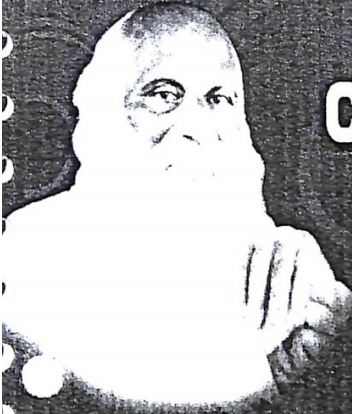


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Tools ICT In Business Research

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- **Introduction:**

Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a vital role in all the thrust areas of any business cycle like finance, sales & marketing, supply Chain management, market research, Agriculture research human resource management and customer feedback for continuous improvement. Marketing and sales environment is rapidly changing reflecting changes brought about by ICT. Management at any level must continually and consistently adapt the organization's marketing efforts to keep pace with observed changes. Such changes require management and staff training, and development of effective selling skills through tools help of ICT. Business innovation is regarded as a key determinant of individual business success and national economic growth (Rogers, 2004). The need of the hour for SMEs today is to have access to ICT tools for facilitating the production processes, market access, supply chain integration and customer feedback which will help them gain better outreach and eventually result in reducing their business costs and thereby reap higher profit margins. The application and use of Information Technology (IT) has evolved to include various forms of microelectronic and telecommunications tools such as laptops and computers, the Internet (via optical fibres and wireless connections), mobile technology, iPads, digital television, palmtops, iPods and digital cameras/videos (Freeman and Hasnaoui, 2010).

The changing area in business scenario and changing attitudes of customers drives the pressures for continuous development towards customer satisfaction. The retrieval of information, analysis of data, facts, figures and reports are generated in easy way with the help of ICT tools. Furthermore, ICT is central to the acquisition, analysis, storage, retrieval, manipulation, management, control, movement, display, and transmission of data and information (Boritz, 2000).

- **ICT related marketing Communication Channels:**

Marketing involves a variety of activities to attract potential customers and aims, first and foremost, to generate interest in the products and services, and to stimulate repeat business. The digitally advanced and competitive environment in which modern organisations operate necessitates an ICT-integrated marketing approach, where new possibilities for the promotion of products and services could be exploited and where marketers can create stronger brand loyalties to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage for their organisations (Smith and ZeZook, 2011). For example, radio is experiencing a resurgence with the advent of satellite and digital formats. Outdoor advertising is becoming more creative and, while newspapers and magazines have been negatively affected by ICT, they are still prominent marketing channels. Although this study focuses on ICT in marketing, traditional forms of marketing will inevitably form part of the discussion. The Internet and the digitalisation of information have, together with

the spread of the use of ICT devices, created the context of E-marketing. E-marketing has a broader meaning, as it includes not only digital media such as web, E-mail and wireless media, but also the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management systems (E-CRM systems) (Clemons and Kilger, 2009). Within the broader E-marketing domain, this section aims to explain the main related marketing communication channels that should be considered in the overall design of an organisation's strategic marketing strategy. These channels include Internet marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing, mobile marketing and direct marketing.

1. **Internet Marketing** : The Internet is often described as an engine of globalisation which knocks down borders and imposes market democracy on every nation. Since the Internet has become integrated into the practices of businesses, governments and social movements and has changed the way modern individuals live and work. Hence, the Internet could be a powerful marketing tool if exploited by organisations (Yannopoulos, 2011). The Internet enables Internet marketing, which aims to create, communicate and deliver value to customers. Internet marketing is defined as the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through various activities in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products and services to satisfy customer needs. It is imperative that organisations have a user-friendly website in conjunction with online promotional techniques such as Search engines, banner advertising, E-mails and direct links from own and partner websites (Chaffey et al., 2006).
2. **Social Media Marketing** : social media fulfils the fundamental human need for communication, and the emergence of social media could be regarded as the biggest development since the Industrial Revolution. Of all the different types of E-marketing, social media networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube have generated the most publicity. The term "social media" is the new buzz word in the communication and marketing industry.
3. **Digital marketing** : Digital marketing is defined as the practice of promoting products and services using digital distribution channels to reach consumers in a timely, relevant, personal and cost-effective manner (Merisavo, 2008). According to Chester and Montgomery (2008), venture capitalists are increasingly investing in the following three types of digital marketing, namely social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace), mobile technology (such as BlackBerry and iPhones) and online videos (such as YouTube). Other forms of digital marketing include podcasting, blogging, banner ads and video streams.
4. **Mobile Marketing** : The evolution from desktop to mobile communication is a paradigm shift that has emerged prominently in the last decade. Twenty years ago, individuals would not have imagined the endless connectivity made possible by mobile technology (Teter, 2011). The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA, 2005) defines mobile marketing as any form of marketing, advertising or sales promotion aimed at influencing and informing consumers via a mobile channel. Mobile marketing connects businesses and customers with the right message at the right time and right place.
5. **Direct Marketing** : For buyers, direct marketing offers customers access to a wide range of individually designed products anywhere in the world. For sellers, it offers a lower-cost, rapid and efficient alternative for reaching their markets. According to

(Flici,2011), direct marketing is increasingly becoming part of key thinking regarding the development of strategic marketing strategies and the development of sustainable customer relationships. It applies marketing approaches that target specific individuals or groups of individuals by using both traditional and digital marketing methods such as mobile technology, E-mail (or spam), door-to-door selling, automated dialling machines and, more recently, automated SMS (Short Messaging Services) messages. Direct marketing is also used by charities (to secure donations), political parties and other social and welfare groups. Information obtained from marketing lists, public information (such as phone books or public registers) or information based on previous transactions supplies the sources that direct marketers use (Flici,2011).

6. **Software tools:** Number of Commercial and open source software's are available in market for analysis and interpretation of data. These data helps to get appropriate decision within time.

- **Conclusion Remarks:**

You can use features on your website such as visitor polls, online surveys and your website statistics to find out what your customers like more and how they feel about certain aspects of your business to determine how you can improve your product and the way you do business. For current research scenario ICT helps to manipulate facts & figure time to time. The data available on digital records is easily available or useful for managerial decisions. The survey regarding products & services helps regarding the new products & service launched. To remove the lacuna

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