

# A handshake with digital

**In a Knowledge Sharing Webinar by MMS, Manoj Kotak not only demystified the technologies behind the Internet-giants like Google and Facebook, but he shared a few secrets about how to leverage these platforms to our benefit.**

The smartphone generation, the selfie generation, the WhatsApp generation, and now emerging, the Okay Google generation are all the products of digital transformation in the past 25 years. The most exciting part of this transformation isn't how the 'generations' are divided by age. Still, they are truly the different pockets of the population of varied ages, education levels, access and understanding of technology. Manoj Kotak, Managing Director, Image Online Private Limited, unfolded the trade secrets in MMS' Knowledge Sharing Webinar – All About Digital Marketing.

## The story of generations

Manoj started his presentation with a declaration: Nothing is going to die. Nothing is going to be forever. He reiterated this point again and again throughout his presentation. However, the storytelling of the journey of the first 25 years of the Internet in India proves his point.

Since the launch of the Internet in India in 1995, we the people have changed the way we interact with information. And, with each advancement and the launch of new technologies, we have learned new ways to access, process, and consume information.

In the pre- and early-Internet age in India, the brands relied entirely on push marketing – advertisements in the newspapers, the hoardings, and many places including aeroplanes to rickshaws. The brand information flew one way – from the advertiser to the consumers. Moreover, this marketing effort wasn't much targeted for the lack of any pointed targeting strategy and tools. There were loose base-rules; for example, English dailies were read by upper-middle-class compared to the regional language newspapers.

With the advent of Google's search engine or Facebook's granular data on individuals and communities enabled the marketers to target the specific segments of the audience to fetch enhanced returns on marketing investments. However, the journey of these platforms began as 'problem solvers' for the general public – Google promised to deliver knowledge at the click of a button while Facebook aimed at connecting people. As we increasingly interact with these platforms and shared our data, that they started leveraging this data to their benefit by reaping revenue by marketing products and services to us.

While the algorithms working behind the scenes for these platforms are complex, Manoj simplified their mechanism for us. If you searched for the nearest coffee outlet on Google or liked a post by a Brand A of a coffee chain on Facebook, you will see the advertisements for several other outlets of Brand A in Google search results. And suppose Brand B is also marketing online on Facebook. In that case, you will be presented their advertisements by matching your liking for coffee with their primary business activity – a cafe serving coffee.

A consumer searches for the brand or a business on Google; on Facebook and other social media platforms, the brands are empowered to reach the most likely customer by targeting specific profiles.

While this matching allows effective targeting of the audience, it makes marketing investments a lot more effective at comparatively lower budgets compared to the traditional marketing channels. Moreover, these digital platforms offer marketers many tools to track the performance of their marketing campaigns and messaging by providing insights into impressions, clicks, leads, customer visits, and more.

With each such advancement in Internet-based technologies, more and more people have come online. The first was the technology-enabled population that demanded the email services. Then came the younger and young-adult population who connected on Facebook. With the advent of WhatsApp, anyone with the know-how of using a smartphone and a decent data-pack could use the Internet-based technology to connect and interact. And more recently, tech-savvy people are participating in e-commerce by shopping online with billions of rupees worth of transactions each year. At each stage, these technologies have strangled the businesses of offline products and services, for example, the greeting cards

market was decimated by electronic cards and later by instant messaging applications. However, we are also witnessing a strong resurgence of physical products – from books and book stores to diaries, planners, calendars and even greeting cards.

Manoj concludes the journey of the Internet in India by saying that "whatever is possible in the offline world, is possible in the online world. And vice versa." He, however, backs it up with an example. We all had conferences where we met face-to-face. You saw

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“Nothing is going to die. Nothing is going to be forever.”

**Manoj Kotak**  
Managing Director  
Image Online Private Limited

### Is your business social-media-ready?

In this day and age, each business must have a digital presence on the social media and the digital marketing platforms. The following grid, based on the one shared by Manoj during his presentation, will guide you to prepare your business' social media marketing plan by following step-by-step task-check for each platform.

Tasks	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Instagram
Account Creation	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Writing profiles	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Weekly posts or articles	The ideal number of posts to be decided	The ideal number of posts to be decided	The ideal number of posts to be decided	The ideal number of posts to be decided	The ideal number of posts to be decided
Monitoring and replying the engaged users	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Analytics	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Source: The above table is based on the template shared on <https://www.kotak.co.in/digital-marketing/others/117-social-media-marketing-plan.html>

me, and I could look into your eyes as I addressed the gathering. Now we are still meeting in the virtual world. The purpose of the interaction – knowledge-sharing is still possible. Does this mean we shall never have a conference? We shall have it sooner or later. The experience of the two worlds is different. Therefore, both will co-exist, and they have co-existed so far; and so is true of the marketing spends – offline and online marketing should go hand-in-hand. We need to understand that both channels complement each other.

### Where does one start?

Highlighting the importance of these dynamic technologies, Manoj advises the webinar audience that they educate themselves about what, why, how, when, and more of these digital technologies. While he insists on the importance of a business' digital presence – from website to digital and social media marketing, he advises to start small, but start correctly.

“Have a one-page website and then spawn into a multi-page, multi-feature portal full of your portfolios, product and service information, blog, and more. However, compliance is of utmost importance,” says Manoj. He insists that the website should be designed to be responsive – i.e., mobile-friendly while being designed for larger screens such as desktops; it should be search engine optimised (SEO) with correct keywords to attract the traffic of the potential customers and clients; and “always remember that the content is the king” so the website should focus on sharing relevant content to alleviate client’s pain points rather than wholly focused on selling them your products or services.

If the business isn't online yet, Manoj suggested that it should have a professionally-designed, search engine optimised, responsive and safe website as the starting point. “Consider your website as the online storefront of your business,” he then adds that focus of all your online efforts should be on directing people to your online and offline storefronts through search engine marketing (Google) or the content-driven social media marketing efforts. For both the strategies, Manoj advises that “the content must be crisp, concise, and educational” that will attract the targetted audience. He shares a digital marketing plan:

Designing a website	Hire professionals to design a compliant, search engine optimised, safe website
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)	Use business-relevant, high-ranking keywords to enhance the effectiveness of your website and digital marketing campaigns.
Content distribution and marketing	Blog writing, interesting articles on your and other websites, guest blog posting, paid PR distribution, publishing infographics.
Google AdWords	Reach anywhere on the Internet with advertisements on Google
Facebook Adverts	Choose your audience with granular targetting for age, gender, location and more.

Manoj further details different methods to leverage the strengths of Google and Facebook to bring business to your business. He suggests that people look into Google's AdWords and Facebooks Ad manager to get a better understanding of budgets and methods to target the potential audience. He strongly recommended Google for digital media marketing and LinkedIn for social media marketing for B2B (business-to-business) print companies. At the same time, Google and Facebook/Instagram mix work well for the local, retail print businesses such as Photoshop's and printshops.

Eighty-six per cent of the participants of this MMS' Knowledge Sharing Webinar about digital marketing voted it as 'excellent'. This overwhelming feedback says it all about how your Organisation is adding value through these sessions, even during these challenging times. Team Print Bulletin urges you to participate and make most of these initiatives to steer your business for better resource utilisation, effective cost-control, and profitability.

