THE EFFECTIVE E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR GROWING PROFITABLE A BRAND THROUGH A S.M.AR.T. MARKETING CAMPAIGN RUN IN THE MOST PROFITABLE WAY IN E-COMMERCE CHANNEL- Intermediary Qualitative Research Results

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The e-commerce Model: A Qualitative Exploration of main mandatory elements needed for developing and putting in place a successful Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable the brand sales through E-commerce channel.

ABSTRACT

In a world of exponential growing of internet connectivity and changing significantly the shopping behavior of e-consumers, especially post pandemic, switching from off-site shopping, going physically in the stores to on-website shopping experience, this research examines key aspects necessary for developing an effective integrated digital marketing communication model aimed at increasing profitable the brand sales through e-commerce platforms within the digital world. The study was conducted using

qualitative research methods across top 10 marketing directors in Romania, within one-to-one interviews followed by focus group sessions, comprising ten top marketing directors from both multinational companies and entrepreneurial businesses in Romania. The study aimed to identify the critical components required to be implemented by marketing experts and entrepreneurs to grow profitable the brand sales through integrated marketing campaigns run, in the most effective way, in the digital world. The intermediary proposed result is an e-commerce model, with seven-step framework for structuring efficient digital marketing campaigns and all the critical aspects which an expert in marketing should take into consideration to put in place in the right moment, in the right place, in the right way, step by step, for obtaining growth results above the competitors average performance. This article discusses the research methodology, data collection methods, and analysis, as well as presents intermediary key findings on campaign success factors.

Keywords: e-commerce model, integrated marketing, digital campaigns, e-commerce, qualitative research, Romania.

1. Introduction

The increasing importance of digital marketing profitable results from e-commerce growth requires comprehensive and integrated digital marketing communication campaigns. This study explores the stages and the main important components and aspects necessary to implement a successful digital marketing campaign aimed at increasing profitable the sales, in the most profitable way, through online platforms. Drawing on insights and expertise from expert marketers in Romania, this research aims to develop a model which to serve as guidance for marketing experts when a campaign is desired to be planned and implemented with outstanding results. This e-commerce Model could be developed, based on the identified steps and "mandatory" / "helpful" / and "nice to have" aspects for each step necessary for a campaign to be successful for building a great Brand performance, which represents seven critical stages for a digital marketing campaign: Documenting phase, Objectives phase, Construction phase, Tactics phase, Optimization phase, Research phase and Evaluation phase; all these phases, if implemented methodically right, under a military discipline, could conduct a Brand to a Success phase.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Defining the Decision Problem

The research addressed the need of the marketing experts and entrepreneurs for an e-commerce MODEL which could help them to design and implement the most performance digital marketing campaigns for growing the sales through e-commerce channel. A marketing expert should have a frame with all the main steps and for each step, all the mandatory aspects

necessary for a campaign to be successfully. The focus was to understand which elements are needed and how to build and implement a successfully integrated digital marketing campaign which could lead to sustained brand growth and marketing results above the market average.

2.2 Research Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this research was to identify the key marketing actions required to optimize digital campaigns. The objectives included: understanding the role of research and data in campaign preparation, defining the success metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) essential for campaign execution and structuring an efficient model for campaign planning, execution, optimization that delivers high ROI and post-evaluating the campaign with the main key learnings.

2.3 Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing "one-to-one" interviews followed by focus groups to gather digital marketing expert opinions. Four focus groups were conducted, each consisting of top marketing directors from mix of multinational corporations and entrepreneurial businesses. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to ensure consistency in discussions across the focus groups.

The methodology adopted for this research includes detailed individual discussions and in-depth interviews aimed at capturing the complex elements needed for a campaign to succeed and to get results above market average. The qualitative methods employed to explore the in-depth expertise of marketing directors from fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector on e-commerce platforms.

A total of 10 detailed interviews, individual in-depth discussions (IDI), were conducted with people from different gender and age categories, specifically selected Marketing Directors with more than 10 years' experience in digital marketing and online stores, especially those who frequently use major retail platforms such as Carrefour, eMAG, or Cora. The interviews aimed to thoroughly evaluate the online shopping experience, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current process, as well as identifying and analyzing the barriers and factors that influence the decision to purchase food products through e-commerce.

By applying these qualitative methods, the research aims to provide strategic recommendations based on marketing directors expertise after more than 10 years of experience in designing nd implementing integrated digital marketing campaigns for growing profitable the brands in value , volume and profits, thus facilitating the development of digital marketing communication campaigns with results above the market average, effectively and directly addressing the expectations and needs of the market.

3. Sampling and Data Collection

3.1 Sampling Method

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who were marketing and communication directors from leading companies in Romania both from multinational leading brands and local Romanian brands. Both multinational and local entrepreneurial companies were represented, ensuring a mix of perspectives from established and growing businesses.

3.2 Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited based on strong record of their expertise and experience in executing digital marketing campaigns with great brands growth results above the average market

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performance. The recruitment process included screening for relevant industry experience in e-commerce and digital campaigns.

3.3 Data Collection: Semi-Directed Interviews

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing for both predefined and spontaneous questions. This provided a balanced approach to exploring key themes while giving participants the flexibility to express unique insights.

3.4 Interview Guide Design and Questionnaire Design for Sample Selection

The interview guide was constructed around the stages of the e-commerce model, ensuring that each focus group contributed directly to the development and refinement of the model. A structured questionnaire was used to select focus group participants, ensuring they met the criteria of industry relevance and hands-on experience with digital marketing strategies.

3.5 Research Execution

The research was conducted in a series of 2 stages, one stage of "one-to-one" virtual interviews followed by the second phase with focus groups where were discussed and debated 3 categories of needed elements to put in place in order a campaign to become successful. Each focus group was addressing different facets of integrated marketing communication. Discussions were recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed to identify patterns and insights.

4. Data Analysis and Key Insights from Top Marketing Experts Included Within the Qualitative Research Highlighted Per Each Phase of a Successful Digital Integrated Marketing Campaign

DOCUMENTATION PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

In full agreement, all ten marketing directors included in the study emphasized that the Documentation phase is a rigorous process, recommended to be run under a military discipline, of gathering and analyzing data related to the market, competition, consumers, and the brand itself. This step is essential in ensuring that any marketing campaign is built upon a deep understanding of both the external environment and the internal dynamics of the brand. Numerous marketing and communication experts underscore the necessity of starting with a robust documentation process to reduce uncertainty and create campaigns that are closely aligned with the brand's objectives and the realities of the market.

The importance of documentation cannot be overstated. As Peter Drucker, a renowned management consultant, famously said, *"What gets measured, gets managed."* (Drucker, *The Effective Executive*, revised ed. (Harper Business, 2006), p. 61). In the realm of marketing, this translates to a comprehensive understanding of the key market forces, competitor strategies, and consumer behaviors, enabling marketing professionals to make informed decisions. David Ogilvy, a highly influential advertising figure, noted, *"Advertising people who ignore research are as dangerous as generals who ignore decodes of enemy signals."* (Ogilvy, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, 1st ed. (Vintage Books, 1985), p. 158). This highlights the critical need to

understand the market landscape before embarking on campaign development. Thus, the documentation phase is not solely about collecting quantitative data but also about deriving qualitative insights that reveal consumer attitudes and behaviors.

In an interview about the Documentation phase, most marketing experts in integrated digital marketing communications recommended to focus on several core areas of research. First and foremost is market research, which involves understanding market dynamics, identifying growth opportunities, and analyzing the forces driving demand. This includes recognizing emerging trends, evolving consumer behaviors, and significant industry developments. As Kotler puts it, *"Marketing is not the art of finding clever ways to dispose of what you make. It is the art of creating genuine customer value"* (Kotler, *Marketing Management*, 11th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 9). Hence, market research should be focused on uncovering unmet consumer needs and pinpointing gaps in the market.

Competitor analysis is another key aspect of this phase, where marketing experts assess the strengths, weaknesses, pricing strategies, and promotional tactics of the competition. Sun Tzu's renowned quote from *The Art of War*, *"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles"* (Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Lionel Giles, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 78) aptly applies to marketing. Knowing the competition allows brands to strategically position themselves in the market and capitalize on areas where competitors are weak or complacent.

Consumer insights also play a crucial role in this stage. Gathering data on customer preferences, challenges, and purchasing behaviors helps inform a campaign's direction. Qualitative research methods, such as focus groups and customer interviews, provide a deeper understanding of consumer needs. This customer-centric approach drives the need for campaigns that align closely with the expectations and desires of the target audience.

Brand positioning is another critical element that must be documented before campaign development begins. This includes a thorough evaluation of brand perception, brand equity, and customer loyalty. Warren Buffet famously remarked, *"Your premium brand had better be delivering something special, or it's not going to get the business"* (Warren Buffet, quoted in Roger Lowenstein, *Buffett: The Making of an American Capitalist*, 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 223). Documentation at this stage ensures that the brand's value proposition resonates strongly with the intended audience.

Additionally, environmental scanning is essential to understanding the external factors—such as economic conditions, regulatory changes, technological advancements, and sociocultural trends—that could impact the success of a campaign. Marketing experts recommended for using frameworks like PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors) which helps them systematically assess these influences.

Marketing experts, included within the research, highlighted several tools and methods used during the documentation phase. These include surveys and polls for gathering quantitative data on consumer preferences, focus groups for qualitative insights, social listening tools to analyze conversations on social media platforms, and SWOT analysis to evaluate a brand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to its competitors. Customer journey mapping is another useful recommended method by the marketing experts to document the various touchpoints where customers interact with the brand, helping to understand the factors influencing their purchase decisions.

The documentation phase is stated by the marketing experts included in this qualitative research that the fundamental to the success of a marketing campaign because it informs every subsequent stage of the e-commerce model. It sharpens the campaign's objectives by providing data that supports realistic KPI setting. It guides campaign creation by ensuring that strategies are aligned with documented market insights. It informs tactical decisions by ensuring that the

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most effective channels and messages are employed to engage target audiences. Furthermore, it enables optimization by establishing a baseline for comparison as the campaign progresses, allowing for real-time adjustments to improve performance.

During the interviews, all marketing experts tried to explain in many ways why this documentation phase is so critical, emphasizing that, without it, a marketing campaign would be like "operating in the dark". All agreed that documentation provides the necessary context to make informed decisions, identifying opportunities, pinpointing vulnerabilities in the competition, and understanding what consumers truly value. As David Ogilvy wisely pointed out, *"If you don't understand the market, you'll waste your advertising budget convincing people of something they don't care about" (*Ogilvy, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, 1st ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 82). Thorough documentation ensures that campaigns avoid such pitfalls.

When asked what marketers should focus on during this phase to outperform competitors, all experts stressed the importance of competitor analysis and consumer insights. A deep understanding of competitor strategies and behaviors allows brands to exploit gaps in the market, while consumer insights ensure that the campaign resonates on a personal level with the target audience.

In conclusion, the Documentation phase is the backbone of the e-commerce model, serving as the foundation for all subsequent stages of an integrated digital marketing campaign. By thoroughly documenting key aspects such as market trends, competitor strategies, consumer insights, and brand positioning, marketing professionals can set the stage for campaigns that are not only aligned with business objectives but are also capable of outperforming competitors and delivering tangible results in terms of volume, value, and profit for a sustainable growth of a brand.

OBJECTIVES PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

In the e-commerce model, the Objectives phase serves as the strategic anchor of the entire campaign. It defines the destination that all subsequent efforts aim to reach and the metrics by which success will be measured. Setting clear, specific objectives is not just about knowing what you want to achieve, but about creating a roadmap that guides every decision, from tactical implementation to optimization. Marketing campaigns without well-defined goals are prone to losing focus, often resulting in wasted resources and unclear outcomes.

Renowned marketing theorist Philip Kotler stated, "The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself." This quote highlights the importance of aligning campaign objectives with customer needs and expectations. Objectives should be rooted in a deep understanding of the market, consumer behavior, and brand positioning. This process requires rigorous documentation, but even more crucial is the formulation of objectives that will drive tangible results. Setting objectives too broadly—such as simply aiming for "brand awareness"—can dilute the focus of a campaign. Instead, objectives must be S.M.A.R.T. meaning specific and measurable, such as increasing website traffic by 20% or improving conversion rates by 10% over a defined period, but as well achievable, realistic and with a clear timing set.

Experts in digital marketing, particularly those involved in integrated campaigns, often stress the importance of not only setting objectives but also ensuring they are accompanied by clearly

defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). According to John Doerr, a prominent figure in the business and marketing community, "Ideas are easy. Execution is everything." In digital marketing, execution depends heavily on the clarity of objectives and the ability to measure progress toward them. KPIs serve as the compass by which campaign performance is monitored, offering real-time feedback on whether or not the campaign is on track to achieve its goals.

When interviewing experts in integrated digital marketing communication about the Objectives phase, several key themes consistently emerge. First and foremost, the setting of objectives should be deeply tied to the brand's overall business goals. An effective marketing campaign does not exist in isolation—it is one piece of a broader business strategy. As such, the first question a marketing expert should ask before even considering campaign execution is: **What does the brand need to achieve in terms of growth, market share, or customer loyalty?** This is a critical investigation that ensures the marketing campaign is not just creatively compelling, but also strategically aligned with the brand's long-term goals.

In addition to alignment with business goals, all marketing experts included in the research, emphasize the need for objectives to be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Specific objectives help the team focus on one area of impact, whether that's increasing social media engagement, improving e-commerce conversion rates, or driving leads through a particular digital channel. These objectives must be measurable, meaning that they are tied to concrete numbers that allow the marketing team to evaluate success in real time. Achievability is equally important. While ambitious goals can inspire teams, objectives that are too lofty can demoralize a campaign if they remain out of reach. Therefore, objectives must strike a balance between challenge and realism.

Marketing professionals also stress that objectives must be relevant to the target audience and the competitive landscape. In highly competitive markets, as noted by marketing expert David Meerman Scott, "If you're not getting your share of the attention, it's because your content is not relevant." This is particularly critical in digital marketing, where the ability to cut through the noise and grab consumer attention can be directly tied to how relevant the campaign's messaging and objectives are to the audience. Therefore, an expert in this field would recommend thorough audience research during the Documentation phase to ensure that the campaign objectives speak directly to consumer needs and pain points.

Once objectives have been clearly defined, it is equally important to establish the KPIs that will track progress toward these goals. KPIs act as the heartbeat of a campaign, providing the data that informs whether objectives are being met. According to digital marketing strategist Neil Patel, "Data beats emotions." This speaks to the fundamental role that KPIs play in making campaign decisions based on facts rather than assumptions or intuition. In digital marketing, this could mean tracking metrics like cost per acquisition (CPA), customer lifetime value (CLV), or return on ad spend (ROAS). These KPIs not only allow marketing teams to monitor campaign performance but also offer insight into which aspects of the campaign are working and which may need adjustment.

An expert in integrated marketing communication, when asked about how they set objectives, would likely explain that one of the key challenges is ensuring that objectives are not only relevant and measurable but also adaptable. Digital marketing operates in a rapidly changing environment, where consumer behaviors can shift overnight. Therefore, KPIs must be regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect these changes. An objective might initially focus on increasing engagement on a particular social media platform, but if consumer data indicates that engagement is declining on that platform, KPIs might need to shift to target another digital channel. In this way, setting objectives is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process of refinement and adjustment.

To outperform competitors, experts suggest that objectives should also be benchmarked against industry standards. Knowing what your competitors are achieving, in terms of metrics like market share growth or customer acquisition costs, helps set realistic yet competitive goals. As Michael Porter, the famous strategist, noted, "The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do" (Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, 1st ed. (New York: Free Press, 1980), p. 63). In this context, a brand might decide to forgo certain objectives that its competitors are pursuing, choosing instead to focus on a niche market or an underexplored opportunity where they can excel.

Finally, a successful Objectives phase must conclude with the entire marketing team aligned around the goals and KPIs. It's crucial that every member of the team understands not just the campaign's creative elements but also the underlying objectives and how success will be measured. Experts stress the importance of communication within the team to ensure that everyone is working toward the same goals. As former General Electric CEO Jack Welch famously said, *"In reality, strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell" (Welch,* Winning*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), p. 67).* In the context of digital marketing, this means that once objectives and KPIs are set, every tactical decision must be executed with laser focus on those goals.

In conclusion, the Objectives phase in the e-commerce model is where a campaign's success is either made or broken. Clear, measurable objectives and well-defined KPIs provide the framework for a strategic, data-driven campaign that not only aligns with the brand's goals but also stands the best chance of outperforming competitors. By ensuring that objectives are specific, relevant, and adaptable to changing market conditions, marketing experts can guide their campaigns toward measurable success.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

For the **Construction of Strategy and Tactics** phase for the e-commerce model, the marketing experts highlighted how critical it is to establish a well-thought-out strategy before a campaign is implemented. In this phase, **for growing profitable a Brand,** the marketing experts are recommending that is critical to focus on and to establish mandatory the following main elements: the brand's positioning, targeting, segmentation, the channel selection, and the key messages are going to hit the target persona of the Brand. All, already established, will come together to create a cohesive blueprint for success. Further, on the top of the main aspects that the marketing experts recommended within this phase, in order to increase the quality of the strategy at this stage in terms of the campaign's effectiveness, is related to the art of a marketing expert with a high focus to ensure the best combination of all these elements within the campaign, how there are all mixt together: how is selected, targeted and reached the right audience, with the right message through the most impactful channels.

A marketing campaign is only as good as the strategy behind it. This sentiment is reflected in a famous quote by Michael Porter, who said, *"Competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value" (Michael E. Porter,* Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance, *1st ed. (New York: Free Press, 1985), p. 60).* This principle applies directly to the construction of a digital marketing strategy, where the sheer number of available platforms and tactics can overwhelm a brand's resources if not carefully chosen in order to bring value. A successful

campaign is not about doing everything but about doing the right things—making smart choices on positioning, targeting, and messaging that resonate with the target audience and differentiate the brand from competitors by positioning it in the mind of the consumers in the desired territory.

One of the first considerations in constructing a campaign strategy is positioning. Positioning defines how a brand will present itself to its audience and is the foundation upon which targeting and messaging are built. As Al Ries and Jack Trout, pioneers in marketing strategy, argued in their classic book *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, *"Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect" (Al Ries and Jack Trout,* Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, *20th anniversary ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), p. 2).* In this light, positioning is about finding and claiming a unique space in the consumer's mind, where the brand stands out from competitors. An expert in integrated digital marketing would stress the importance of identifying a brand's unique value proposition at this stage—what makes the brand different from, and more valuable than, others in the same market.

Targeting and segmentation follow naturally from positioning. Once a brand has defined its unique place in the market, it must determine which consumers are most likely to respond to that positioning. Philip Kotler emphasizes that effective targeting is about focusing on those consumers whose needs most closely align with the brand's strengths. *"There is only one winning strategy,"* Kotler writes. *"It is to carefully define the target market and direct a superior offering to that target market" (Kotler,* Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Control, *12th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 234).* This principle speaks to the importance of laser-focused targeting, where marketing dollars are spent reaching an audience that is more likely to engage with the brand rather than wasting resources on a broad, undifferentiated approach.

An expert in digital marketing communications, when discussing this phase, would likely underscore the importance of data in making these decisions. Today's marketers have access to unprecedented amounts of data that can inform their targeting and segmentation decisions. This data allows for more granular and personalized targeting, where campaigns can be tailored to specific demographic segments, behavioral patterns, or even psychographic profiles. By analyzing consumer data, experts can uncover valuable insights about which segments are most responsive to certain types of messaging or channels, thus refining the targeting strategy for maximum impact.

Equally important in this phase is channel selection. The choice of channels—whether it's social media platforms, search engines, email marketing, or programmatic advertising—will determine how effectively a campaign reaches its intended audience. As Seth Godin points out, *"Don't find customers for your products, find products for your customers" (Seth Godin,* Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable, *New York: Portfolio, 2003, p. 68).* This idea extends to channel selection as well; marketers should prioritize channels that are most aligned with where their target consumers already spend their time. For instance, if the target audience is young, visually oriented, and highly engaged with social media, platforms like Instagram or TikTok might be more effective than traditional display advertising.

Channel selection is also intricately linked to the campaign's messaging strategy. In the digital age, the key to crafting the right messages lies in personalization and relevance. As **David Meerman Scott** argues in The New Rules of Marketing and PR, *"On the web, you are what you publish" (David Meerman Scott,* The New Rules of Marketing and PR, *6th Edition, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2017, p. 22).* The implication here is that every message sent to consumers' needs to be valuable and tailored to their specific needs and interests. The goal of a successful digital marketing campaign should be to deliver personalized content that speaks to the individual, not just the masses. This is where data-driven insights become invaluable, as

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they allow marketers to craft personalized messages that resonate with individual consumers, increasing engagement and conversion rates.

One marketing expert included in the research strongly advised that a brand's campaign tactics must be integrated across all channels for maximum effectiveness. As digital marketing expert **Jonah Berger** argues in *Contagious: How to Build Word of Mouth in the Digital Age*, *"Integration is key to achieving marketing synergy"* (*Berger,* Contagious: How to Build Word of Mouth in the Digital Age*, 1st Edition, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013, p. 103).* A siloes approach, where channels are managed independently without coordination, can dilute the impact of the campaign. However, an integrated strategy, where all channels reinforce one another and communicate a consistent message, amplifies the overall effect.

During the interviews, more than half of the marketing experts, state through **the main considerations when building a strategy that will outperform competitors to** focus on differentiation and consumer-centricity. First, a brand must identify a clear point of differentiation that resonates with the target audience, something competitors cannot easily replicate. Whether it's a unique product feature, a superior customer experience, or an emotionally compelling story, the strategy must highlight what makes the brand stand apart.

Furthermore, the experts stressed out the importance of a consumer-first mindset in constructing the strategy and tactics. Today's consumers are more empowered than ever, with access to a wealth of information and competing options. As **Simon Sinek** famously stated, *"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it" (Sinek,* Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, 1st Edition, New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2009, p. 39).* Therefore, the strategy must not only showcase what the brand offers but also connect with consumers on a deeper emotional level, articulating the brand's purpose and values.

Another aspect highlighted by marketing experts included within the research, a well-constructed strategy is always proactive rather than reactive. Instead of simply responding to competitors' moves, successful brands create their own momentum, leveraging their unique strengths and insights to lead rather than follow. As **Jeff Bezos**, founder of Amazon, once remarked, *"If you want to be inventive, you have to be willing to fail" (Jeff Bezos,* Invent and Wander: The Collected Writings of Jeff Bezos*, 1st Edition, Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2020, p. 45).* This underscores the idea that innovation and risk-taking are often at the core of effective marketing strategies, allowing brands to differentiate themselves from the competition in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, the Construction of Strategy and Tactics phase is where a campaign moves from planning to actionable steps. Positioning, targeting, and segmentation form the backbone of the strategy, while channel selection and messaging ensure that the right audience is reached in the most effective way. Tactics, meanwhile, are the means by which this strategy is brought to life, requiring precision, flexibility, and constant optimization. Together, these elements create a marketing campaign that is not only strategically sound but also capable of delivering results that surpass those of the competition.

TACTICS PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

The **Tactics** phase in the e-commerce model plays a pivotal role in transforming a well-crafted strategy into tangible actions that drive the success of a marketing campaign. While strategy sets the foundation, it is the precise and effective implementation of tactics that ultimately

determines the impact of a campaign. As Peter Drucker famously noted, *"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work" (Drucker,* The Effective Executive*, Revised Edition, New York: HarperCollins, 2006, p. 112).* In the context of marketing, this hard work is reflected in the meticulous execution of tactics, which involves delivering the right message through the appropriate channels, to the correct audience, at exactly the right moment.

The role of tactics cannot be overlooked in the construction phase. Tactics involve the specific actions and initiatives that will bring the campaign strategy to life. One of marketing experts cited **Gary Vaynerchuk**, a leading expert in digital marketing, *"Ideas are shit. Execution is the game" (Gary Vaynerchuk,* Crush It!: Why NOW is the time to cash in on your passion*, HarperCollins, 2009, p. 87).* What Vaynerchuk means by this is that even the most brilliant strategy will fail without strong tactical execution. Whether it's optimizing a paid social campaign, crafting engaging content for a blog, or executing a series of email drip campaigns, the devil is in the details. Each tactical move must align with the overarching strategy and be executed with precision.

Tactics are the specific actions and initiatives that bring the strategic vision to life. Experts in integrated digital marketing stress the importance of tactical agility, where marketing teams must be both diligent in their execution and responsive to changing market conditions. For example, an expert would likely emphasize that the timing of when tactics are executed can be as important as the tactics themselves. Launching a campaign during a key moment in the market cycle or during a peak in consumer interest can significantly amplify its impact. **David Meerman Scott** reinforces this in his work, asserting, *"Marketing is about timing, and being in front of people when they're ready to hear your message" (David Meerman Scott,* The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, 6th edition, Wiley, 2017, p. 150).*

An expert in digital marketing communications, when asked about how they ensure that tactics are implemented effectively, emphasized the importance of real-time monitoring and data-driven adjustments and cited **Gary Vaynerchuk**, a digital marketing entrepreneur, has often stressed that *"The execution of the strategy is the most important part. If you're not adjusting in real-time based on feedback, you're not marketing, you're just talking" (Vaynerchuk,* Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World*, Harper Business, 2013, p. 62).* This idea of flexibility during implementation is central to modern marketing campaigns, where digital platforms provide immediate feedback on the effectiveness of various tactics. A marketing expert should be well-versed in utilizing real-time data from platforms like Google Analytics, social media insights, and e-commerce tracking tools to identify what's working and what's not.

All marketing experts within the research stressed out that it's also critical to ensure alignment between tactics and the overall strategy. **Philip Kotler**, one of the leading voices in marketing, said, *"Good tactics can save even the worst strategy, but bad tactics will destroy even the best one" (Philip Kotler,* Marketing Management*, 15th edition, Pearson, 2016, p. 212).* In essence, even if the strategy is sound, poorly executed tactics can sabotage the entire campaign. This can happen if tactics are implemented inconsistently across channels or fail to convey the intended message. For example, a campaign's tone and messaging must be consistent whether it's delivered through social media ads, email marketing, or content on a brand's website. Each tactic should reinforce the core message and objectives set out in the construction strategic phase, ensuring that the audience receives a cohesive brand experience.

Another key consideration for experts in this phase is resource allocation. Digital marketing allows for highly targeted campaigns, but ensuring that resources are spent effectively requires precision. Experts must continually evaluate whether the marketing budget is being allocated to the tactics that are yielding the highest return on investment (ROI). According to **Neil Patel**,

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a renowned digital marketing expert, *"Digital marketing success is about continuous evaluation and refinement. It's not set it and forget it" (Neil Patel,* Hustle: The Power to Charge Your Life with Money, Meaning, and Momentum*, Rodale Books, 2016, p. 147).* This emphasizes the importance of resource fluidity—being able to shift budget and attention to where it has the greatest impact as the campaign unfolds. Whether reallocating spend from one social media platform to another or increasing investment in high-performing search engine marketing (SEM) keywords, constant optimization is key.

During the interviews about the Tactics phase of a digital marketing campaign, few experts mentioned as **critical aspects to consider while implementing tactics to outperform competitors,** the three main elements: timing, personalization, and integration. Timing, as previously mentioned, can greatly affect the success of a tactic. Being first to market with a message, or simply delivering that message at a time when consumer interest is highest, can offer a competitive advantage. In a crowded digital landscape, even a perfectly executed tactic can be lost if it's not timed correctly.

Personalization is another factor that has become essential in today's digital marketing environment. Consumers increasingly expect brands to deliver personalized experiences, which means that tactics must be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the target audience. **David Ogilvy**, the "Father of Advertising," famously said, *"Don't count the people you reach; reach the people who count" (David Ogilvy,* Ogilvy on Advertising*, Vintage Books, 1985, p. 174).* This is more relevant than ever, as modern tactics should not be designed for broad, untargeted audiences, but for specific segments that are most likely to engage with the brand. From personalized email campaigns to retargeted social media ads, each tactic must be finely tuned to the audience's behavior and preferences.

Finally, one expert stressed out the importance of integration during the implementation phase. **Jonah Berger** wrote in *Contagious* that *"Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell" (Jonah Berger,* Contagious: How to Build Word of Mouth in the Digital Age*, Simon & Schuster, 2013, p. 19).* In the digital space, those stories are often told across multiple platforms and touchpoints. Therefore, tactics must be not only effective in isolation but also work in concert with one another. An email campaign should complement a social media push, and content marketing efforts should drive traffic to landing pages that are optimized for conversion. This level of integration ensures that each tactic amplifies the others, creating a seamless and effective customer journey.

Moreover, the implementation of tactics should be agile and scalable. The digital marketing landscape is continually evolving, with new platforms, technologies, and consumer behaviors emerging rapidly. An expert in this field must be ready to pivot quickly when new opportunities arise. This agility allows brands to stay ahead of competitors by adopting new trends or adjusting tactics in response to market shifts. For instance, during a time of crisis or major market disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, experts who can rapidly adapt their tactics—shifting from in-person events to digital webinars or from traditional ads to e-commerce-driven campaigns—can maintain or even grow market share while competitors struggle.

In conclusion, the Tactics phase in a marketing campaign is where strategic plans turn into actionable steps, and it is the careful execution of these tactics that can make or break a campaign's success. Experts in digital marketing must ensure that their tactics are timely, personalized, and integrated across platforms to create a cohesive and powerful brand presence. Furthermore, they must remain agile, using real-time data to continually optimize their efforts and respond to market dynamics. As **Gary Vaynerchuk** said, *"It's all about execution" (Vaynerchuk,* Crush It!: Why NOW Is the Time to Cash In on Your Passion*, Harper Business,*

2009, p. 73) and in the fast-paced world of digital marketing, it's those who execute the best tactics that ultimately outperform the competition.

OPTINIZATION PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

The **Optimization** phase in the e-commerce model is a crucial point in the lifecycle of any marketing campaign. All marketing experts included within the research declared that this stage is about actively refining tactics while the campaign is running, rather than waiting until its conclusion to assess outcomes. The essence of real-time optimization is agility—being able to react to data, market conditions, and consumer behavior as they evolve, in order to maximize performance. As **John Wanamaker**, one of the pioneers of modern advertising, famously stated, *"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half" (John Wanamaker, statement frequently attributed in various advertising and marketing books. Earliest mention in print: George W. Hopkins,* Salesmanship and Sales Management*, P. Blakiston's Son & Co., 1923, p. 131).* In the era of digital marketing, optimization is what allows marketers to determine which part of their spend is effective and to shift resources toward the tactics that are delivering the best results.

An effective optimization strategy begins with constant monitoring of performance metrics. Modern marketing campaigns provide a wealth of real-time data that can be leveraged to make informed adjustments on the fly. Platforms such as Google Analytics, Facebook Ads Manager, and various customer relationship management (CRM) systems offer insights into user engagement, click-through rates, conversions, and more. These data points allow marketers to assess, in real-time, whether a specific ad, keyword, or channel is performing as expected. **Neil Patel**, a renowned digital marketing expert, emphasizes, *"Real-time data is the lifeblood of modern marketing" (Neil Patel,* The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing*, 2nd edition, NP Digital, 2019, p. 45).* In practice, the marketing experts declared that optimization is not a one-time task but a continuous process of learning and adapting to ensure that the campaign is always moving toward its goals.

Tactical decisions should also involve a degree of flexibility. The dynamic nature of digital marketing means that no campaign plan remains static. Experts in integrated marketing communication emphasize the need for real-time monitoring and adaptation. For example, if a particular tactic—like a specific social media post or ad variation—underperforms, it must be swiftly adjusted. This constant monitoring and optimization process ensures that campaigns remain agile and responsive to both market conditions and audience reactions.

An expert in integrated digital marketing communication, when asked about the importance of real-time optimization, would likely highlight the need for agility and responsiveness. The dynamic nature of the digital landscape means that market conditions and consumer preferences can shift rapidly. For instance, an ad that was initially performing well might suddenly see a drop in engagement due to changes in consumer interest, market saturation, or competitor actions. A static approach, where the campaign is left unchecked until its conclusion, would result in wasted budget and missed opportunities. Instead, an expert would argue that optimization must be built into the DNA of any campaign. Adjustments to targeting, messaging, and budget allocation should be made as soon as performance indicators suggest that a tactic is underperforming.

The ability to adjust and optimize is one of the primary advantages of digital marketing tactics compared to traditional media. As tactics are implemented, continuous analysis allows for tweaks in messaging, targeting, and spend allocation to improve performance. For instance, an

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ad that performs exceptionally well with a certain demographic or region might be scaled up, while another that underperforms could be discontinued. **Seth Godin** encapsulates this idea by stating, *"You can't improve what you don't measure" (Seth Godin,* Measure What Matters, *3rd edition, Penguin Books, 2018, p. 92).* In the Tactics phase, an expert's role is to ensure that every action taken is measurable and that every piece of data collected informs future decisions.

One of the key focus marketing experts are recommended is to understand and **know when a tactic is not delivering the right results, what actions should be taken.** The focus should lies in a deep understanding of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and the thresholds that signal whether a campaign is on or off track. Metrics such as cost per acquisition (CPA), return on ad spend (ROAS), or click-through rates (CTR) are critical in determining whether a tactic is performing optimally. If a particular channel, such as a Facebook ad, shows a CPA significantly higher than expected, immediate action should be taken. This could involve adjusting the creative, refining audience targeting, or reallocating the budget to higher-performing channels. As **Gary Vaynerchuk** succinctly puts it, *"You can't let fear of failure hold you back from optimizing your campaign" (Vaynerchuk,* Crushing It!: How Great Entrepreneurs Build Their Business and Influence—and How You Can, Too*, Harper Business, 1st edition, 2018, p. 157).* In other words, experimentation and iterative improvement are essential, and it is strongly recommended that marketers must not hesitate to make changes in the face of data that suggests underperformance.

During the interviews, one expert stressed that one of the most important aspects of optimization is maintaining a test-and-learn mindset. This involves not only identifying when a tactic isn't working but also understanding why it's not working. For example, if an email marketing campaign is experiencing lower-than-expected open rates, rather than abandoning the tactic, a marketer might test variations of subject lines, send times, or audience segments to identify the root cause of the underperformance. **Eric Ries**, the author of *The Lean Startup*, champions the idea of *"validated learning"* as a critical component of optimization. He argues that *"every adjustment made during a campaign should be grounded in data and lead to a deeper understanding of the audience or market. The goal is to continually refine tactics based on what the data is revealing" (Ries,* The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*, Crown Business, 1st edition, 2011, p. 150).*

Furthermore, real-time optimization also allows marketers to capitalize on unforeseen opportunities. In many cases, marketers uncover unexpected insights or opportunities as a campaign progresses, which can be harnessed to enhance results. For instance, a specific ad variation or message might resonate more strongly with an audience segment that wasn't initially targeted. Instead of rigidly sticking to the original plan, optimization encourages a flexible approach where successful elements are scaled up to maximize their impact. This principle aligns with the thinking of **David Ogilvy**, who said, *"Test your advertising. Test it again. Test it a third time" (David Ogilvy,* Ogilvy on Advertising, *Vintage Books, 1st edition, 1985, p. 68).* Constantly testing and adjusting tactics is the backbone of successful real-time optimization.

When marketing experts are asked about the key elements to investigate during optimization, several factors stand out. First, audience segmentation is critical. Understanding how different audience segments are interacting with the campaign allows for hyper-targeted adjustments. If a particular demographic is engaging more frequently or converting at a higher rate, resources can be redirected toward reaching more individuals in that group. Second, platform performance should be continually assessed. Different platforms—whether it's Google Ads, Instagram, or email marketing—often yield varying results based on the campaign type and

audience. A platform that is underperforming can have its spend reduced or paused altogether, while higher-performing platforms can be scaled up.

Another essential aspect of optimization is the quality and relevance of the content being used in the campaign. If a piece of content—whether it's an ad, a blog post, or a video—isn't generating the desired engagement, it should be re-evaluated and tweaked to better align with the audience's interests. This can be as simple as adjusting the headline of an ad to make it more attention-grabbing, or as complex as redesigning an entire landing page to improve user experience. **Seth Godin** captures the essence of content optimization in his statement, *"People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories, and magic" (Godin,* All Marketers Are Liars*, Portfolio, 1st edition, 2005, p. 18).* In this light, ensuring that content remains compelling and aligned with the audience's evolving needs is critical for maximizing the effectiveness of the campaign.

In conclusion, the Optimization phase is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires marketers to be agile, responsive, and data-driven. Real-time monitoring and the ability to adjust tactics as they unfold can dramatically improve campaign outcomes, ensuring that marketing efforts are constantly aligned with performance goals. As experts in digital marketing often emphasize, optimization is not a one-time task but an integral part of campaign execution. Through careful analysis, experimentation, and adaptation, brands can outperform their competitors by continually refining their tactics to meet the needs of their audience and market conditions. As **Jeff Bezos** famously said, *"What's dangerous is not to evolve" (Bezos, interview in* Wired*, December 2011, p. 22).* In digital marketing, evolution means constantly optimizing in real-time to stay ahead of the curve and deliver the best possible results.

POST CAMPAIGN RESEARCH PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

The **Post-Campaign Research** phase is a vital element in the lifecycle of a marketing campaign, serving as the stage where the effectiveness of a campaign is evaluated and valuable insights are gathered from consumers. This phase is often overlooked or inadequately addressed, but it plays a crucial role in shaping future marketing strategies and refining a brand's approach. As Peter Drucker famously said, *"What's measured improves" (Drucker,* The Practice of Management*, Harper & Row, 1954, p. 240).* Post-campaign research is not just about reviewing the numbers; it's about understanding the audience's experience and perceptions, determining what resonated with them, and uncovering insights that can inform future campaigns.

A core aspect of post-campaign research involves gathering **consumer feedback**—insights that are only truly revealed once the audience has engaged with the brand's messaging, product, or service. As **David Ogilvy**, the "Father of Advertising," once remarked, "*The consumer isn't a moron, she's your wife" (David Ogilvy,* Confessions of an Advertising Man*, Atheneum, 1963, p. 96).* This quote underscores the importance of respecting and valuing the consumer's voice. After a marketing campaign has been executed, consumers are in the best position to provide feedback on how they perceived the campaign, which elements were most persuasive or appealing, and what could have been improved. Through surveys, interviews, and social listening, marketers can collect this feedback, which then serves as a critical component of post-campaign analysis.

One of the marketing expert in integrated digital marketing communication, when asked about the **importance of post-campaign research**, emphasized that this phase is not simply a retrospective activity but an essential forward-looking process. It provides the opportunity to

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assess whether the initial campaign objectives were met and, more importantly, why certain tactics succeeded or failed. Post-campaign research goes beyond analyzing quantitative data— such as sales figures or click-through rates—to delve into the **qualitative insights** that offer a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior. By engaging directly with consumers and encouraging open-ended feedback, marketers can uncover insights about emotional responses, brand perception, and even unintended interpretations of the campaign messaging.

For instance, a brand might discover through post-campaign interviews that while their messaging was intended to convey innovation and leadership, consumers perceived it as too aggressive or impersonal. In this case, the campaign may have achieved its quantitative goals— driving traffic or increasing sales—but failed to strengthen brand loyalty or emotional connection. **Seth Godin** famously said, *"Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make but about the stories you tell" (Seth Godin,* All Marketers Are Liars: The Power of Telling Authentic Stories in a Low-Trust World*, Portfolio, 2005, p. 2).* Post-campaign research, therefore, should investigate not only the metrics but also the **story** the campaign told to consumers. Did it align with their expectations and values? Was the narrative compelling enough to foster a deeper connection with the brand? These are the kinds of insights that can only be obtained through thoughtful post-campaign research.

A well-conducted post-campaign evaluation should focus on several key areas. One of the most important aspects is understanding **consumer sentiment**—the emotional and cognitive reactions of consumers to the campaign. This can be achieved through direct surveys or focus groups where consumers are asked to share their thoughts on the brand's message, its execution, and their overall experience. Additionally, **social listening** tools can be leveraged to monitor how the campaign was discussed across digital platforms, offering real-time insights into consumer reactions and identifying emerging trends or potential issues that may not have been captured in pre-campaign research.

Another critical element of post-campaign research is identifying what worked well and what didn't. This includes reviewing both the **tangible metrics** (e.g., sales figures, conversion rates, engagement levels) and the **intangible outcomes** (e.g., shifts in brand perception, customer satisfaction). One marketing director cited **Philip Kotler**, the pioneer in marketing who highlighted: *"The best way to hold customers is to constantly figure out how to give them more for less" (Kotler,* Marketing Management*, 14th Edition, Pearson, 2012, p. 47).* Post-campaign research can reveal whether the value proposition of the campaign was clear and whether it resonated with consumers in a meaningful way. By analyzing these insights, marketers can refine their value delivery and positioning for future campaigns, thus maintaining a competitive edge.

More than half of marketing experts pointed out that post-campaign research is a real and not to miss opportunity to identify **missed opportunities**. While some aspects of the campaign may have performed well, others may have fallen short of expectations. Perhaps a particular demographic segment was under-targeted, or certain platforms didn't generate the engagement levels expected. By asking the right questions and analyzing the data in depth, marketers can uncover these gaps and adjust their future strategies accordingly, mentioning during the focus groups what **David Meerman Scott** suggested, *"You must constantly test new approaches, and post-campaign research allows for this level of analysis, identifying where the campaign could have been more efficient or where more attention was needed" (David Meerman Scott,* The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, 6th Edition, John Wiley & Sons, 2017, p. 213).*

A post-campaign review also helps ensure that marketing teams **learn from each campaign** rather than starting from scratch every time. The insights gained from this research create a knowledge base that can be referenced in future campaigns, helping teams avoid past mistakes

and build on what has been successful. An expert might explain that this phase is about closing the feedback loop—ensuring that every piece of data, whether quantitative or qualitative, is fed back into the system to inform future planning and execution. **Eric Ries**, in his concept of *"validated learning,"* advocates that *"The only way to win is to learn faster than everyone else" (Ries,* The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*, Crown Business, 2011, p. 104).* In marketing, this means that each campaign should be a learning experience that refines the next iteration.

Moreover, post-campaign research can reveal **long-term impacts** that may not be immediately visible. For instance, while a campaign might achieve short-term objectives like increasing sales or website traffic, it's equally important to assess how it has influenced brand loyalty or customer retention over time. Did the campaign foster deeper relationships with existing customers? Did it attract new customers who are likely to return? These are crucial questions that post-campaign research can answer, ensuring that the brand's marketing efforts contribute to both immediate and sustained success.

During the interviews about the **key elements to investigate** during the Post-Campaign Research phase, the marketing experts highlighted the fact that most of them skip this phase but in order to get better results than the competitors it is critical and they recommend to focus on key elements in areas such as: consumer feedback, campaign effectiveness, and long-term brand impact. The experts stressed out the importance of investigating not just what happened, but why it happened. By connecting consumer behavior to the marketing tactics used, brands can gain a clearer understanding of how different elements of the campaign contributed to its overall success or failure. This analysis should be thorough and multidimensional, taking into account all available data, both qualitative and quantitative.

In conclusion, the Post-Campaign Research phase is an indispensable step in any marketing campaign. It allows marketers to gather valuable feedback from consumers, analyze the effectiveness of tactics, and identify areas for improvement. By approaching this phase with a focus on both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights, brands can gain a comprehensive understanding of how their campaigns are perceived and what changes might be necessary to improve future efforts. As **Michael LeBoeuf** wisely said, *"A satisfied customer is the best business strategy of all"(LeBoeuf,* How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life*, Berkley Publishing Group, 1987, p. 58).* Post-campaign research ensures that satisfaction is not merely assumed, but measured and acted upon, driving continuous improvement and helping brands stay ahead of their competitors in an ever-evolving market.

Even it is very rare in practice it is a highly recommended phase by marketing experts and who is going to implemented with a military discipline, will take for sure much better results.

EVALUATION PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

The **Post-Evaluation** phase in the e-commerce model represents a crucial step in assessing the overall effectiveness of a marketing campaign once all tactics and actions have been implemented. While optimization and post-campaign research provide real-time adjustments and feedback, post-campaign evaluation is a retrospective analysis that allows marketers to objectively measure success against predefined objectives and KPIs. Within this phase, marketing experts' feedback is turning attention towards drawing definitive conclusions from the campaign's performance, identifying areas for improvement, and generating learnings that can be applied to future efforts.

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The significance of a comprehensive post-campaign evaluation cannot be overstated. As **Peter Drucker** famously noted, *"You can't manage what you can't measure" (Drucker,* The Practice of Management*, Harper & Row, 1954, p. 135).* This evaluation phase involves a detailed review of how well the campaign met its goals, such as increasing brand awareness, driving sales, or improving customer engagement. It is also the stage where marketing teams analyze the return on investment (ROI) and the impact of their efforts compared to competitors. An effective post-campaign evaluation not only highlights what went right but also uncovers what could have been done better, ensuring that future campaigns are even more successful.

All marketing experts in integrated digital marketing communication, emphasized that this phase provides the critical perspective needed for the sustained growth for a brand – not only one shot success. Campaigns are dynamic and multifaceted, and a holistic evaluation allows marketers to assess how various elements—such as messaging, channels, targeting, and timing—worked together to achieve the desired outcomes. According to **David Ogilvy**, *"Advertising people who ignore research are as dangerous as generals who ignore decodes of enemy signals" (Ogilvy,* Ogilvy on Advertising*, Random House, 1983, p. 158).* This sentiment applies to the post-campaign evaluation phase, where data-driven insights from the campaign's performance are decoded and interpreted to guide future strategies.

The marketing experts declared that a well-executed post-campaign evaluation should start in the first place with a clear comparison of the campaign's results against its **initial objectives and KPIs**. This analysis provides the foundation for understanding the campaign's overall success. For example, if the goal was to increase website traffic by 20%, did the campaign achieve that target? And if so, did the increased traffic translate into higher conversion rates or sales? Measuring success in this structured way ensures that the evaluation is tied to the specific goals set during the planning phase, allowing for an accurate assessment of whether the campaign delivered the intended results.

In evaluating a campaign, one of the key aspects is understanding the **effectiveness of the different tactics** employed. **Philip Kotler**, a leading voice in marketing, has stated, *"Good companies will meet needs; great companies will create markets" (Kotler,* Marketing Management*, 11th Edition, Pearson Education, 2003, p. 62).* This idea can be applied to post-campaign evaluations, as it encourages marketers to think beyond basic performance metrics and consider whether the campaign successfully created new opportunities for the brand. Did the marketing efforts open doors to untapped audiences? Were new markets or customer segments engaged effectively? This kind of evaluation requires a deep dive into the performance of each tactic—social media ads, email marketing, content strategy, etc.—to understand which contributed most to the campaign's success and which underperformed.

Another critical element in post-campaign evaluation, the marketing experts are recommanding is the analysis of **ROI** and the cost-effectiveness of the campaign. One of the marketing expert cited **Warren Buffet** who wisely observed, *"Price is what you pay. Value is what you get" (Buffet,* Berkshire Hathaway Letters to Shareholders*, 1991, p. 85).* This principle underscores the importance of determining whether the resources allocated to the campaign were used efficiently and whether the brand received a high return on its investment. In the evaluation process, marketers must calculate the cost per acquisition (CPA), customer lifetime value (CLV), and the overall revenue generated by the campaign to assess whether the financial investment in the campaign was justified by its results. If a campaign performed well but was cost-prohibitive, adjustments in budget allocation may be necessary for future efforts.

An expert might explain during an interview that post-campaign evaluation is not only about measuring direct results but also about understanding the **long-term impacts** of the campaign on brand equity and consumer loyalty. While short-term gains such as immediate sales or

engagement spikes are important, it is the longer-term effects—such as improved brand perception or increased customer retention—that often determine a campaign's true value. According to **Simon Sinek**, *"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it" (Sinek,* Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action, *Penguin Books, 2009, p. 39).* A post-campaign evaluation should investigate whether the campaign succeeded in communicating the brand's purpose and values in a way that resonated with consumers, fostering long-term relationships rather than just short-term conversions.

Post-campaign evaluation should also focus on **competitor analysis**, comparing the brand's performance to that of its rivals. Did the campaign enable the brand to outperform its main competitors in terms of market share, customer acquisition, or engagement? **Michael Porter**, a leading authority on competitive strategy, has said, " Strategy is about making choices, trade-offs; it's about deliberately choosing to be different" (Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, Free Press, 1985, p. 12). In this light, an effective evaluation not only identifies where the campaign succeeded but also where it could have made different choices. Were there missed opportunities in terms of targeting or channel selection that competitors capitalized on? Understanding the competitive landscape through the lens of the campaign's outcomes can help a brand refine its positioning and strategic direction for future efforts.

Few marketing directors included within the research, beyond performance metrics, recommended that a post-campaign evaluation should also capture **qualitative insights** from internal and external stakeholders. This includes gathering feedback from the marketing team on how smoothly the campaign was executed and identifying any internal challenges that may have hindered performance. Similarly, capturing feedback from external partners—such as media buyers, content creators, and digital platforms—can provide valuable insights into operational efficiency and collaboration. According to **Seth Godin**, *"The best marketing doesn't feel like marketing" (Godin,* Permission Marketing: Turning Strangers into Friends and Friends into Customers, *Simon & Schuster, 1999, p. 72).* The post-evaluation process should consider whether the campaign felt authentic and seamless to both the brand and the consumer. Were there any executional missteps, or did the campaign fail to resonate in the way it was intended?

Some marketing experts in integrated digital marketing would also emphasize the importance of using the post-campaign evaluation to establish a **blueprint for future success**. Every campaign offers lessons—both positive and negative—that should inform future strategies. The evaluation phase is where these lessons are codified into actionable insights. **Eric Ries** champions the idea of *"continuous innovation" (Ries,* The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses, *Crown Publishing, 2011, p. 104),* in his book *The Lean Startup*, arguing that the companies that learn and adapt the fastest are the ones that thrive. In the context of marketing, post-campaign evaluation serves as a feedback loop that ensures each new campaign benefits from the learnings of its predecessors. By documenting these lessons, brands can evolve their marketing approaches, becoming more agile and better equipped to outperform competitors.

But all marketing experts within the research process admitted that the post-evaluation phase is a very good opportunity to reflect on the **alignment between the campaign's outcomes and the brand's broader business goals**. A campaign might succeed in delivering tactical wins—such as driving short-term engagement or sales—but the real question is whether those wins contribute to the brand's strategic vision. For example, if the overarching business objective is to position the brand as a leader in sustainability, a campaign that increases sales but fails to highlight the brand's environmental credentials may fall short of its true potential. **Howard Schultz**, former CEO of Starbucks, stated, *"In times of adversity and change, we really discover*

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who we are and what we're made of" (Schultz, Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul*, Rodale Books, 2011, p. 32).* In the post-evaluation phase, marketers should take stock of whether the campaign stayed true to the brand's core values and mission, ensuring that each marketing effort reinforces the brand's identity in the marketplace.

In conclusion, the Post-Evaluation phase is where the full impact of a marketing campaign is assessed and its learnings are distilled into insights for future campaigns. This phase involves a comprehensive review of how well the campaign met its objectives, the effectiveness of the tactics employed, and the ROI generated. It also explores the long-term effects on brand perception and customer loyalty, as well as the campaign's competitive positioning. By conducting a thorough and thoughtful post-campaign evaluation, marketers can ensure that every campaign is not just a one-off effort, but a stepping stone toward greater success in the future. As **Jeff Bezos** famously said, *"What we need to do is always look into the future" (Bezos, interview in Wired, November 2002, p. 3).* The post-evaluation phase allows brands to do exactly that—by learning from the past, they can shape strategies that secure lasting success in the ever-evolving marketing landscape.

CELEBRATION SUCCESS PHASE: the main elements needed to be taking into consideration and put in place within an Integrated Digital Marketing Campaign for growing profitable a Brand, by getting results (value, volume & profit) above market (vs. competitors) average and above the main competitor through e-commerce channel

The **Celebrating Success** phase in the e-commerce model may not be a commonly discussed component of marketing campaigns, but it was recommended by a marketing director as an action which could help a lot the results of the next future campaigns and it is an essential part of sustaining momentum and fostering a culture of excellence within marketing teams. After implementing a marketing campaign with great results, acknowledging the success is more than just a feel-good moment; it reinforces a cycle of achievement and sets the tone for future projects. Celebration serves to recognize the hard work, creativity, and collaboration that went into the campaign and provides a platform for learning, reflection, and motivation.

Success in marketing is not solely about the metrics or the market share gained. It is also about the team that made it happen. **Simon Sinek**, in his leadership book *Start With Why*, emphasized, *"Success is not about the work you do; it's about the difference you make" (Sinek,* Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, 1st edition, Penguin Group, 2009, p. 92).* In this sense, celebrating the success of a marketing campaign is about recognizing not just the tangible outcomes but also the collective effort that delivered those outcomes. Acknowledging milestones, whether small or large, is crucial for sustaining team morale and ensuring that individuals feel valued for their contributions? This celebration can take many forms, from public recognition within the company to more private moments of gratitude and reflection among team members.

One marketing director expert in integrated digital marketing communication, who proposed this phase to be taken into consideration at the end of a successful marketing campaign when discussing the importance of celebrating success in a campaign, highlighted how this phase contributes to future success: celebrating a victory creates a positive feedback loop that inspires the team to continue delivering excellent results. Teams that are recognized for their achievements are more motivated, more cohesive, and more likely to take ownership of future campaigns. **Richard Branson**, founder of the Virgin Group, famously said, *"If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients" (Branson,* The Virgin Way: Everything I Know About Leadership*, 1st edition, Portfolio, 2014, p. 223).* This idea applies directly to

marketing teams; when their efforts are celebrated and valued, they are more invested in ensuring that the brand continues to thrive.

But all marketing directors agreed within the focuss group when discussion about this phase that one of the most important aspects of celebrating success is the opportunity it provides for reflection and learning. Celebration should not be an endpoint but rather a transition into continuous improvement. As **Winston Churchill** once remarked*, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts" (Winston S. Churchill,* Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches*, 1st edition, Hyperion, 2003, p. 426).* In the context of a marketing team, celebrating success is about pausing to acknowledge what went right while preparing to apply those learnings to the next campaign. This reflective process allows the team to break down what worked well—from strategy to execution—and discuss how these successes can be replicated or expanded in future projects.

Marketing experts recommended even how to celebrate success effectively, emphasizing that the celebration should not just focus on the visible results, like sales growth or brand awareness, but also on the behind-the-scenes efforts that contributed to those results. Marketing campaigns are complex, involving data analysis, creative brainstorming, media planning, and real-time adjustments. Celebrating the contributions of each team member—whether they worked on creative content, data analytics, or media buying—reinforces the importance of every role in the overall success. As **Steve Jobs** noted, *"Great things in business are never done by one person; they're done by a team of people" (Jobs, as quoted in* The Steve Jobs Way: iLeadership for a New Generation*, by Jay Elliot and William L. Simon, Vanguard Press, 2011, p. 215).* This recognition helps cultivate a sense of shared achievement and reinforces a culture of collaboration.

Celebrating success also sets the tone for how future challenges will be approached. In a highly competitive digital marketing landscape, campaigns are often fast-paced and require constant adaptation. Celebrating a successful campaign not only boosts morale but also reinforces the belief that the team is capable of overcoming the inevitable hurdles and uncertainties that come with future projects. This resilience is crucial for staying competitive, especially in industries where consumer behavior and digital platforms evolve rapidly. By celebrating their ability to execute a campaign with great results, the team is mentally preparing for the next challenge with a greater sense of confidence and cohesion. **John C. Maxwell**, a renowned leadership expert, aptly stated*, "The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails" (Maxwell,* The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Thomas Nelson, 2007, p. 197).* Celebrating success is, in essence, adjusting the sails for the next journey, ensuring that the team feels empowered and ready to tackle new opportunities.

Another aspect recommended to be considered in the celebration phase is that it creates a **momentum of success**. When teams see that their hard work leads not only to positive results but also to recognition and celebration, they are more likely to maintain a high level of performance. This momentum becomes especially important when preparing for future campaigns where the stakes may be even higher. **Jeff Bezos** once said, *"One of the only ways to get out of a tight box is to invent your way out" (Bezos, Interview with Charlie Rose, 2012).* Celebrating past successes provides the emotional and intellectual fuel needed for innovation in future campaigns. It helps create an environment where taking risks and pushing boundaries are encouraged, knowing that the rewards of success will be celebrated.

Furthermore, the celebration of success after a campaign can strengthen relationships not only within the team but also across departments. Marketing campaigns often require collaboration between different areas of a company—product teams, sales, customer service, and even external partners. Recognizing the success of a campaign offers an opportunity to acknowledge these cross-functional contributions. This fosters a stronger sense of unity and shared purpose

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within the organization, which in turn can lead to more effective collaborations in the future. As **Bill Gates** famously said*, "Great organizations demand a high level of commitment by the people involved" (Gates, Business @ the Speed of Thought, 1999, p. 175).* Celebrating success ensures that this commitment is not only acknowledged but reinforced.

In conclusion, the **Celebrating Success** phase of the e-commerce model is more than a simple acknowledgment of results. It is a powerful tool for building team morale, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and ensuring that the marketing team remains motivated and united in its efforts to deliver exceptional outcomes. By taking the time to reflect on what went well and recognizing the contributions of all team members, brands can create a momentum of success that drives future achievements. As **Oprah Winfrey** put it, *"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate" (Winfrey, The Wisdom of Sundays, 2017, p. 45).* In the world of marketing, the more a team celebrates its successes, the more successes it is likely to achieve.

Celebrating the success of a marketing campaign reinforces the belief in the team's abilities, provides valuable learning opportunities, and cultivates a spirit of collaboration and resilience that can lead to even greater results in future campaigns. In a highly competitive market, this phase is essential for ensuring that success is not only achieved but sustained, positioning the brand for continued growth and success against its competitors.

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

The qualitative insights gathered from the focus groups culminated in the creation of the e-commerce model. This model is a comprehensive framework that guides digital marketing experts through the critical stages of an integrated campaign. Each stage of the model is interconnected, ensuring that marketing actions are data-driven, goal-oriented, and continually optimized for maximum effectiveness.

The study underscores the importance of a structured approach to integrated marketing communications in the digital space. The e-commerce model offers a robust framework for experts to enhance e-commerce sales through targeted, well-executed campaigns. The qualitative results gathered with the help of the top marketing director experts, will be included within a future research to be validated within a quantitative research by a selected representative panel of digital marketing managers at a more extended level through quantitative validation and broader application across industries.

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