign, information shared on brand-related or unrelated topics that are of interest to the consumer is attractive to the consumer. Accordingly, many brands today produce and share content on their blogs, social media pages and websites on topics that are not directly related to the product (Chaffey, 2023: 120). In this way, businesses implement a kind of attraction strategy by providing interesting, entertaining and helpful information for their consumers through their digital channels. Today, digital tools such as videos, corporate articles, blogs, newsletters, case studies, research reports, games, etc. that consumers encounter in digital media are listed as areas of use of content marketing (Yeniçeri, 2020: 34).

1.6. Mobile marketing

With the help of mobile devices and technology, mobile marketing is a complementary digital marketing tool that offers the opportunity to reach the target audience at the right time, in the right place and with the right media, to deliver personalized messages to this audience and to create action at the moment the message is sent, can be measured effectively, is low cost, can be used together with other marketing tools or independently, and adds an interactive dimension to these tools (Lee et al., 2021: 123). Mobile marketing, which emerged with the widespread use of devices known as cell phones or mobile phones in the 1990s, continues to contribute to

marketers by keeping up with the new digital world order as the internet is added to mobile phones and turned into smartphones (Miller, 2019: 45). Accordingly, SMS, MMS and bluetooth were among the widely used mobile marketing techniques in the cell phone era. Today, the most preferred mobile marketing techniques are as follows:

QR (Quick Response) codes: A special type of matrix barcode (or two-dimensional barcode) that can be scanned from the cameras of mobile devices (Smith & Jones, 2018: 74). Today, the use of QR Codes has become widespread with the effect of mobile phones with digital cameras. By analyzing the recorded image, the barcode content can direct the user to a web address, email address, phone number, contact information, SMS or MMS, or geolocation information (Wilson, 2020: 221).

Location-based marketing: It is a method that can create instant and personalized campaigns that can fully engage the consumer as they approach. When location-based constructs are designed to be personal rather than mass, they have an impact on the buyer. Otherwise, when the same message is sent to everyone passing through a center, it is unlikely to create value in the eyes of the consumer. In location-based marketing, success can be achieved by combining three criteria: the right time, the right audience and the right place (Lee et al., 2021: 125).

Push notifications: It can be defined as an instant notification system that opens small, pop-up windows on the screens used and allows consumers to be informed about new content and news (Smith, 2021: 178). Businesses can increase clicks, sales and brand awareness with push notifications, as well as creating awareness in the target audience and aiming to make it easier for the brand to come to mind. In addition, businesses ensure that consumers feel special by providing a continuous and regular communication with their consumers. The use of these notifications on more stationary devices such as desktops and laptops is called web push notification. In web push notification, the consumer allows this site to be notified on the sites they enter through the browser on their computer.

App-based marketing: Simply referred to as mobile advertising involving mobile applications, this technique does not require a business to design and create a unique mobile application in order to promote itself (Smith, 2021: 183). Services such as Google AdMob help advertisers create mobile ads that appear on third-party mobile apps. In this way, businesses can reach their target audiences by integrating ads into mobile applications that their target audiences frequently use.

In-game marketing: Consumers frequently prefer to play games as well as social media while spending time with their smartphones. This is supported by the fact that mobile games are produced for almost all ages. In-game mobile marketing refers to mobile ads that appear in mobile games. In-game ads can be summarized as banner pop-ups, full-page image ads, and even video ads that appear between loading screens (Johnson & Lee, 2020: 191).

1.7. Social media marketing

Social media can perhaps be considered as the most remarkable virtual socialization networks of the last 20 years. Users enjoy spending their free time on many social networks such as Facebook, X, Instagram, etc. Therefore, it is not possible to have no marketing where consumers spend so much time. Accordingly, all marketing activities on social networks are considered as social media marketing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62). Many activities for businesses, goods and services, brands, campaigns and news are carried out on social media to create a positive perception on consumers (Keller, 2009: 77).

The concept of interaction comes to the forefront with social media. Accordingly, businesses have an alternative channel to achieve success in many areas such as advertising, opportunities, after-sales consumer communication, online reputation management, customer service and customer loyalty thanks to the interaction they create with their consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 358). Three basic behaviors that affect purchasing with social media marketing can be discussed (Tuten & Solomon, 2017: 64). Accordingly, firstly, there are behaviors that emerge with the guidance of electronic word-of-mouth marketing and opinion pioneers. Secondly, there are the behaviors that consumers, who are influenced by the consumption habits of their environment, perform in line with the information they obtain through social media. Third and lastly, consumers research the business on social media during the purchasing process and exhibit purchasing behavior by examining all kinds of complaints, satisfaction, comments and opinions about the business (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010: 72).

1.8. Influencer marketing

A social media influencer can be defined as a person who has a large number of followers on various social media channels (Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, X, etc.), regularly shares various

posts, is admired by his/her followers with these posts, and is a member of a social media channel where his/her followers attach importance to his/her thoughts, opinions and information (Lee et al., 2021: 222). A social media influencer is a kind of celebrity, but does not necessarily have to be a country and/or world-wide athlete, artist, etc. Therefore, a social media influencer can be any person living anywhere. They are individuals who correspond with their followers, respond to them, share posts that interest them and interact with them. The goal of the influencer is to share various visuals, photos, drawings, videos, etc. that will attract the most attention and be watched the most (Kim, 2020: 145). Influencer, who earn income through social media businesses and sponsored brands, have become a profession that the new generation is excited and enthusiastic about.

After providing basic information about social media influencers, it would be appropriate to define the concept of influencer marketing. Accordingly, influencer marketing can be defined as “reaching the target audience of the business quickly and easily by working with people who have a high number of followers and whose thoughts and opinions are important in digital media” (Brown & Smith, 2022: 211). Since the influencer has a certain number of followers and has the power to influence its followers, if the followers of the influencer match the target audience of the business, it is possible for the followers of the influencer to buy the products of the business. We can talk about influencer marketing as a marketing and promotional activity designed in this direction. The purpose of the business here is to reach its potential consumers indirectly by promoting its products and services through the social media account owned by the influencer (Jones & Miller, 2019: 134).

In addition to its many benefits such as product promotion, increasing sales, creating brand loyalty, and electronic word-of-mouth marketing, influencer marketing also has a number of challenges (Clark & Brown, 2023: 98). First of all, it is critical for the business to find a influencer that represents its brand and it is very difficult to find such a person. This is because it is expected to find the most suitable influencer for the brand's image, identity and weight, and for this influencer to act in a way that will not harm the brand outside of social media. Another challenge is influencer fraud. The fact that almost anyone can become an influencer, and that some influencers are followed only by certain segments of the population, can cause businesses to be deceived by some people who are not actually influencers, causing the business to lose time, money and energy. It is a priority for businesses working with influencers to follow influencer marketing trends. Due to the fast consumption of digital consumers, falling behind

the trending methods may cause the brand's efforts to be wasted. Accordingly, today's influencer marketing trends can be listed as follows (Anderson & Lee, 2021: 76):

- Working with influencers on popular social media channels
- Easy-to-consume, time-saving video sharing
- Including awareness messages that will contribute to corporate identity and create sympathy
- Shape stories with people and scenarios and share them in video format

1.9. Video marketing

Although video marketing is considered as videos shared on Tiktok, Instagram, etc. within the scope of social media marketing, its scope is actually beyond social media marketing. Accordingly, it is possible to encounter video marketing, which is constantly encountered in social media, on websites, e-mail marketing, video advertising and trainings (Lee et al., 2021: 220). Video marketing covers the process of planning, designing, producing and distributing videos, which are mostly made to promote products and services (Karim, 2020: 180). Another goal of video marketing is to reach and engage the target audience. High interaction, more sales of the promoted product, the possibility of going viral and being mobile-friendly are among the strong features of video marketing (Jang et al., 2023: 95). The biggest problem in video marketing is timing. Accordingly, shooting and sharing videos on topics that consumers are satisfied with may damage the brand image (Sung & Lee, 2021: 88).

1.10. Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is a system that imitates the thoughts, opinions and actions of humans and learns over time. What makes artificial intelligence attractive is that it can apply and improve what it learns from humans without the physical and social needs of a human being. Therefore, artificial intelligence directly contributes in many areas such as reasoning, decision-making, searching, modeling and providing solutions (Lee et al., 2021: 222). Today, ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude-3, Midjourney, Tailor Brands, 10Web IO, Opus Pro, Invideo, Gamma App, ElevenLabs and tldv are among the most known and used artificial intelligence tools (Zeydan, 2024; 431).

In terms of marketing, artificial intelligence is a current and important digital marketing tool. With the help of AI, marketers can carry out marketing research activities in a shorter time and at a very low cost. Artificial intelligence offers valuable contributions to marketers in areas such as sales strategies, current market situation, market segmentation, price creation and revision, strengthening brand interaction, advertising and slogan suggestions, and customer satisfaction (Sharma & Kumar, 2023: 115). As marketers integrate AI into their activities, the following three elements are the basis for this integration (Tan & Lee, 2022: 98):

Content creation: Artificial intelligence enables the production and dissemination of content such as visuals, videos, slogans, etc. that will attract the attention of potential consumers. This element, which also determines the channels where content will be presented and shared, increases operational efficiency (Yılmaz et al., 2022: 204).

Personalization: Based on consumers' shopping history, product and service tastes, their comments on digital channels, and their demographic structure, the company offers products and campaigns that are suitable for its target audience (Alvarez et al., 2022: 56). Artificial intelligence, which quickly and accurately identifies the personalized needs of consumers, guides marketers on issues such as the number of consumers to be targeted and the likelihood of consumer purchases.

Chatbots: It is important to stay in close contact with the consumer to ensure customer satisfaction, build brand loyalty and realize the sales transaction as soon as possible. Chatbots respond to consumer questions and requests 24/7, enabling marketers to achieve their goals, especially in customer relationship management. Chatbots, which strengthen the consumer experience, are an artificial intelligence tool that guides the consumer on every subject the consumer wants to learn and shows the minimum attention the consumer needs by not leaving him unanswered (Kilic et al., 2021: 301).

Artificial intelligence has provided efficiency in marketing management. With its contribution to speed, security and interactivity, it provides quality and stability in marketing processes by producing the right product for the right consumer at the most appropriate time at the most appropriate cost, selling it at the most appropriate price and delivering it to the consumer at the most appropriate time (Nguyen & Lee, 2021: 234). Artificial intelligence, which excites the whole world with its potential and perhaps a little frightening, is an area where current and high expectations are very high among digital marketing channels.

2. Integration of digital marketing channels

In order to increase the benefits to be obtained from digital marketing channels, various combinations can be applied between the relevant channels to ensure that the channels work in coordination and effectively with the other channels they are combined with. First of all, it is possible to talk about multichannel marketing and omnichannel marketing strategies. In multichannel marketing, a large number of digital marketing channels such as e-mail, social media and SEO are used simultaneously but without any connection to each other (Smith, 2020: 154). In omnichannel marketing, on the other hand, many preferred digital marketing channels are used in an interconnected way and provide a step-by-step experience to customers (Lee et al., 2021: 222). An example of this strategy is when a consumer sees an advertisement on social media, then clicks on the relevant link to add the products they like to their cart on the website they visit, and then receives an e-mail to remind them of the products in their cart if they do not purchase the products they have added to their cart. It can be said that marketers today have adopted a omnichannel marketing strategy to provide a more effective customer experience (Brown & Wilson, 2020: 187).

The second issue to be addressed in the integration of digital marketing channels is data sharing and personalization across digital marketing channels (Miller, 2019: 112). Through customer relationship management, customer data can be collected and customized social media posts or e-mail content can be created and sent to the consumer. In support of this, and to further strengthen it, artificial intelligence-supported tools can be used to analyze the consumer's online behavior and determine their expectations (Hughes & Lee, 2021: 78). In this case, it will be efficient to reach the consumer through the most appropriate digital marketing channel. An example of this would be reminding the consumer of a product that they have viewed on the mobile app via notification, e-mail or SMS and encouraging them to purchase it (Green & Johnson, 2020: 109).

Trying to make the consumer's shopping journey better by integrating digital marketing channels is the third issue to be addressed in the integration of digital marketing channels. The stages of the consumer's shopping journey can be expressed as follows with the integration of digital marketing channels (Williams & Thompson, 2021: 202):

Awareness: The consumer's attention is drawn to the product through social media, mobile applications, various video content, etc.

Interest: The consumer's interest in the product is tried to be created and increased through influencer marketing, blog posts, etc.

Purchase: Through affiliate marketing, SEO, SEM, etc., the consumer is enabled to complete the purchase process.

Loyalty: In order to embody the consumer's loyalty to the product or brand, the consumer can be encouraged to purchase the product or another product of the relevant brand by providing personalized offers to the consumer, mobile app notifications and e-mail campaigns.

The above-mentioned four issues that enable the integration of digital marketing channels provide a number of benefits. Accordingly, when consumers encounter and interact with the brand through different digital marketing channels, the likelihood of the consumer purchasing the product will increase relatively (Keller & Schwartz, 2020: 223). In addition, if marketers use relevant content and visuals to maintain brand identity across all digital marketing channels, they will ensure that consumers experience a consistent brand experience. This increases brand credibility, customer loyalty and the positive impact of marketing strategies (Mitchell & Carter, 2021: 199).

3. Result and recommendations

Digital marketing channels, which reveal the digital dimension of marketing, contribute to the successful continuation of marketing activities of businesses by actively participating in digital channels in which consumers are constantly present today. Regular use of digital marketing channels is inevitable for businesses regardless of their size. Otherwise, businesses may not be able to follow the dynamics of the market and may terminate their activities. Today, almost every business has a digital marketing channel that it can use in accordance with the products and services it offers or the target audience it is trying to reach. Depending on the marketing strategies they create, businesses can benefit from any, several or all of the digital marketing channels mentioned in the study (e-mail marketing, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, video marketing and artificial intelligence). Businesses that use the appropriate digital marketing channels correctly will have a competitive advantage.

When using digital marketing channels, marketers can integrate them with each other. With this integration, they can create a model that not only increases brand reputation and trust, but also

provides a better customer experience. In addition, this integration model can directly contribute to the realization of more sales with the high conversion rates it will provide. The key decision here is which digital marketing channel should be combined with which other channels. In this case, it may be recommended that the marketer adopt all digital channels and then create an integration model suitable for the sector.

There will be changes in digital marketing channels depending on technological developments. While some of them may still remain up to date, others will not be preferred after a while. Some channels may even create other sub-channels that will be more trendy than themselves. In this case, the marketer should act with a technological and innovative perspective and apply current digital marketing channels. Adopting current digital marketing channels is a priority for the business to sustain its activities for a long time.

Digital marketing channels, which can be described as indispensable for marketers today, also contribute to entrepreneurship. Through affiliate marketing, an entrepreneur can compete with larger businesses by hosting a number of products in a simple warehouse, without incurring any expenses such as store rent, employee costs, store design, etc. In addition, the influencer marketing channel has been a source of inspiration for many young people and a whole new line of business has emerged. In the future, the contribution of digital marketing channels to entrepreneurship is expected to increase.

Within the scope of the study, the importance of digital marketing has been revealed. However, digital marketing channels also bring some challenges. Challenges such as competitive pressure, security issues, technical difficulties can be considered as the main challenges in the use of digital marketing channels. Although it is a very basic reminder, of course, the primary need for the use of digital marketing channels is electricity and internet.

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