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The age of the digital branding entrepreneur



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Branding is a language in itself; it is an ongoing dialogue that tells the story of a product and a business to its customers every time they come in contact with the brand. A brand image is a reflection, in every aspect of a product, company or service, of the vision and mission of an organization and isconsequently a promise made to the customers. It has become the most important input in the customer decision process.

"If you are not a brand you are a commodity", says Philip Kotler. Right branding exercises are essential to highlight the USP's of the products; these branding solutions will ensure a consistent and strong brand image, creating a visual style keeping in mind the characteristics and requirements specific to each product and business.

Consumer behavior across the world has changed rapidly beyond the reach of traditional marketing strategies. The options available to a consumer are many and myriad; the decision making, influenced heavily by media and internet, lends hitherto unseen power to the consumer. The funnel metaphor in the selection process has given way to a consumer decision journey. In the digital space of a cybernated and connected world a brand lies stark naked, scrutinized endlessly and analyzed beyond imagination through reviews, feedbacks, opinion and plain gossip.In fact, now, more than ever, it is the customer who holds the reins over the brand value. Brand owners need to innovate and experiment with digital media; the exponential proliferation of smartphones and the explosion of social media and social networking provide ample opportunities for brand positioning while also making it all the more imperative.



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Digital branding explores thenew interfaces – the touchpoints - for customer brand interaction that have changed in number and nature. Each of these touchpoints represent a potential avenue for influence, interaction, brand awareness and customer conversion. It requires a relook at the concept of branding to hold the attention of an ever online population. Although the primary concepts of clear brand promises and brand values remain the same, branding in the digital age has re-defined many core concepts of branding and marketing with the age old techniques being replaced by new generation strategies like integrated consumer experience in tandem with a realignment of budget. This horizon where the classic concepts and the modern strategies meet is a fertile ground where entrepreneurs delving in digital branding solutions can thrive.

Digital branding is not merely online marketing. It is a comprehensive process that uses the world wide weband the digital media as a hub to connect and tie together the audience and the diverse digital platforms to facilitate brand activity; as a multiplier to extend the reach and longevity of the communications; and as an arena to engage consumers at all levels. A plethora of channels are at disposal for digital brand engagement between consumers and brands- websites that offer enhanced, interactive experience, blogs, search engines like Google, social media networks like Facebook, Youtube, microblogging site Twitter, interactive smartphone applications and a host of other services including lesser explored avenues like Instagram & Pinterest. The analytics tools and similar associated services enable keeping track of consumer trends, activities, and even measurement of performance and ROI.

The need of the hour is hence right solutions at the right time by the right people. Some of theseinclude the following:

- Social media management
- Digital media planning
- Reputation management
- Search engine optimization
- Search engine marketing
- Digital Advertising
- Digital Brand assessment & positioning

In an interactive world characterized by transforming global economy, it is not just of utmost importance but also essential to embrace digital branding for a sustainable business. Companies across the globe are predicted to increase the onlinebrand advertising spend this year. This significance of the changing branding needs can translate into viable entrepreneurial ventures, the success of which depends on the success of each branding exercise undertaken which in turn depends on knowing the target audience, producing authentic &valuable content and delivering all the promises made.In effect, the entrepreneur delving in the wide array of services under digital branding will discover a minefield of opportunities.