CONSUMER FASCINATION TOWARDS ONLINE MARKETING

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ABSTRACT
Online marketing is exceedingly complex and it fascinates billions of consumers every day. Many Indian consumers are now involved towards online marketing due to higher access and increased flexibility. The virtual stores are replacing the physical stores and modern information relating to products and services are provided by online marketers.

Keywords: Online Marketing; Retailing; Retention Rate; Targeting Consumers

INTRODUCTION
Online marketing of products and services are becoming more common. People can have their breakfast by ordering online, can go to office using online call taxi booking or online call driver booking, can open fixed deposits online in banks, can invest in various shares and funds, can by a car online by viewing the various specifications, dealer location, price details and required documents. The consumer need not wait in the long queues for paying the electricity bills, telephone bills, children school fees or for getting regular train or bus passes or tickets. Now books, videos, music, luxury goods, clothing etc., can also be bought online. People can order for flowers and gifts, subscribe for journals and book for various types of tours.

NEED FOR ONLINE MARKETING
The current day explosions in the field of information technology and mobile computing have significantly changed the marketing pattern of consumers. The traditional business requires a physical space in which they conduct various business transactions. The managing people are given specific objectives. Many of these objectives are focus driven. The physical store should be within the access of consumers and the store should accommodate reasonable number of consumers within the physical space. The cost of maintenance, cost of inventory and cost of labour are very high and these costs are to be shared by the consumers to a higher extent unknowingly, without change in standards. Under these circumstances, the online marketing method is a factual boom for billions of global consumers.

PROBLEMS OF ONLINE MARKETING
The online marketers are people who are working hard to intensify their customer base and are trying to maximize their consumer retention rate. The consumers want to learn about the products and services and obtain information about warranty, service, repair, insurance policies etc. They want to obtain general information about the company and also try to understand the financial stability of the online marketing organizations. Thousands of online marketers have entered the premises of almost all consumers through various technologies in Internet and mobile technologies. These firms have to sustain visitor attention and encourage return visits and provide meaningful, interactive
communication at various levels. Hence a study on consumer fascination towards online marketing requires special attention.

**OBJECTIVES**

The prime objective of this study is to analyze the fascination of consumers towards online marketing practices and their current levels of satisfaction on various online activities.

**METHODOLOGY**

For the purpose of this study, Tamil Nadu is taken as the study area and within the study area, two specific cities, i.e. Tiruchirappalli and Madurai are considered for taking sample consumers. The online product delivery organizations are contacted and the lists of consumers are obtained in August 2014. Among the list 120 sample consumers are taken on convenient sampling method for the purpose of collecting primary data. The sample consumers given structured interview schedule and the data are classified. Analysis is done with the help of Statistical Packages.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The perceptions of consumers towards various online marketing methods are collected under various headings. The details line awareness about the firm, awareness about the product, familiarity of the firm, commitment of the firm, Advertising method, Targeting consumers, Providing discounts, pricing policy, Customer Relationship, Product differentiation, sending products and payment process.

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<tr>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>VG</th>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>25</td>
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Table 1. Perception of Consumers on Online Marketing Practices

Note: VG – Very Good, G- Good, N – Normal, P – Poor, VP – Very Poor

Source: Primary data

Table shows the perception of consumers on various online marketing practices. Likert’s Five Point Scaling Technique is used for analysis. Weights are assigned as follows: Very good +2; Good +1; Normal 0; Poor (-)1; and Very Poor (-)2. Points are calculated using weights. Then coefficient is calculated by dividing the points by total number of respondents. Points P = \( \sum wf \); W – weights; f – frequency; Coefficient Coeff = \( \frac{\sum wf}{\sum f} \). Analysis reveals that the points scored for awareness about the firm is 44; awareness of the product is 57; Familiarity of the firm is 25; Commitment of the firm is (-) 19; Advertisement methods is 43; Targeting consumers is (-)16; Providing discount is 24; Pricing policy is 4; Customer relationship is (-) 2; sending products is 9 and payment process is 41. This shows that points scored for Awareness of product is high and commitment of the firm is the least. The coefficient calculated for awareness about the firm is 0.367; awareness of the product is 0.475; Familiarity of the firm is 0.208; Commitment of the firm is (-) 0.158; Advertisement methods is 0.358; Targeting consumers is (-)0.133; Providing discount is 0.200; Pricing policy is 0.033; Customer relationship is (-) 0.017; sending products is 0.075 and payment process is 0.342.
In online marketing practices, among the twelve variables, the first rank is given to Awareness of the product; the second rank to awareness about the firm; the third rank for advertising methods; the fourth rank for payment process and the fifth rank for product differentiation. The eleventh rank is given for targeting consumers and the twelfth rank for commitment of the firm. It is inferred that online buying consumers have some awareness about the product and firm. The awareness is least for commitment of the firm and targeting consumers.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The online buying consumers have better awareness of the product and firm and hence the online marketing firms may continue to provide the same level of information about the product and services and the firm.

The consumers are satisfied with the method of advertisement and the firms may continue to follow the existing pattern. However, to expand the customer base, the firms can formulate new strategy in advertisement methods.

The payment process is now simple due to various flexible banking practices and payment intermediaries. The product differentiation methods can be improved by creating new awareness creation methods for various types of consumers.

The pricing policies are now acceptable to certain extent. The firms may clearly state the method of pricing so that the online consumers feel satisfied with the pricing policy of the firm.

The firms can prove their commitment by advertising about the success stories and information about the vast consumer base. Periodical contacts with the consumers can increase the customer base of the online marketing firms.

CONCLUSION

Online marketing has become more authentic and prevalent in the current decade and the firms are using various types of online advertisements, banners, pop-ups, and e-mails. Some firms are using Internet to manage their relationship with customers and use it to identify the methods to reach them periodically. Many firms go in for rational pricing and branding methods to acquire standardized consumers.

REFERENCES