

Digital Marketing Guide For Teenagers and an Introduction to Behavioral Economics

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Introduction

My friends and I all have causes we're passionate about. For some of us it's climate change and sustainability; for others it's mental health or gender discrimination. The causes may be different, but what they share in common is our desire to bring about a positive social change.

As I watched my friends and acquaintances try to launch their own social initiatives, I saw how they struggled to spread awareness and recruit enough followers to their causes. As a business and economics student, I knew about the power of marketing and behavioral economics in the form of choice architecture. I realized that I could help others by creating a guide on how they can **leverage behavioral economics insights in digital marketing** to spread greater awareness about their causes or business ideas.

Digital marketing is one of the fastest and best ways of advertising. It is cost effective, it allows you to reach your target audience through social media, and it puts you directly in touch with the people who might support your cause, or even buy your products. Further, it's an intuitive format for young people, who are already accustomed to communicating and networking through digital formats.

Basics of Digital Marketing

This guide aims to break down the basics of digital marketing fundamentals, so that teens can use digital marketing to help sell their products, ideas, and raise awareness about the initiatives and causes that are important to them.

The major components of digital marketing are:

- Internet Marketing – Website, SEM (search engine marketing – includes SEO and Pay per click advertising)
- Smartphones, mobile markets (i.e. Google Play, Apple Store)
- Email marketing
- Online banner advertising
- Social Media.

Digital Marketing is most prevalent in social media applications as well as paid online marketing that appears while browsing websites. It differs from traditional forms of marketing as it's free, and can be targeted to a specific audience through social media platforms.

The Role of Behavioral Economics in Digital Marketing

One major idea that has influenced recent trends in marketing is increased awareness and use of behavioral economics theories. Behavioral economics is a method of economic analysis that applies psychological insights into human behaviour to explain economic decision-making. The concept of behavioral economics has grown in popularity and prominence over the last decade, thanks to best-selling books including Daniel Kahneman's 'Thinking, Fast and Slow' and Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein's 'Nudge'.

Nudges & Choice Architecture in Digital Marketing

A nudge, in behavioral economics, is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way, while still leaving the onus of choice with them. An example is putting fruit at eye level to encourage people to make healthier food choices, as opposed to an outright ban on junk food.

Many advertising firms have begun to incorporate nudges and choice architecture into their marketing strategy. For example, Ogilvy has established a specialist behavioural economics practice called Ogilvy Change which employs 'Choice Architects' "to investigate and apply principles from cognitive psychology, social psychology and behavioural science to create measurable behaviour change in the real world".

1. Different types of nudges & examples

a. Scarcity

Scarcity is based on the theory that people tend to value things more highly when they believe they are scarce.

For example: Apple creates an idea in people's minds about how iPhones are very limited and in order to buy the new models consumers have to stand in long queues to buy the newly launched iPhones.

b. Anchoring effect

The value of something is often set by anchors or imprints in our minds, which we use as mental reference points that influence our decision-making. The anchors can be completely arbitrary and still have an impact.

For Example: When any service provider offers their customer a list of premium plans, the company makes sure to put the anchored plan (most expensive) plan first and then offer the rest because there is a high probability that the customer would buy the first plan itself.

c. Loss Aversion

We will often go to greater lengths to avoid the loss of something we already have rather than to gain something new. People can find it twice as painful to lose something they own in comparison to how enjoyable it was to acquire it in the first place.

For Example: Netflix offers a free trial, because once consumers own a Netflix account, they are more likely to continue their subscription rather than lose it.

d. Authority

Years of societal convention have led us to place an often irrational trust in the judgment of experts, even if their judgements are not always correct or moral.

For Example: A lot of Puma's success has come about due to their association in the Formula One arena with Lewis Hamilton.

e. Paradox of choice

Offering customers more choice is not always the best course of action. When we're paralysed by too many options, the likelihood that we pick the 'most suitable' choice is reduced and we procrastinate for fear of making a bad decision. Therefore, when fewer options are presented, there is less chance of making a mistake and decisions are sped up.

For Example: If a parent wants to buy their child a new phone, it would be simpler to choose between a few phones with different prices rather than having numerous phones with similar prices.

f. Social proofing/herding

Social proof describes our tendency to run with the herd and make decisions based on what those around us are doing. We often validate our choices on whether others were following a similar course of action, which is why books are marketed as 'bestsellers'.

For Example: While purchasing a new car, the customer would check for the best reviews and ratings and buy the car according to those criteria to make sure that the car has been endorsed by various people.

Digital Marketing Strategy & Rules

Rule 1. Attract Your Viewer

While scrolling through your social media feeds, you've probably noticed paid advertisements popping up on your screen. Often, people find these irritating, especially if it's irrelevant content that doesn't interest you. But every once in awhile, there are ads that are compelling enough to make you click on them.

The key to getting people to click on your advertisements to learn more about your product or cause is to create content that attracts your viewer. You can do this by adding humor, or including topics or ideas that are trending.

For example.... Various digital marketing platforms advertise their products or services by having trending songs and tunes playing in their background which attracts consumers of that specific age group.

Rule 2. Choose the right platform

Effective advertising is all about knowing your customer, including who is using which type of platform. For example, while teenagers are on almost all social media platforms, the ones they use most frequently are Instagram and Snapchat. Their parents and other adults, on the other hand, tend to use Facebook and Twitter more often. If your target audience is teens, then you should invest more time and effort in digital advertising on Instagram and Snapchat. If, on the other hand, you're trying to target adults, you should stick to platforms Facebook and Twitter.

Rule 3. Keep it Short and Sweet

Do you know the average attention span of a goldfish?

9 seconds.

Do you know the average attention span of a 21st century teenager?

8 seconds!!

If you want people to know about your product or service, make sure you summarize all of the points. Keep any posts and digital advertisements short, to the point, and crisp. Otherwise it will be ignored like every Terms & Conditions page you agree to without actually reading.

How do you keep your posts short?

1. Show the solutions that your product solves immediately.
2. Put in voice overs instead of using too much text.
3. Summarise your advertisement in the end by a catchy phrase.

Rule 4. Don't put all your eggs in one basket:

Today's followers are fickle. As soon as a new social media platform start trending, users – particularly teens – move to where the trend is, sometimes causing older platforms to die off. To avoid a loss, it is advisable that you invest your digital marketing resources across multiple platforms, and create a digital marketing plan that spans a few different channels.

Your marketing plan could be based on saving of resources and less risk taking. In my opinion people should invest in the advertisement of their product/ services on those platforms that are used by the majority so that they have very high chances of getting a return.

Rule 5. Use Positive Reinforcement

With any sort of digital marketing campaign, user engagement is key. One of the most important factors in getting enough followers to generate likes, and get your posts or campaign trending.

One of the ways to boost likes and followers is by holding posting interactive posts, like questions or polls that people can respond to.

Another method is to hold competitions in which people like the page/recruit more followers, in order to participate to win prizes such as gift certificates, experiences, or small tokens (and if these are affiliated with your cause, even better!)