



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

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Sales & Marketing Simplified Toolkit

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This toolkit was prepared by Zaid Sami for SPARK as a part of the Iraqi SMEs COVID-19 Response under Jobs & Perspectives Programme.

The Programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and aims to accelerate economic development in Iraq.

SPARK provides access to higher education and supports entrepreneurship development in fragile states so that young, ambitious people can lead their societies into stability and prosperity.

SPARK provides a variety of full-service business and entrepreneurship programmes in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. We believe that sustainable, economic growth is essential for the alleviation of poverty. By offering private-sector development services to young people in conflict-affected regions, we believe that the potential for further conflict is significantly reduced.



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Country Review

IRAQ

The essential headline data you need to understand the state of mobile, internet, and social media use



Total population

39.77
Million

Urbanisation:

%70

JAN
2020



Mobile phone connections

40.89
Million

vs. Population:

%103



Internet users

29.82
Million

Penetration:

%75



Active social media users

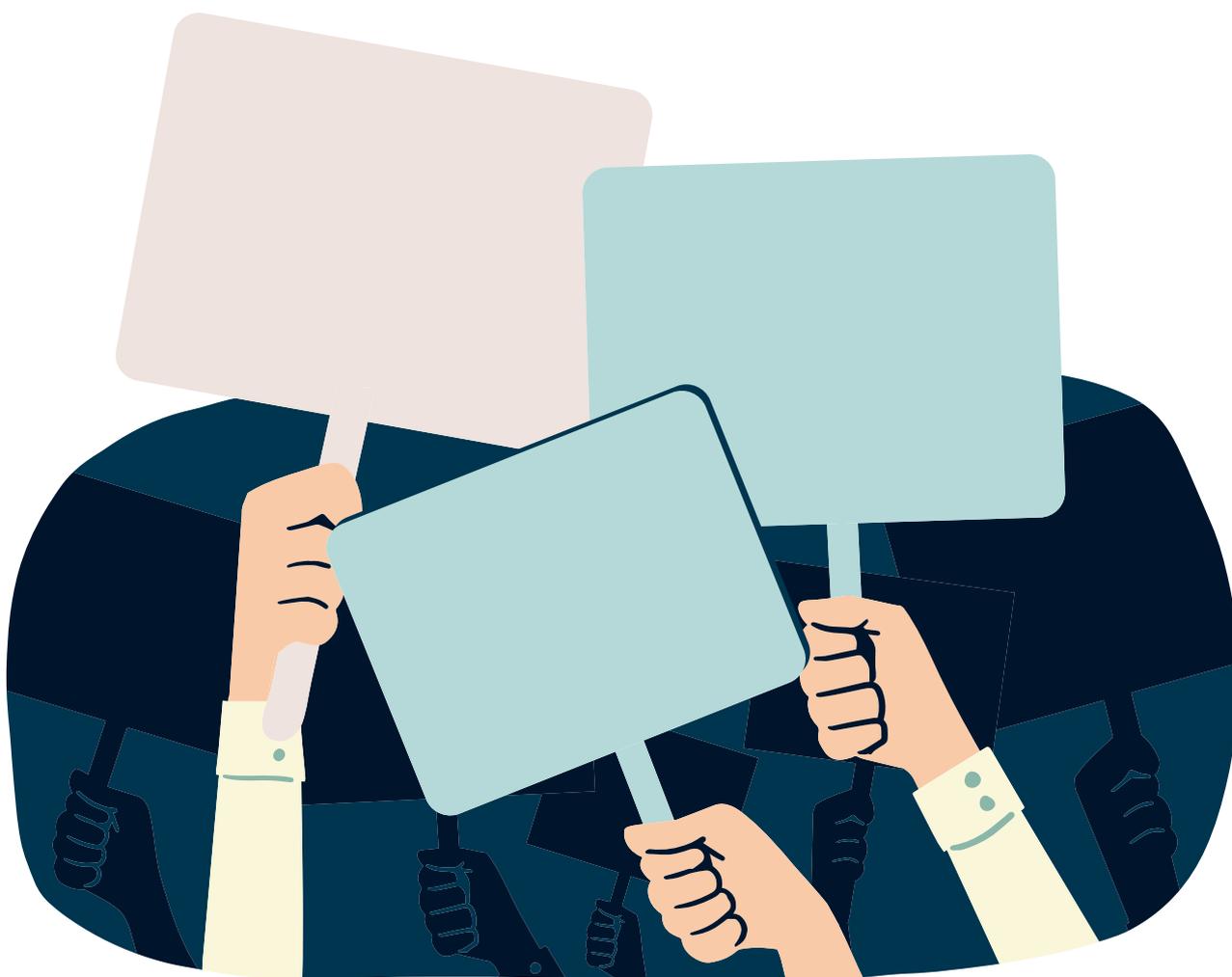
21.00
Million

Penetration:

%53

Current challenges (Political & security)

- Since Oct 2019 Anti- corruption protesting started demanding for employment, better life conditions & Infrastructure in Central and southern cities of Iraq.
- Security deteriorated again since the war against ISIS due to mainly out of the state control armed groups.
- Under the street pressure the government changed and many other structural changes started to follow.
- Although changes started to take place still, out of state control armed groups remains a concern for Iraq stability



Current challenges (Covid 19 Pandemic)

- First cases emerged in Iraq in Mid-March 20
- Daily cases increased rapidly in Sep averaging 4K cases daily
- Government imposed full curfew several times and regulated new precautions against people and organization in Iraq including mid-small businesses to minimize virus spread.
- Health system collapsing quickly due to lack of proper development from the past government leaving the system vulnerable
- Later on The government decided to open up with no further curfews and Live on with the Pandemic

Economic Impact:

- Many businesses slowed down/ closed which they released all/part of their employees & reducing their salaries
- People became more conservative in their spending and started looking more value for money offers
- Oil prices and Production also declined leaving Iraq Budget in a

continues decline

- Public sector represented by Employees salary is severally effected and Salary Cuts & delays is Projected to take effect in Q4

Future projection

- Politically the current government is building positive trend in terms state structural reforms, if this trend continues reforms would start in infrastructure development and other vital projects in the country with in the coming 5 Years.
- This wouldn't happen if the security threats remains, this is why part of the government commitment is to restrict the arms with in the state, full security recovery is projected in a matter of 2 years because of the continuous internal and external stress.
- Ending the Covid 19 pandemic is projected to be mid-end of 2021, several Vaccines and drugs are being heavily tested to find the most proper solution, results are promising and estimates made according to these results, Iraq is assigned for early Vaccine supplies (MOH report).

Future projection (Economic recovery)

Economies worldwide are projecting 2 types economic recovery after the pandemic ends:

- V Shape: A V-shaped recovery means that the economy bounces back quickly to its baseline before the crisis, with no hiccups along the way.
- U Shape: Under this scenario, the economic damage lasts for a longer period of time before

eventually reaching the baseline level of growth again.

For the Iraqi economy the trend is showing a U shaped recovery where recovery could be seen around the end of 2021

Overview	Actual	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	2021
GDP Annual Growth Rate (%)	4.40	-5	2	2	2	2
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.90	8	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
Inflation Rate (%)	0.00	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.1	1.5
Interest Rate (%)	4.00	4	4	4	4	4
Balance of Trade (USD Million)	41524.00	30259	30259	30259	30259	30259
Current Account to GDP (%)	-1.20	-22	-14	-14	-14	-14
Government Debt to GDP (%)	48.40	55	62	62	62	62
Government Budget (% of GDP)	-0.90	-22.5	-12.5	-12.5	-12.5	-12.5
Corporate Tax Rate (%)	15.00	15	15	15	15	15
Personal Income Tax Rate (%)	15.00	15	15	15	15	15

I'm a business owner, how can survive all of this?!

Main issue small businesses are facing to keep business running is limited revenue due to shift in consumer/customer habits, tackling this issue is not easy specially its more related to the overall situation & economic crises, but here are some tips to help staying alive in this volatility.

- Shift the Business goals & plans to focus on Business continuity rather than revenue, profitability, Market share... etc.
- Minimize overall cost and spending (If avoiding a specific spend will not kill your business then don't spend it).
- Change employee's dynamic, focusing on the outcome versus the routine.
- Make sure you have positive ROI (Return Of Investment) for any Investment you do.
- Try to learn the new sentiments and habits of your costumers and build your plans accordingly.
- Have an Online presence (Less cost and better return if managed properly)



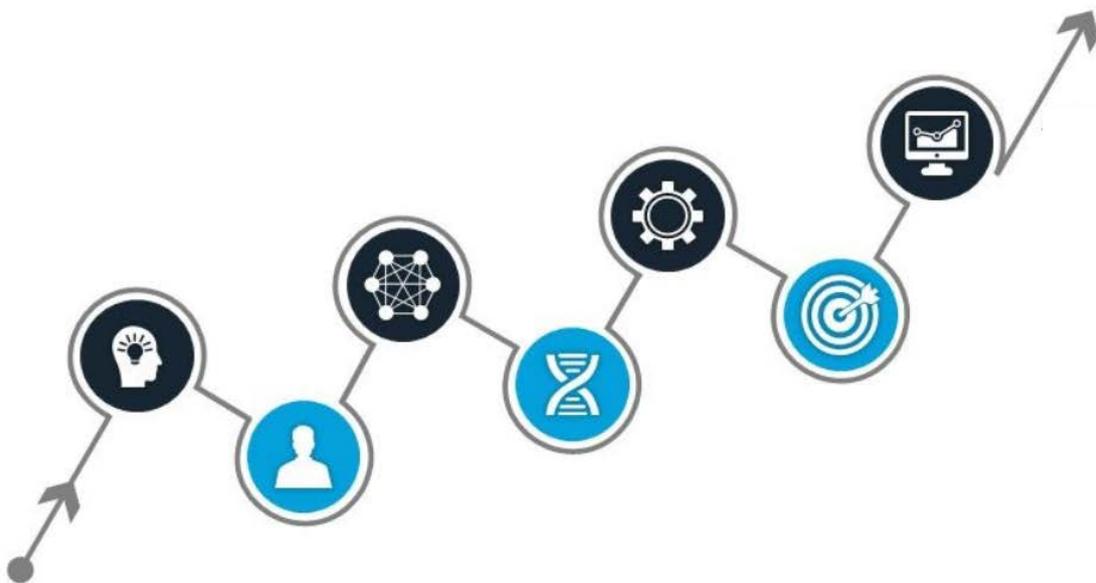
Sales Strategy

In order to build the optimum sales plan there are several points needs to be identified, for instance, understanding your market, customers and channels, are vital to build your strategy.

According to that you would have a better chance to optimize your product journey according to the needs of the market, also drawing your sales process starting from manufacturing/ sourcing your product, positioning, & delivering to end user.

Knowing your Market

Giving the current situation and declining economy, defining your market has never been more important than now, Knowing the market means knowing your customers including demography, your competition and whereabouts they market their product and their customer base, With a clearly defined target audience, it is much easier to determine where and how to market your company.



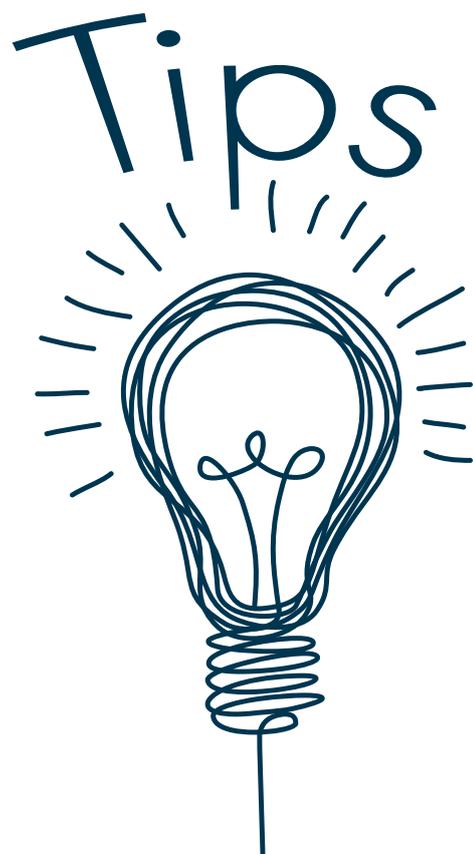
Your product/ Service	Customers	Competition
Product Features	Demography (Age/ sex/ location/ Income level/ Occupation/ education ...etc)	Product features
Main advantages	Psychographic (Interest/ Personality/ Attitudes/ Life style/ Behaviors... etc)	Pricing
Added Value for your customers (Product unique features, price..etc)		Where do they sell?
Cost structure/ Value Chain		How they sell?
		Promotion activities

Hints & Tips:

- My Own Top: Market visit, maybe theoretical study of the market is very good, But in Iraq to gain sharp insights the best way is do it yourself, and go to the market, meet customers, meet end users and take notes, visit several regions and try to identify the differences between these regions.
- Start with your customer base: If you already have a customer base even if it's small, it would be great to gather their opinion and feedback, not only on your

product but competition as well.

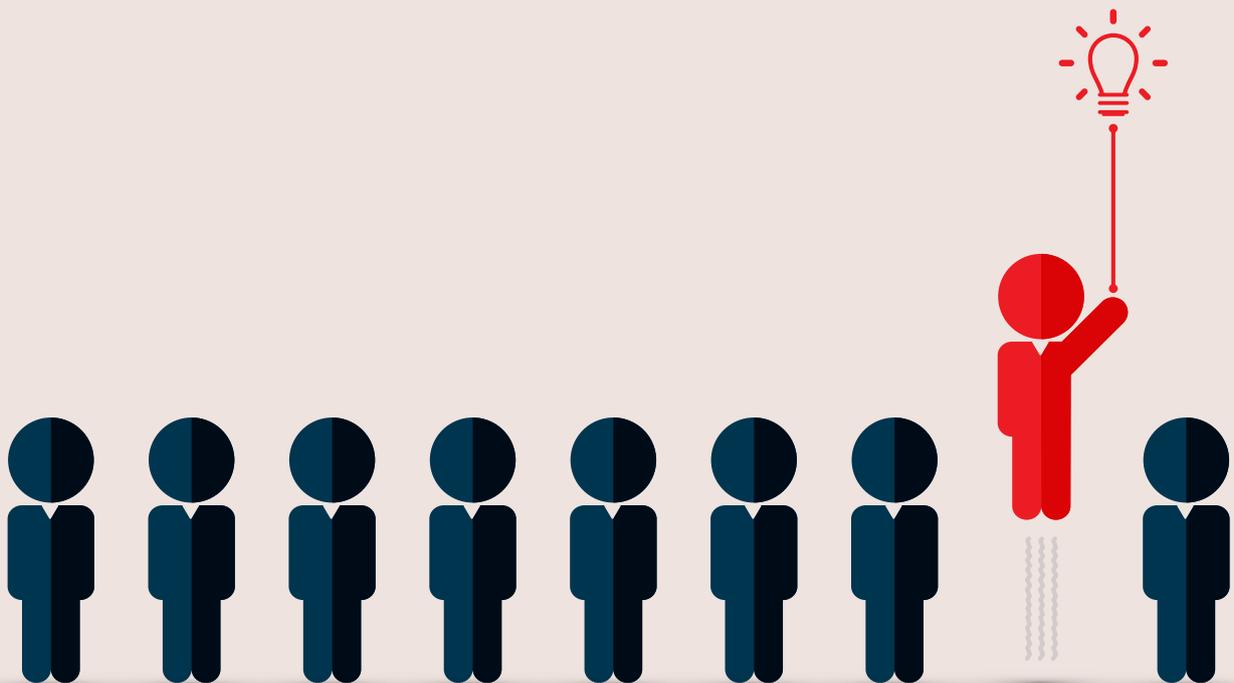
- Surf the internet for data, it's for FREE!



Product positioning

What is product positioning?

- Product positioning is where your product or service fits in the market. It highlights all of the features that make your product unique and communicates how and why it's better than other products or solutions.
- Effective product positioning considers your target audience and their needs and how your product can directly and effectively address those needs.
- Product positioning for products can be done without existing Market (product Innovation)



Marketing Strategy

Marketing is the process of getting people interested in your company's product or service. This happens through market research, analysis, and understanding your ideal customer's interests. Marketing pertains to all aspects of a business, including product development, distribution methods, sales, and advertising.

Types of Marketing

ATL (Mass Marketing)

TV/ Radio/ Billboard/ Newspaper

TTL (Online Marketing)

Social media/ e-mail/ PPC/ SEO/ content Marketing

BTL (Individual Marketing)

Trade/ sampling/ Discounts & Promotions/ Direct Selling events/
Guerilla Tactics

The very purpose of marketing is to make your promising customers aware of your products. **A marketing mix** is the set of those factors which a company can leverage to make the consumer purchase its products. As the term

suggests, it is a mix of many tactical marketing tools. The role of the marketing expert is to prepare the right combination to bring out the excellent synergy between the product and the targeted audience



SWOT Analysis

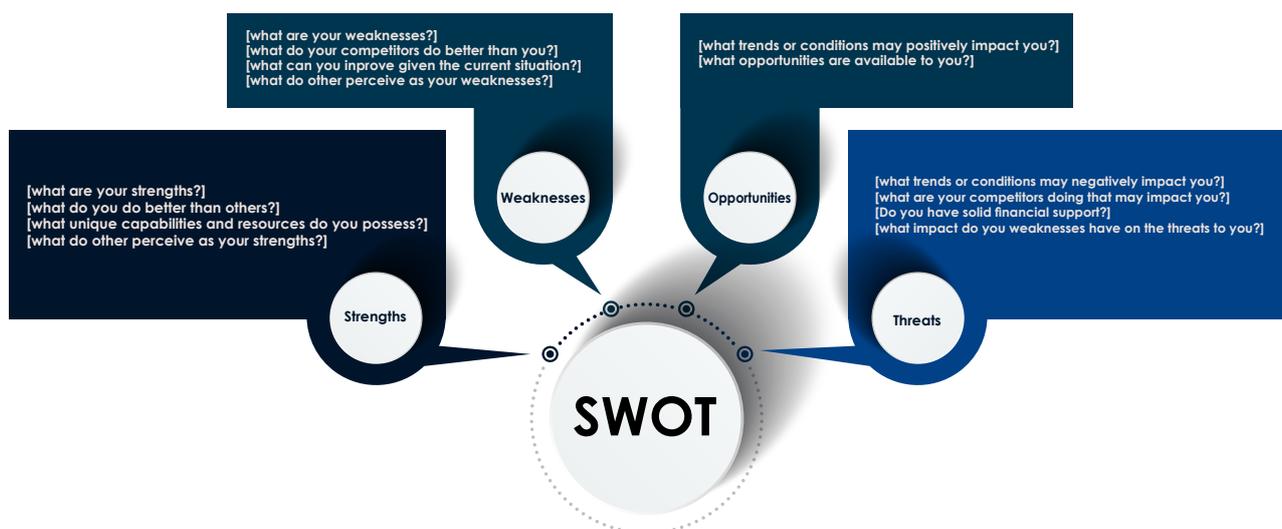
The SWOT analysis will help you understand the company's position which will encourages ideas and decision-making on how to build on strengths, exploit opportunities, minimize weaknesses and protect against threats.

Benefits of SWOT:

- Identify Core Strengths of your Organization- It provides a clear view of your core competencies, and allows you to build on them to meet your business objectives
- Identify Weaknesses - Recognizing your company's weaknesses is one of the first steps to improving your business.

It reveals your weaknesses and provides a chance to reverse them

- Explore Opportunities - It helps your to explore the opportunities that lies ahead. Using this you can draft your strategic growth plans based on your strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize Potential Treats - It helps you analyze possible threats to your business, and you can subsequently make necessary changes to the business policies and necessary actions.



Marketing tactics

Content Marketing

The main idea behind content marketing is creating content that helps inform your audience and solve their problems. This achieves a few important goals:

- Building an audience.
- Establishing authority.
- Driving sales.

Social Media Marketing

Organic reach on popular social networks is declining on popular platforms like Twitter and Facebook, but social media marketing is far from dead. It's effective for building brand awareness, developing community, and getting your content and products in front of new people.

Guerrilla Marketing

This including On- Ground activities using human to human interactions using promoters (Mall activations, Outdoor activations)

Advertising and Pay-Per-Click

Have you ever seen those ads at the top of search results? Those are pay-per-click (PPC) ads,

PPC advertising offers marketers excellent opportunity to sell products directly to searchers. It's also great because it makes it possible to see exactly how much you're spending vs. how much revenue your advertising efforts are generating.

Public Relations

Even in an era packed with new and flashy channels and tactics, good old-fashioned relationship-building remains essential for effective marketing. PR is all about managing perceptions and relationships, ensuring people think positively about your brand.

Influencer Marketing

Why promote your products yourself when you can have trusted people promote them for you, That's the crux of influencer marketing, which involves working with popular people within a given niche or industry to put your products in front of their audiences.

Digital growth indicators

Changes in key indicators of digital adoption



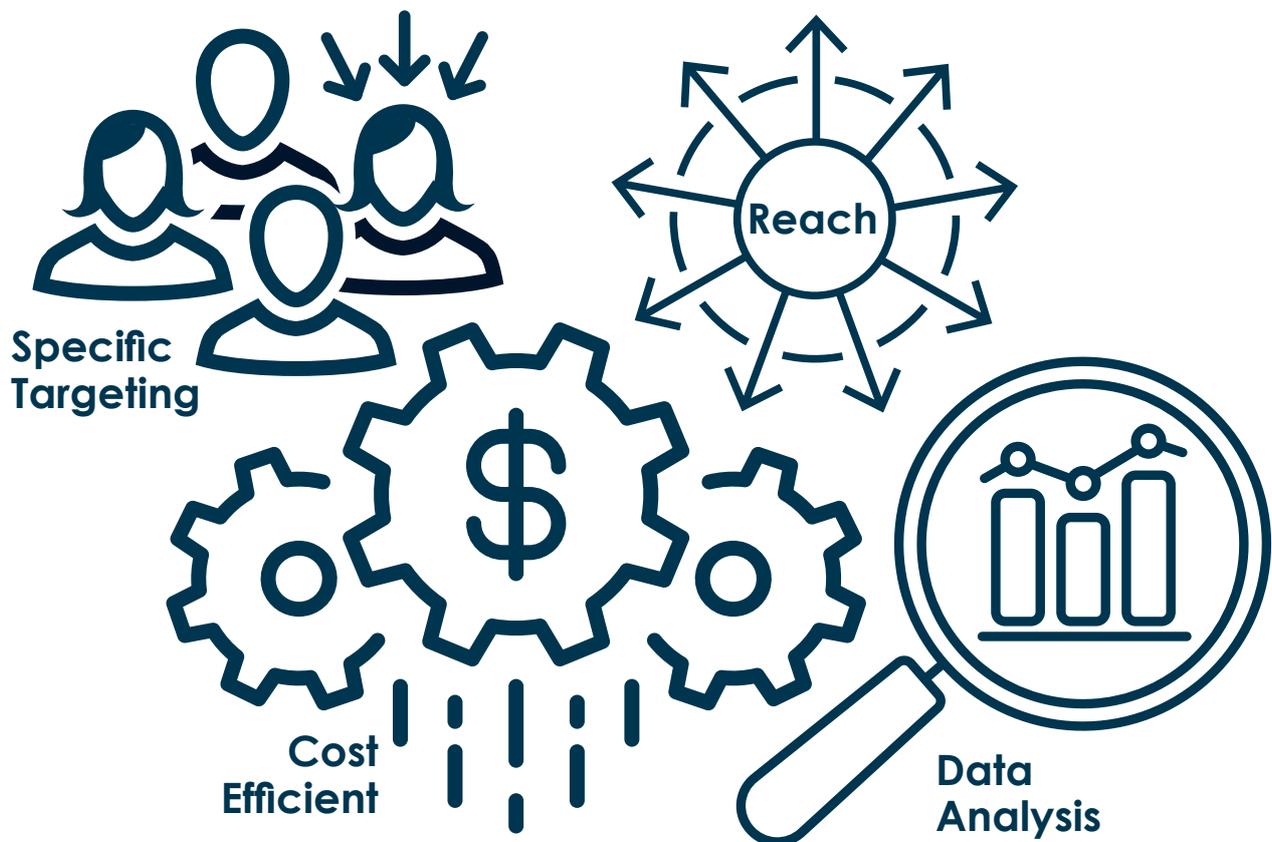
JAN
2020

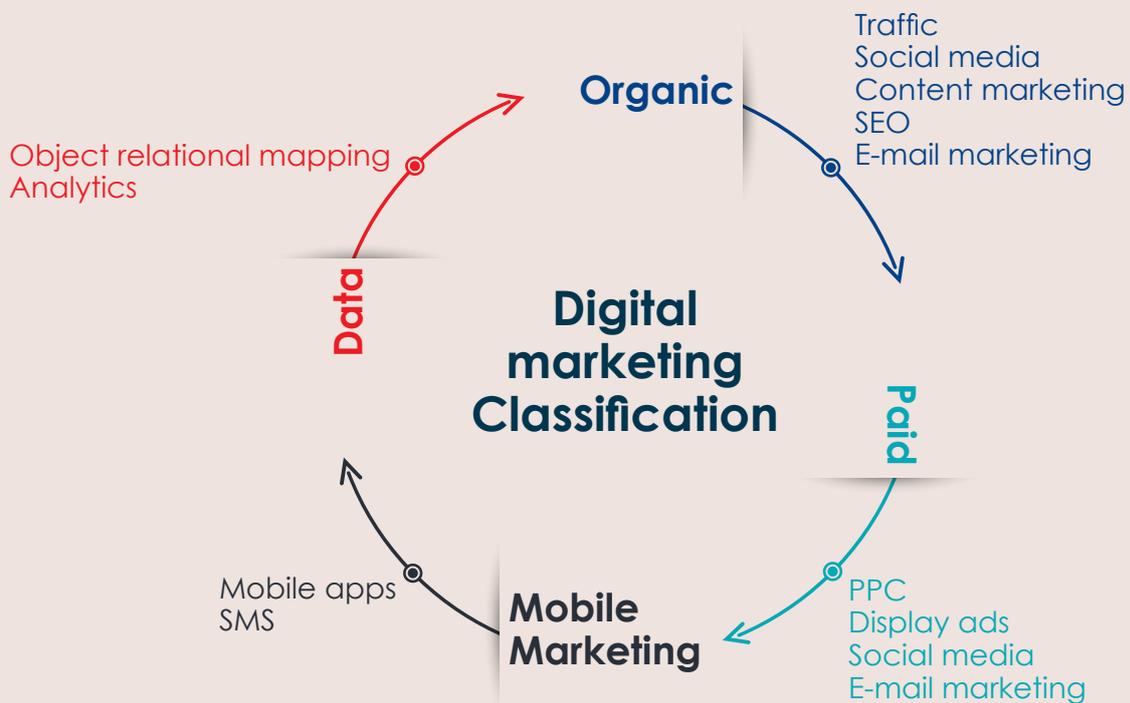
Digital usage in Iraq as per the research from Hootsuite shows great potential, surpassing 55% growth in number of internet Users comparing to 2019, this without considering the Pandemic effect which globally increased the internet users more than average due to lockdowns and staying at home, this once again shows the importance on digital presence of any business regardless the product / service, having an online presence in today's businesses is a must.

What is Digital marketing?

Digital marketing is promoting or creating brand awareness for product or service using internet and online technologies

Why Digital Marketing?





Digital Marketing Tactics

Social Media Marketing

In Iraq Social media usage is high, almost having 21 Million Iraqis on several social media platforms growing almost 10% comparing to last year, Most of these users are on platforms like Facebook. Youtube & Instagram, in addition to Instant messaging platform like Viber & Telegram, on Viber according to

the latest reports from company they have almost 11 Million users in Iraq. Such penetration made it inevitable for all businesses Specially SMEs to exist on these platforms in addition to its physical entity, benefits of being on Social media as a Business can be summarized with the below:

Increase brand awareness



As the content clearly focusing on the Brand making such tactics as Brand awareness

Increase website traffic

Social media posts and ads are key ways to drive traffic to your website. Sharing great content from your blog or website to your social channels is a great way to get readers as soon as you publish a new post.



Any content that promotes for website click along with incentive (Home delivery) is considered as Website traffic tactic

Boost sales

No matter what you sell, social media can help you sell it. Your social accounts are a critical part of your sales funnel—the process through which a new contact becomes a customer.



Pushing sales Ads with incentive like discount, Bundle, Free delivery ... etc Is promoted to increase and boost sales

Partner with influencers

Word of mouth drives 20 to 50 percent of purchasing decisions. When you get people talking about your product or company on social media, you build brand awareness and credibility, and set yourself up for more sales.



Promote content

[Promoting your content](#) on social channels is a great way to get your smart, well-researched content in front of new people, proving your expertise and growing your audience.

 Mr.Hungry - شيف شاهين posted a video to playlist وصفات غربية. 23h · 🌐

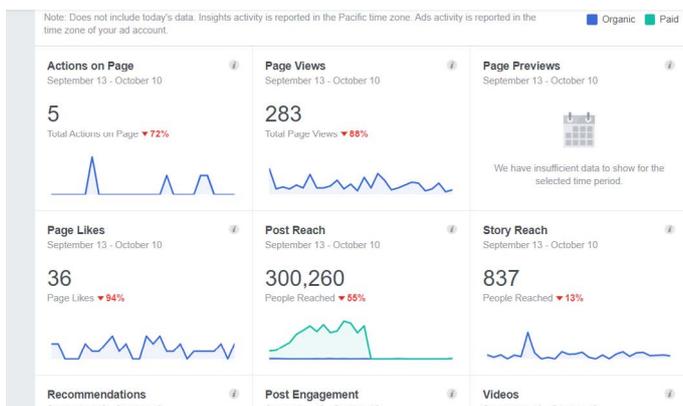
قبل فترة كنت اجرب هاي طريقة لشوي الدجاج كلش حبيتها 🍗 و الحركة مال مايونيز صار لونها حلو و الجلد مقرمش 🍗 بالعافية 🙌



   50K 3.1K Comments 1.4K Shares

Learn more about your customers

Social media generates a huge amount of data about your customers in real time. You can use this information to make smarter business decisions. All of the major social networks offer analytics that provide demographic information about the people interacting with your account. This can help you tailor your strategy to better speak to your real audience.



Keep an eye on the competition

It's also important to know what people are saying about your competitors.

For example, tracking mentions of your competitors might reveal pain points with their products that you could reach out to address, winning new customers in the process.

Targeted advertising

[Social ads](#) are an inexpensive way to promote your business and distribute content. They also offer powerful targeting options so you can reach the right audience and make the most of your budget.

Search Advertising

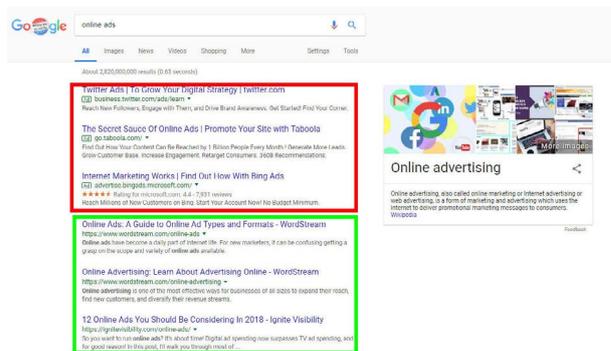
- Paid search advertising (also known as sponsored ads, search marketing, search-engine marketing, pay-per-click marketing, and cost-per-click marketing) is a technique that displays ads in search-engine results whenever someone searches for the services or products offered by the advertiser. In this way, the ad displayed perfectly matches each query.
- Search advertising is very effective; it is based on the explicit need of the users, rather than just on implicit information about what they might be after. This, naturally, increases the likelihood of clicks and conversion.
- While the [global search-engine market](#) is currently dominated by Google with an 77% market share (and growing), it is impossible to ignore the audiences gathered by some of the other search runners-up:

1. [Google](#) (77.43%)
2. [Baidu](#) (8.13%)
3. [Microsoft Bing](#) (7.31%)
4. [Yahoo](#) (5.6%)
5. [Ask](#) (0.13%)

SEO

What is SEO?

- SEO stands for “search engine optimization.” It’s the practice of increasing both the quality and quantity of website traffic, as well as exposure to your brand, through non-paid (also known as “organic”) search engine results.
- Search engines are answer machines. They scour billions of pieces of content and evaluate thousands of factors to determine which content is most likely to answer your query.
- Search engines do all of this by discovering and cataloguing all available content on the Internet (web pages, PDFs, images, videos, etc.) via a process known as “crawling and indexing,” and then ordering it by how well it matches the query in a process we refer to as “ranking.”



Mobile Apps & SMS

- Mobile marketing is a multi-channel, digital marketing strategy aimed at reaching a target audience on their smartphones, tablets, and/or other mobile devices, via websites, email, SMS and MMS, social media, and apps.
- Mobile is disrupting the way people engage with brands. Everything that can be done on a desktop computer is now available on a mobile device. From opening an email to visiting your website to reading your content, it's all accessible through a small mobile screen. Consider:
 - [80% of internet users](#) own a smartphone.
 - Mobile platforms, such as smartphones and tablets, host up to [60% of digital media time](#) for users in the U.S.
 - Google anticipates search queries on mobile devices to [surpass desktop searches](#) by the end of 2015.
- In Iraq as per the research presented earlier, Every Iraqi has at least 1 Mobile phone
- Effective mobile advertising means understanding your mobile audience, designing content with mobile platforms in mind, and making strategic use of SMS/MMS marketing and mobile apps.

Developing a Marketing Strategy

- **Getting to Know Your Audience**
First things first, companies exist to serve customers. Well, figuring out exactly who those customers are, and what problems they need solved, is easier said than done.

- **Figuring Out What You Want Them to Do**

Once you've determined who you need to reach, the next step is figuring out what's required to move them toward a sale.

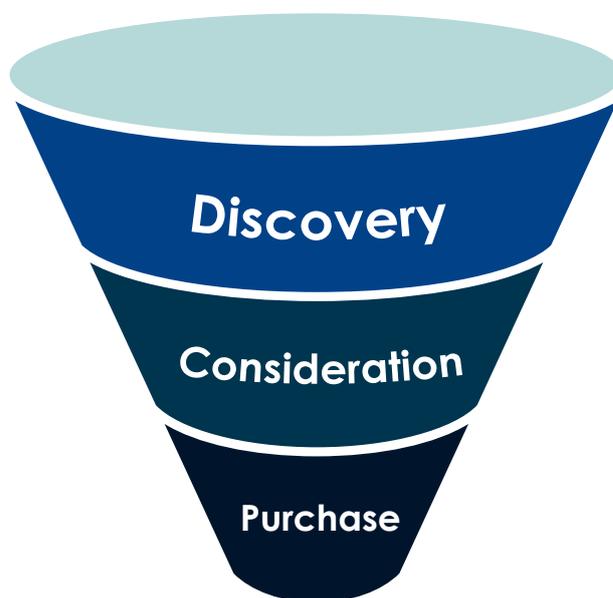
For some companies, this is simple: convincing customers to grab a product and buy it at the store. But, there may be actions you drive them toward before reaching that step (such as getting in to a mailing list or becoming a social media follower).

For others (for example, service-based companies), you might want to get leads (potential customers) to place a phone call for a demo or a consultation before they commit to purchasing.

Understanding the Marketing Funnel

When determining actions you want your audience to take, it's useful to understand how the marketing funnel works.

Funnels help illustrate where customers are at in the buying process, from being unaware of a product (or having a problem), to researching different options, down to making an actual purchase.



Case 1

A small IT solution company that consist of less than 10 employees with 2 years record, economic crises erupted that led to losing almost 50% of the customer base, the company revenue cuts to half while having the expenses at the same level of serving twice the current base, the owner doesn't want to lose his employees neither the business and thinks of business continuity plan crossing the declining times and he decides the following:

- Stop all un necessary spend & hold all planned Hiring & promotions
- Pick up the phone on the continued customers and ask them more about their current needs and why they still pay for the service
- Utilize the excessive time for employees to conduct a research for their target audience and how can they approach new potential costumers

After the research done some key points the team found as the below: People who may need their services are still there and willing to pay

These people try to find help using Google search & Youtube tutorials The team work on a new strategy with the aim to acquire new customers and recover the revenue to accommodate the cost required, strategy summary:

- Utilize the team to put more time on the company Website aiming to improve its content & ranking.
- Create relevant Video content that amplify a clear value proposition.
- Run 2 Digital campaigns targeting audience with interest near to what they provide (The first campaign is search Ad on Google, the Second campaign Youtube Ad utilizing the video content they created)
- Both campaigns aim to increase the traffic on their website,

Since the team also worked on developing the website with appealing content, some of the visitors contacted the company asking about their services, with in time the a percentage of the interested visitors converted in to customers & revenue started to increase again due to focusing on relevant customer needs.

Case 2

Marketing Agency that operates to serve restaurants & Hotels with 5 employees, working with several accounts on retainer fees model, a pandemic started causing closure of all accounts.

Immediately the team researched the market and found a rising demand in marketing video content in specific sector, after running a SWOT analyses and brain storm the team decides a strategy focusing on revenue by acquiring new accounts, the strategy summary:

- To start online learning for the technical team on content creation
- Utilize experienced freelancer to help them build a marketing strategy for their services to reach potential customers.
- Run a targeted marketing campaign on specific channels.

After pushing the campaign interested customers started to enquire about their services, after sometime with no conversions, the team pushes the campaign with special discount and start converting customers bringing back the revenue stream.

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