

Why all management students must learn digital marketing

Understanding the digital domain of marketing has become mandatory with online business growing manifolds, writes **Mohit Malhan**

A young professional with an MBA degree is asked by her boss, 'Can we link our operational data with our digital storefront and social media handles? If yes, is it worth it?' The young professional is stumped, neither her operations electives nor the Marketing core courses have prepared her for such interlinkages. However, today, each business facet is linked to so many others. A student without a deeper understanding of different domains, will find it challenging to navigate the corporate world.

A management degree is supposed to teach a candidate the nitty-gritty of managing a business. The core subjects, in this regard, act as the building blocks of any programme. They reflect what the business world demands and are designed to cover graduates' essential knowledge and skills. The core curriculum thus is periodically reviewed and modified to better suit the industry needs, and ensures that the students are ready to deliver value to the firm from day one. We believe one such review and modification is in order: introducing digital marketing as a core subject.

Global digital ad spend is expected to hit over \$450 billion this year, over 60% of the total ad spend. India provides an even



more fertile ground for digital ad growth. Digital accounts for only 33% of the total ad spend and is expected to rise to 70% in the coming decade. Such tremendous growth coupled with its ubiquitous use across industries will propel Digital Marketing to the forefront of a firm's marketing efforts. This is not to say that the core marketing principles would no longer be applicable at all. However, they would need to be tailored to the needs of the digital world. In addition to teaching the core principles of Marketing, it has become essential for management students from all disciplines to understand digital marketing. The interlinkages of di-

gital marketing with nearly every firm function, from finance and operations to customer service and HR, has made it a prerequisite for any entry-level MBA job. Moreover, an understanding of digital marketing would help students in their entrepreneurial pursuits by providing them with tools to build low cost, sustainable campaigns.

There is clearly a need for the introduction of Digital Marketing as a core MBA subject. Given the intense rigour and limited credits, it is impractical to expect all students to take it as an elective course.

(The author is professor, Marketing, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Gurugram)