An Analysis of Best Digital Marketing Channels and Strategies for Event Organizers in Dublin

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Business Administration at Dublin Business School

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation hereby submitted to the Dublin Business School for the Degree of Masters of Business Administration is the result of my own work, unless referenced in the body of the text indicating the source. Furthermore, I declare that no part of this dissertation has been previously submitted either at Dublin Business School or any other Institution.

Anuj Gupta

23rd May 2016
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Abstract

“An age is called Dark, not because the light fails to shine, but because people refuse to see it.”

James A. Michener

In this era with advancement in technology it becomes imperative for the marketers to be on the same page. The research examines a new topic i.e. ‘Schema.org’ and its importance because it has not been explored and furthermore, it is an important topic that can bring about a change in the marketing strategy of the marketers.

Moreover, the research discusses the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin. There is lack of literature and this research primarily focuses on building the theory. For this research a mixed method approach has been used. The research is exploratory as well as descriptive. The findings of both Quantitative and Qualitative have been merged to come out with final discussion.

The findings reveal that Email is the best channel followed by facebook and SMS. Surprisingly, it was found that mobile marketing is not being exploited by the event organizers. Moreover, differences in attitudes of people were noted based on gender, age and profession. In addition, a frame work has provided by the researcher and it is recommended that event organizers should follow it. The findings of this research will go into the already existing pool of data and will provide reference for practitioners as well as for future researchers.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

There have been many researches done in the field of digital marketing but very few to identify how consumers perceive digital marketing ads or promotions on different digital marketing channels. Not only consumers attitude towards these channels have to be determined but their usage preference in relation to ‘Events’ is also unknown.

There are many events hosted on different websites like meetup.com, citysocializer.com, eventful.com, etc., but the point of thought is how can organizers effectively market their events digitally to those who are not aware of these sites. Not only reaching out to consumers is important but factors that influence these people to go to events have to be determined so that event organizers can strategize accordingly.

Events are a new trend and businesses are using them for their own benefit. A 10 year old monthly gathering of tech heads in New York City called NY Tech Meetup crossed the bar as it had more than 40,000 members and claimed to be the largest tech meetup group in the world. The audiences are much more diverse than one might expect. Although young people tend to predominate, there is a good mix of people of all ages (Sawyer, 2014).

The Meetup platform is not just a social tool but it also brings together a lot of businesses people, especially in the tech sector, providing a good background for future deals. Not only internet has brought people together in cyberspace but it has also proven invaluable in helping arrange face to face meetings. In Budapest, the online Meetup platform is frequently used as a way to create communities of like-minded people, sometimes leading to benefits for their businesses. It can be a really powerful tool and certain government entities have also supported meetup groups by sponsoring space and or snacks, especially in the tech sector (Sefton, 2015).

On the other hand the event information landscape is highly fragmented and de-centralized and it creates challenges for people looking for events. Lopez et al. (2014), so it becomes invariably important for event organizers to strategize their marketing campaigns by utilizing the channels where people look for events and also reaching out to people on channels they are active on and channels on which they positively perceive the promotional messages.

1.2 Defining event organizers

Event organizers are people who plan and run events. There are different events happening in and around Dublin that are organized by professional event organizers, hotels and common people who become part-time event organizers. Most of the events, meetups and seminars are organized by these people. Apart from this the business owners like restaurants and pubs organize events at their business places to boost up their sales.
1.3 An overview of Schema.org

"Schema.org is a joint initiative of the search engines Google, Bing, Yahoo and Yandex aimed at making it easier to index web pages."(schema.org, 2016) Humans understand the code and its meaning when they go through the web pages, but search engines have limited understanding of the content on those pages. By adding additional tags to web pages we help search engines to better understand the content and display it in a relevant way. The aim of the initiative is help search engines to interpret information on web pages so that it can be used to improve the display of search results, making it easier for people to find the information they are looking for.

1.3.1 Rich Snippets

By inserting Schema.org structure we not only make it easy for the search engine to understand the content but it also adds the feature of rich snippets. The rich snippet adds features like number of stars based on high ranking reviews, a small thumbnail picture and custom elements based on the type of element it describes. (Garais, 2015)

As users search for events online it has become very important for the event organizers to make their events visible in the Google search listing using metadata’s. Schema.org has been developed so as to have a common vocabulary for structured data markup on web pages. Structured data are organized and identifiable bits of information typically defined in rows and columns. Web developers use HTML tags based on these schemas to enhance the content of their web pages and deliver more precise search results. The key concept here is “metadata,” which might be defined as data about data. Metadata describe both the content and context of data files. They are the who, what, when, where, how, and even why associated with a particular data set. The addition of metadata to web pages helps the search engines to better “understand” the content of those pages and provide richer search results (Waters, 2013).

By creating pages and sites with structured data, Google can create rich snippets, which it defines as "detailed information intended to help users with specific queries.” Marked-up pages can help Google create snippets that contain ratings, vent details, pricing, and more (Notess, 2012).

Initially Google did not have events as entities. However, they now cover this (Pogue, 2012). With events included in the entities it gives organizers to include schema in their websites so that search engine can interpret it and display it in a richer format as shown below.
Figure 1: The rich listing of events by Google just above Adwords

Developers can refer Schema.org site to learn about structured data and improve how their sites appear in major search engines. This site can further help them embed machine-readable information in their code.

Figure 2: Schema website for events
1.4 Justification of the research topic

1.4.1 Academic Justification

Schema.org is an area which is relatively new and there are very few research papers available concerning to this topic. The research in this area is of utmost importance as findings of the research in this area will highlight the new trend in marketing and will further help the marketers in decision making and doing changes in their marketing campaign in order to capitalize upon the new technology and its offerings.

Although many researchers have explored the digital marketing field, these researches have not been industry specific and in case they have been industry specific, the ‘Event market’ and its digital marketing has certainly not been explored. Therefore, not much literature exists in relation to Events. Consequently, a research is required to explore and build a theory in this area.

Researchers come out with findings that are sometimes in line with previous researches, sometimes in contrast and sometimes adding to the already existing literature. There is no clear view and gaps in the literature exist, hence it is apparent that a research is required to fill these gaps. For example, Email marketing is one such field where different researchers have come out with contrasting findings and it has to be ascertained whether or not email marketing would be beneficial for event organizers in Dublin.

There is lack of framework and a research is required to build this. There are different target audiences for different events. Moreover, not everyone is active on all the channels and there must be differences in ways people search for events or in ways they come across new events. Therefore, the channels on which people search for events have to be ascertained so that event organizers could focus on those channels.

Social media has changed the ways businesses communicate with their audiences. For many businesses social media is the largest web presence. It provides opportunity for marketers for gaining visibility and sustainability in order to survive in this competitive era. Hence, it becomes important for event organizers to know which social media channels are best for them that can give those best results. Moreover, it is also important to know how users perceive ads on social media and what strategy can event organizers employ to effectively utilize social media.

Moreover, there is a lack of literature in regards to motivational and de-motivational factors for people to go to an event and this research aims to fill all these gaps.
1.4.2 Market Based Justification

1.4.2.1 Irish consumers believe there is a poor range of events in Ireland

Although there are number of events happening in Dublin, the Irish consumers believe that there is a poor range of events. As per the Mintel Event tourism Ireland report(2015), 21% of Irish consumers stated that a poor range of events are happening in Ireland and this has prevented them from attending events in the past.

*Therefore, it becomes clear that the event organizers are unable to reach their audiences efficiently and thus a research is required to address the same. Besides, a research is required to understand how and where do people search for events so that event organizers can improve presence on those channels.*

1.4.2.2 Events market expected to increase

As per Mintel Event tourism Ireland report(2015), the impact of events is expected to generate around €242.3 to the Irish economy with Northern Ireland contributing €67.8 million and Republic of Ireland contributing €174.5 million worth in revenue to the economy. Looking ahead at 2015, Mintel estimated that the market will continue to increase in value.

In 2015, a surge in the level of consumer confidence was witnessed, which in turn is expected to help boost the events tourism market.

The value of the events market (revenue received from ticket sales and secondary spending for example food and drink sales) was expected to increase by 2% in 2015 – making the events market worth €202.4 million.

*The importance of the topic is highlighted from the fact that the growing events market will help boost the economy and hence it becomes crucial for event organizers to capitalize upon the growing events market and strategizes to benefit them to the fullest. As the events market is expected to rise, this will give rise in the competition and therefore it is important to identify the ways in which audiences can be attracted towards an event. Not only the events sector is growing every year but even the audiences are interested in going to these events. Therefore looking at the growth in this sector and lack of literature the research in this area becomes meaningful and significantly important.*

1.4.2.3 Countryside events preferred more and remain one of the most popular events

As per the Mintel Event tourism Ireland report(2015), reports 30% of the Irish consumers visited a countryside fair (eg. Balmoral Show) in the last 12 months, making these events the most popular events among Irish consumers.
As the report suggests that countryside events are preferred more it becomes important for event organizers to identify the motivational factors for people to go to these events and strategize accordingly.

1.5. Conclusion

The findings of this research would be vital for event organizers as they can utilize the right marketing mix for each of their target market. Organizations can benefit from this research by knowing the best way to market the events that they host. For example, a restaurant which does not have much footfall can increase it sale by hosting a vegetarian meetup or event at its restaurant and can even make it more successful by choosing the right marketing channels.

Schema.org is a standard and a preferred method to structure the content to have rich snippet in search results. Snippets can be one of the most important determining factors for users to click through to website from the search results and users’ attitude towards rich snippet will be ascertained through this research.

The research advances that could result through this research could be kind of events that people mostly look for and how events can help to further boost up the sales. A lot of people are gaining benefit from the going to events and meeting like-minded people and thereby helping each other in their endeavors. The technology over the past decade has evolved in such a way that it is not only helping people to connect online but has also facilitated a safe face to face meeting. It is now up to event organizers to reach these people by making use of the same technology that can be beneficial for all the parties involved.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Literature Introduction

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016,p. 74) state that literature review provides a foundation on which our research will be built. It helps to develop a good understanding and insight into relevant previous research and the trends that have emerged.

Cooper and Shnider(2008, p.102) state that a literature search involves review of books as well as articles in journals or professional literature. Moreover, a literature search requires the use of library's online catalogue and one or more bibliographic databases and indexes.

Cameron and Price(2009, pp. 176-177) describe the 4 C’s that forms the base of a good literature review. The literature review should be Coherent, Critical, Contemporary and Conclusive. There should be a logical flow from start to finish while drawing on the strengths and limitations. It should bring out a balanced new thinking and produce some well-reasoned conclusions.

Following the above guidelines the literature review has been carried out. As the aim of the research is to find the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin, keeping this view in mind different literature themes have been identified based on people’s behavior towards these channels. Moreover, the gaps in the literature have been identified and further research has been done to fill those gaps.

2.2 Shift towards digital marketing

With the development in digital media there has been a change in consumer’s behavior in a sense that they are redirecting from traditional to digital media. However, consumers use different kinds of digital media and there is a difference in acceptance of media by the consumers. Rakic and Rakic (2014, p.190-192)

The process of digitalization has had an influence in the acceptance of new digital media and it is helping consumers to quickly convey messages to multiple people. As per the recent survey by branding and marketing firm Hinge, more than 80% of customers visit websites before they even speak to a firm. As per Sarah Jhonson Dobek president and founder of Insvantes, you can reach only fewer people through referrals where as you can create a much wider network with digital marketing.(Vien, 2015, p.1)

Similarly, Laroche et al.(2013) in their research perceived that the old type push marketing approaches based on mass media and massively produced products have become less and less effective. The online advertising engages people more than does traditional media. However, the effectiveness of internet marketing remains a controversial issue. For instance,
continuous decreasing rates of click through banner ads raise a question regarding internet marketing effectiveness. Studies describe perceived intrusiveness negatively influences a person’s experience by interfering with his or her privacy (Hsin et al., 2013).

2.3 Importance of social media channels

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, cited in Karimi and Nagibhi, 2015, p.88-89) describe social media as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” Social media offers an abundance of services on the Internet. An expanded definition is “a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels.”

The findings of the research done by Al-Bahrani et al.(2015) reveal that students have the strongest presence, in descending order, on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. However, based on their utilization preferences, these channels can be ranked as follows: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The survey indicates that students use their social media accounts more frequently than email. Over a four-month period, 948 surveys were completed by students and returned for analysis and the result showed that Facebook was among the most commonly used social media website followed by Youtube.

On similar lines, Weiler et al.(2015) in their research with 284 students found that they used social media websites for more than two hours each day. The average amount of time spent by students on social media websites during a 50-minute class period was 9.3 minutes. Additionally, 99.5% of students reported observing other students using social media websites during class on a daily basis.

However, Kumar et al.(2016) suggest that although firms are investing more in social media, marketing communications transmitted by television and e-mail are also important channels through which an organization can connect with their customers. The authors further suggest that social media marketing is important and it should be used for communication and building relationship with the customers. The authors in their study found that if a firm develops social media community with a dedicated fan base and builds relationship then it can positively impact its revenue and profits.

The study by O’Brien(2011,p.38)highlighted the significance of empowered consumers. The author states that although social media empowered consumer can be far more high maintenance than traditional consumer, they can act as an important sources of information and can impart significant influence on their online communities in their purchasing habits, helping businesses in their product and service design thus acting as a co-creator. As a result of consumer empowerment the researcher identified inconsistencies between traditional relationship marketing literature and the online relationship. The researcher perceived that the consumer have become more demanding than ever before and now have more expectations from a business they
are related to. The relationship is now bi-directional and is controlled by the consumer and hence social media becomes even more important.

As a result of amplified word of mouth Consumer purchasing decisions have shown positive trend, hence, social media marketing and more distinctly social networks are becoming increasingly important. Moreover, an average of 4.6 hours per week is spent on social media sites worldwide (Hubspot, 2012 cited in Karimi and Nagibhi, 2015, p.88) and hence it can be seen that the world is becoming more social. Social media enables firms to engage consumers in a timely and direct manner at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than with more traditional communication tools. This makes social media not only appropriate for large organizations, but for small and medium size companies as well.

Along similar lines Gunelius (2011) emphasizes on the importance of social media. The author states that technology has revolutionized this era. No longer is the business limited to communicating with a small audience. Every business has the potential to flourish if it is managed and operated effectively. This requires an awareness of current business scenarios, trends and assessment of the competitiveness of an organization. Businesses depend upon the clientele and clientele in turn depends upon an organizations method to approach them. With changing times there has been a change in these approaches as well. Social media is not all about connecting with friends but also connecting with like-minded people and there is a way to search them by using different tools available in social media. Social networking tools help an organization to engage with people who share similar interest and by using these tools a small organization can build relationship that can lead to more business. Moreover, the benefit of social media marketing is the ability to build relationship with actively engaged consumers. It gives an opportunity to have conversation, increase brand awareness and increase brand loyalty. In addition, Social media provides a platform where businesses can share important information and opportunities to their audiences.

2.4 Consumer’s attitude towards digital marketing channels

2.4.1 Differences in attitudes towards Email marketing

Martin et al.(2014) in their research found that majority of decision-makers tend to have negative attitudes toward e-mail promotional messages. Contrasts in state of mind existed between those of different ages and positions within organizations. The author further states that marketers can attempt to improve attitudes among recipients by building relationships with the recipients prior to sending e-mail advertising and marketing messages, and paying attention to the layout and content of the e-mails.

Similarly, the result of the research done by Kumar and Sharma(2014) indicated that the respondents were negatively inclined towards e-mail marketing. Respondents felt that the
marketers are unethical by using e-mail as the promotion of marketing tool. It was also revealed that the respondents recognized spam mails as a problem as these lead to the arousal of unnecessary curiosity to gain more information regarding the product, leading to wastage of time, energy and cost and, thus, forcing them to switch or change their e-mail addresses.

The study done by Chang et al. (2013) signify that the perceived intrusiveness of email advertising significantly affect consumers behavioral attitude toward email advertising. The results suggest that permission-based email is more effective as compared to spam email advertising.

In a similar study E. Fariborzi and M. Zahedifard (2012, p.233) found that when an E-mail gets through to the consumer, there are so many E-mails that needs to be looked at, it sometimes becomes troublesome for the individual to distinguish between solicited and unsolicited E-mails, in addition to have time to read through the emails. Besides, disadvantage of E-mail marketing is that it may transmit software viruses and it ends up making consumers suspicious even to the trusted sources.

Danaher and Rossiter (2011) suggest that despite the fact that email is well established and widely used, the traditional channels of television, radio, newspapers and direct mail retain their historically favored attributes of trust and reliability of information that make them still preferred by consumers. Moreover, it is even preferred by tech savvy younger consumers who use e-mail and SMS extensively. The same is the case with business receivers who receive more e-mail marketing communications than other consumers and they too are more likely to act on a marketing offer if it comes through traditional mass media.

Contrary to this Merisavio and Raulas (2004) in their research found that Consumers exposed to email marketing recommended the brand to their friends. Loyal customers acknowledged regular communication and different other informational content from the brand more than mere offers. These results encourage marketers to keep in frequent contact with customers via email with the aim of enhancing brand loyalty.

Similarly, DMA research indicates that email remains the favored strategy for brand marketing for consumers in every age bracket. (Lin, 2015, p.12)

It’s not surprising that consumers who do business with companies continue to be receptive to email. Moreover, it enables marketers to build genuine relationships. This is important, because ultimately people don’t buy from companies people buy from people. The survey done by Marketing Sherpa showed that a vast majority i.e. 91 % of U.S. adults like to receive promotional emails from companies they do business with. In fact, 86 % would like to receive promo emails at least monthly and 61 % at least weekly. Fifteen percent would like to receive these emails daily, twice a week (10 %), three times a week (4 %) and weekly (32 %). Nine percent do not want to receive promo emails from companies they do business with. (PR NEWS WIRE, 2015)

A large percentage of spam e-mails are those related to health topics. A survey of 200 college students was done to understand their behavior towards spam emails related to health topics. The results revealed that 32% opened and read the spam emails, besides, 12% ended up purchasing the products. (Joshua, 2012)
The survey done by Raad et al.(2010) show that most of the people are interested in the E-mail marketing services. However, they avoid it because e-mails are always directed to Spam box. The author concluded that using e-mail marketing service is risky and it cannot give the expected result without a solution to the problem of spam, while using spam technique is not a appreciated way to advertise the products.

On similar lines (Grimes et al., 2007, p. 319, cited in Blyth ,2011, p. 76) suggest that if an organization is sending emails to consumers without their consent or the messages are not relevant to the needs of the person, the company is actually spamming the consumer.

2.4.2 Differences in attitudes towards Facebook advertising

By the end of year 2013, Facebook had more than 1.23 billion users (The Guardian, 2014, cited in Gaber and Wright, 2014), which clearly shows that it can be used as a means of marketing by those who prefer innovative ways over traditional ways of marketing.

Gaber and Wright (2014) state that there are two ways available on Facebook for marketing and advertisement:

1) Paid Advertising: Here advertisers place advertisements that appear on the right hand sides of profile pages or the Facebook home page. Facebook provides ways to customize these advertisements so that they only appear to the target market. These targets can be based upon gender, location, age and interests etc. this helps in keeping the advertising efforts focused on the prospective customers.

2) Free Advertising: For this companies have an option of creating a fan page on Facebook. Facebook users have the option to like such pages and become fans of the corresponding brands. Any news related to the brands can be posted by the brand managers and the users would receive notifications which would keep them updated about the product and services of the company and would also make them more connected and engaged with the brand.

Conlon added that it costs only EUR 12 to reach 15,000 people using Facebook advertising. The Facebook page insights allow user to see who is viewing the posts demographically, in relation to gender, age and location. A user stated that he could not target his audience as accurately using any other form of advertising. (Sunday business post, 2015)

Facebook's standard advertisements are usually found along the side of the page. By clicking on one of these ads a consumer would most likely be redirected to the organizations website. Similar to suggested pages, consumers unwillingly receive standard advertisements on their facebook page. To check the effectiveness of facebook's standard ads Pikas and Sorrentino(2014) conducted a research where respondents were asked about their likelihood of overlooking these ads.84% of all respondents confirmed that they were very likely or likely to overlook advertisements on Facebook. Moreover, respondent’s mean probability of overlooking advertisements on Facebook
was 4.24 out of a 5-point scale (1=very unlikely through 5=very likely). By looking at these statistics the authors concluded that consumers are not receptive to Facebook advertising.

The respondents typically ignored placed advertisements because they are there to be social and not to look for advertisements. The respondents further stated that there was no motivation to click the advertisements as they were not relevant to their age and interests. Moreover, potential for viruses and trust issues also affected respondents decision to click on advertisements (Diffley et al., 2011, p. 56).

Similarly Lilley et al. (2012) in their research found that members avoided Facebook advertisements as much as possible and opposed data sharing/selling practices.

Contrary to this the main conclusion from the statistical analysis done by Yousif (2012, pp. 128-129) reveal that respondents showed a great deal of interest in advertising messages on Facebook. Moreover, the author also concluded that the respondents found advertising messages exciting and appealing. In addition, the respondents perceived messages trustworthy and reliable.

On similar lines Duffett (2015) confirm that advertising on Facebook has a positive influence on consumers intention to purchase.

In a similar research done by Vejacka (2012) results indicate a higher Facebook advertising efficiency than that of banner ads. Overall, a high positive attitude towards advertising was perceived among the companies, the reason being lower prices, broader reach to customers, easy campaign management and better possibility of customer feedback.

Contrary to this, General Motors Co. stopped advertising on Facebook after the auto maker’s executives determined their paid ads had little impact on consumers’ car purchases. GM’s pull back comes as marketers are increasingly questioning paid advertising on Facebook. Some advertisers said they find it very difficult measure the effectiveness of Facebook ads. (Terleps et al., 2012)

2.4.3 Differences in attitudes towards mobile marketing

The SMS’s are relatively easy to create and can be easily delivered in a very short span of time. However, the limitation of 160 characters is a drawback and not much can be explained about a campaign. One of the areas where SMS has an advantage over emails is that unlike emails SMS cannot be discarded as junk. Moreover, mobile phones being personalized device, people carry it with them and can receive messages ant time, anywhere. In addition marketers only pay per message and can reach a wider audience without additional cost. Besides, the more innovative and interactive the messages are there are more chances of a potential customer to respond to it.

SMS marketing is more powerful than traditional marketing strategies in a sense that SMS messages could be stored and read later and can even be forwarded to friends that can act as viral marketing Mczorkle et al. (2013).
Acceptance of SMS advertising is positively associated with intention to receive the message and further behavioral responses.(Dix et al., 2016)

Different researches suggest that consumers hold negative attitudes about mobile advertisements. It is thought that this is because consumers find mobile ads irritating, given the personal intimate nature of mobile phones. Gonzalo Luna Cortes and Marcelo Royo Vela (2013) complement this view by stating that privacy concerns and intrusiveness lead to the irritation that consumers feel after they receive an uninvited SMS advertisement. Besides, the data indicates that privacy concern doesn’t affect the attitude towards SMS ads directly but it does affect directly and positively the perceived intrusiveness on the mobile phones. This directly and positively results in perceived customer irritation which appears to have a major negative impact on attitude towards SMS ads. So, it is believed that privacy concern does affect attitude towards SMS ads negatively even though indirectly. To alleviate this concern companies should focus on personalizing their advertising messages as much as possible for target consumers.

Keeping with the above Findings of Pareeno et al. (2013) show that entertainment, irritation and usefulness are key drivers of teenagers’ attitude towards mobile advertising. Moreover, in order to increase the acceptance of mobile advertisement amongst teenagers companies should work upon improving teenagers’ attitudes towards mobile ads. Perceived usefulness is one of the major factors in doing so as it is known that perceived usefulness reduces irritation.

Contrary to this findings of Smuthkupt et al. (2012) show that SMS marketing is found to have a significant positive impact on brand awareness and perceived quality. Personalized, interactive and general messages significantly help in building brand awareness and they have a very positive influence on perceived quality. Findings show that consumers’ attitudes are favorable if ads were sent with permission. With the right choice of message, explicit permission enhances the effects of SMS marketing on brand association.

As the empirical data show, the respondents held negative attitudes about receiving mobile ads. This may have been because they found mobile ads irritating, given the personal, intimate nature of mobile phones. Besides, agreeing with the views of Smuthkupt et al. (2012) the author suggest that attitudes were favorable if advertisements were sent with permission. Thus, permission based advertising may become major mechanism in the mobile environment in the future.(Haq, 2012, p.285)

A study by Chhateja and Jain (2014) has found that the response rate for SMS Marketing is generally higher than that of other mediums but this medium must be used strategically. The researchers also state that the consumer should not be bombarded with several messages. An ideal frequency for a particular brand would be once in a week. Additionally, permission must be taken before sending messages to consumers.
2.4.4 Differences in attitudes based on generation

Moreover, Seungwon (2011, p.285-286) perceived that the younger respondents, between 20 and 41 years old considered Twitter/Facebook easy to use. Moreover, consistent with the findings of Weber and Ladkin(2004) and Fenich et al.(2011), members born after 1980, showed the strongest confidence in using Twitter/Facebook. In contrast, the 51year old and older group who were trained to use traditional verbal communication in their business, showed the least adoption of Twitter/Facebook and the least confidence in using Twitter/Facebook and IT.

Strutton et al.(2011, p.582) in their study indicated that both generation x and y engaged at uniformly high levels of personal or business email exchange, and exchanges on the social networking Sites Facebook and MySpace even while Gen Y used Facebook more frequently. But these results also suggest that neither cohort responds differently from the other to advertising. Messages in ways that marketers could use to inspire generationally targeted e-WOM effects and viral outcomes. To be certain, generational differences in e-WOM behaviors were blurred and thus difficult to detect in this study.
2.5.1 Sponsored vs Organic search results

Searchers seem to spend the longest observation time on the organic search results, then on the keyword advertising placed above the organic search results, and finally on the keyword advertising placed at the right-hand side of the page.(Lo et al., 2014)

On similar lines Moral et al.( 2015) in their case study found that paid keywords do not affect the volume and Quality of unpaid traffic. The author further suggests that an increase in traffic volume is not always due to paid keyword. Moreover, the lowest Quality visits come from sponsored links.

Despite the importance and growth of text search ads, little research has been conducted concerning how search and display ads may be jointly deployed or how a text search ad strategy can be maximized. Richardson(2006) conducted a test concerning factors that influence text ad effectiveness. The research shows that text ads can be very effective in driving response especially when the text ad format is consistent with the search motives of the visitor.

Agarwal et al.(2015) find that Organic results hurt the sponsored search performance. An increase in organic competition leads to a decrease in click performance of sponsored ads. Moreover, the author also concludes that organic competition has a higher negative effect on click performance than does sponsored competition.

Chan and Young(2015) find that consumers can be classified into two segments that exhibit distinct search behaviors. The value of ad position not only depends upon identities and position of the sponsored listing but also depends upon the composition of online consumers who exhibit distinct search behaviors.

Research findings of Mukherjee and Jansen(2014) show that the combination of brand focus with the gender orientation of key phrases is a major factor in predicting sponsored search performance and behavior. Gender orientation plays an important role when determining the performance advertising campaign. The results show that females are more attracted to use branded terms than males and this may be due to trust and customer loyalty created by brand image.

Zhongming et al.(2013) state that Consumers exhibit a lower level of trust toward vendors that appear in sponsored links than to vendors in organic search results. Consumers are less likely to purchase from vendors that appear in sponsored links than from those that appear in the organic search results.

2.5.2 Page ranking and sponsored links an old trend

Web searches have evolved in this era and they are increasingly seeking to use the structured content. The structured content leads to more richer and interactive results. Hence, these developments have made it absolutely necessary for web and application developers to be able to exchange their data in an interoperable way. The incremental increase in the competition for web page ranking led search engines to look beyond ranking of results to help improve search results.
Both Yahoo and Google used a technique of augmenting the snippets associated with each search result with structured data from results page. Initially the focus was on small number of verticals that also included events. For each category they augmented the snippet with some structured data so as to optimize both the users and webmasters experience. More the level of adoption from from webmasters the better the results. Key metrics were produced from a sample of 10 billion pages. The sample showed that 31.1% of the pages had schema.org markup implemented, a significant increase from 22% a year ago. The driving factor in the design of Schema.org was to make it easy for webmasters to publish their data.(R.v Guha, Dan Brickly, Steve Macbeth,2016)

(Desposito,2016) dubs semantic web or web 3.0 as the next big wave. The topic is of interest to the author as one of the mail goal is to make the content more accessible to the users and it is easy to use the new technology for the new content that is generated on daily basis, so as to make it more easily searchable.

The result of a questionnaire based survey was administered by Ahmed et al.(2013) to Internet users in order to determine their web use and searching habits demonstrated that firms are currently exploiting SEO at a limited level, that the use of social media is rare and that firms do not consider users’ searching habits. This study also reveals that 84% of web users spend up to two hours daily searching the Internet. The dominant search engine (i.e., the engine used by 90% of users) is Google. The use of social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace is high among users (i.e., 85%).

2.6 Success factors in digital marketing

2.6.1 Credibility
The findings of the research done by Moise and Cruceru(2014,p. 101-102) reveal that the events promoted through social media channels are considered more credible since 72% of the respondents trust what their friends, relatives or colleagues share or comment upon. Moreover, the respondents change their behavior if it is an event they are interested in and are likely to transmit the details of the event, further, announcing their intention to go and may attract other participants. However, the main problem is that sometimes there may be lot of people going to an event that may deter a potential customer to go to that event and the number of expected participants will diminish, the same can happen the other way around. But the event organizers can prevent this by restricting the participation through selling tickets or the participation of event.
2.6.2 Access to larger Audience

When asked to state their feelings or opinions about Facebook pertaining to their business use, every participant immediately launched into the positive aspects of Facebook. The most consistent response that participants gave was that Facebook made it easier to connect with more people participants can provide information to their existing clientele and fans quickly and efficiently and they are able to gain more access to potential clients and to secure them as new group members or for users to “like” their page. Itoga and Lin (2013, p. 2790)

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3:** Event Promotion process on facebook Source: Itoga and Lin (2013, P. 2791)
However, Obrien(2015,p.37) state that initially a business requests the friendship of a user, or a user is suggested to befriend the business by another contact. However the bond can be severed by eroding consumer trust at each warning point. This cycle recognizes the power of the consumer in the relationship formation process and it is not until all four stages are complete that brand bonding occurs and the consumer is considered to be in a relationship with the business. Evidently it can be a complex task to secure a relationship with a consumer on social media.

![Customer Contact Cycle](image)

**Figure 4:Customer Contact Cycle Source: Obrien, 2015, p.37**

### 2.6.3 Friend recommendations

The study done by Diffley et al. (2011) shows that Influence of Friends plays a vital role on social network sites. There was a general consent among the respondent that it would have an impact on their attitudes if their friends make any comments regarding products on social networking sites. One of the participants from the non student group responded that friends share similar interest and therefore if friends were to recommend something it would be of interest to them as well and they would retain it in their minds and it won’t be effective sending information to random people. The respondents felt that the information was pre-filtered if coming through friends. Only three respondents in the 35+ age group responded that recommendation by their friends had an influence on their opinion.

In a recent survey by businesswire (2014) show that based upon the extent to which various factors influence the sales of software and ebooks, they can be ordered as,
1) Friend recommendation (47%),
2) Ad on TV (31%),
3) Text ad on search results (23%),
4) Celebrity recommendation (14%).

The survey also reveals that Friend recommendation is the most influential of them. Over 90% of consumers that were interviewed trusted the recommendations made by someone they followed online. Their likelihood to buy the product was found as,

a) May be – 35%,
b) Very likely – 33%,
c) Definitely – 14%.

Furthermore, the research showed that percentages of respondents that trusted various social media platforms for such recommendations were,

- Facebook – 65%,
- Youtube – 36%,
- Twitter – 27%,
- Websites – 26%,
- Blogs – 19%,
- Instagram – 17%,
- Pinterest – 16%,
- LinkedIn – 14%

The indirect promotion of a product or service through social network increases the interest of others in the network and hence is more effective than banner advertising.

Findings show that online ads attract less attention levels than friends’ recommendations and that the recommendations on Facebook and other social media are perceived as more credible.

Therefore, personal recommendations are more likely to be observed than commercial ads.

Findings show that online ads attract less attention levels than friends’ recommendations (Barreto, 2013)

2.6.4 Email marketing success factors

2.6.4.1 Email Subject

It should be a phrase that encompasses a call-to-action thus, convincing the recipient to check the email. It must, of course, relate to the content of the email. It should be compelling and it should make the reader curious and excited to open and find out what the email is about. More attractive subjects bring more responses Dehkordi et al. (2012).
2.6.4.2 Length of Subject Line
Subject line should not be too long. 5 to 7 words usually are convincing enough. A length of less than 50 characters is assumed to be the best but this limit is also decreasing over time. B2B companies often use less than 20 characters, as most of the recipients are reading the emails on PDAs and mobile devices. So, in order to choose the subject length properly, senders must be aware of how their audiences will be checking their emails Dehkordi et al.(2012). Even Fariborzi and Zahedifard(2012, p.234) confirm that subject line with shorter length works better.

2.6.4.3 Email Content
Emails with attractive incentives get higher responses. Length of the email affects the response rate inversely, so the content should not be huge and should be kept to the point. It has also been found that the email contents made up entirely of images bring more responses. Dehkordi et al.(2012)

2.6.4.4 Targeting the Audience
It is best to know the target audience in advance. Any email communication sent should speak directly to a specific audience. An email may have the richest content in the world, but it won’t do any good if it was sent to the wrong audience (Short, 2012, p.19). Costa(2010) say that the only way to get most out of email marketing is to segment customer databases according to their profile, online behavior and preferences. This allows marketers to send tailored emails to individual users; not only it is cost-effective but has real impact on consumers. On similar lines Grossman(2011,p.12) suggests that if an email is sent to the wrong audience that is not interested in the topic, it is very likely to be overlooked given the amount of emails that are stuffed into the present day consumer’s inbox. It is best practice to send direct messages to the consumers who have requested to hear from you than sending blanket e-mails to a mailing list.

2.6.4.5 Other Email marketing Success Factors
The effective E-mail marketing is based on the consent of target or potential customers, for which the first aim must be to understand the target customer. (LIU,2012,p.26)

Subscribers tolerate more Email than many marketers realize. Not only the read rates decline with increased frequency of emails but it also gives rise to increase in complaints, (newsrx,2015). Frequency of sending mails is an important factor. Part of that is talking to them when they want to be talked to, because not everyone wants to receive an email once a day, or once a week. (Maeve,2011).
2.7 Literature Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a definite gap in the literature as some people do not like companies marketing on social media but when it comes to events the same people may get attracted if their friends are going to an event or when they are recommended by their friends to go to an event. Thus digital marketing may help find services and in spite of dislike of this kind of marketing it has to be ascertained whether people are more responsive towards events than compared to any other product or services when it comes to digital marketing and what motivates them to go to events. Email marketing can be a powerful tool to update interested users of the upcoming events and even this has to be ascertained whether event goers would like to receive emails and where do they look for new upcoming events. Moreover, not much previous research has been done to identify the utilization preferences of different digital marketing channels for events. Different researches have been done to identify users click preferences but not much has been researched about user’s preference of the rich snippet results.

There is a gap in the literature as it is unclear whether e-mail marketing is acceptable or not. As majority of the researches indicate that email marketing is perceived negatively but few researches indicate that email marketing is accepted by the people.

Thus it has to be ascertained what kind of marketing methods positively affects the people and how people react to email marketing and whether event lovers would like to receive emails regarding upcoming events.

The gap in the research is that the negative inclination may be for majority of products and services but not for events. Hence this is needed to be ascertained in addition to what motivates people for going to events. Is it the direct ad by the company or recommendation by friend’s and peers.

There is a gap in the research as utilization preferences have not been categorized in previous researches and it is not identified which digital marketing channels are utilized most for the events. Thus this research will identify the most preferred channels for events and their response rate.

There are many researches done on the importance of page ranking and SEO. Moreover, a lot has been discussed about organic search results and sponsored page results but not much research has been done on the rich snippet results and how consumers perceive these rich snippets. Schema.org being a relatively new technology there is a vast gap in the literature in terms of users click behavior and preferences.

There is not much literature available in relation to events and motivational factors motivational factors that influences people to go to events. Moreover, there is a generic literature available and definitely gap exists in relation to Gender, Age and professional differences in attitudes.

Social media channels have become part of our lives and there is a high utilization of these channels but not much literature is available in regards to utilization of these channels for event promotions.
Moreover, the literature indicates that junk emails have a positive response on certain topics. So it has to be confirmed whether people in Dublin read junk emails if they find them of their interest.

Mobile marketing is being widely used but it is not clear from the literature whether SMS is perceived useful or not. Moreover previous researches have been very broad and this case as well gap exists in relation to Age, Gender and Professional differences in attitudes towards SMS.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to “a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge.” (Saunders et al., 2016, p.124).

Crisan and Borza (2015, p.38) state that research methodology plays a vital role in academic research. Choosing appropriate research methodology to carry out a documented research involves not only a complex documentation, but also requires finding the right instruments and methods that can better present and measure the studied phenomenon. Thus, the aim of the research methodology is to provide a framework for planning and operational activities that follow up the implementation of the procedures.

3.2 Research Problem definition

Cameron and Price (2009, p.189-190) state that it is important to have clear and specific focus for the research from the beginning. A research Question should communicate to the stakeholders exactly what the research project is trying to achieve.

For the purpose of this research the, the research Question is expressed as follows:

“What are the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin”

3.3 Research Objective

As per Saunders et al. (2016, pp.45-46) research Questions are generally more accepted as an evidence of researchers clear sense of purpose and direction. Research objectives express how the researcher intends to structure the entire research process in order to answer the research Question. In other words, research objectives complement a research Question and provide means to operationalise it. For this very reason different research objectives have been detailed below.

1. To determine the importance of implementing schema for event organizers in Dublin Particularly:

   To determine

   - The most preferred search engine
   - The attitudes of people towards rich snippet
   - The importance of visibility on the first page of Google
   - To identify the channels where people search for events

2. To find the best digital marketing channels for event organizers in Dublin

   More specifically:
To gain understanding of

- Digital channels where people search for events.
- Digital channels through which people come across events.
- Digital channels on which people are most active.
- The usage frequency of emails
- The attitudes of people towards accepting email messages
- Attitude of people towards SMS
- Attitudes of people towards spam e-mails
- Best social media channel for event organizers
- Whether people pay attention to facebook ads

3. To determine Success factors for event organizers in Dublin

   More specifically:

   To evaluate

   - The best time for hosting an event
   - The frequency of marketing communication
   - The target audience and preferred channels
   - The motivational and de-motivational factors towards going to an event

4. To find differences in attitudes based on gender, age, status type

   Particularly:

   To analyze and compare

   - Behavior towards rich-snippet, organic and sponsored links
   - Frequency of use of different digital marketing channels.
   - The motivational and de-motivational factors towards going to an event
   - Attitudes towards digital marketing channels

3.4 Rational behind the Objectives

The above mentioned objectives have been developed from the academic literature review. Not only there is enough literature on the topic being discussed but there also exists gaps in the literature.

It was not clear from the previous research findings whether email marketing is acknowledged by the general population or not. Moreover, not much research has been done in regards to rich snippets, besides, attitude of people towards rich snippets, organic and paid results cannot be determined from literature. In addition, there were differences in attitudes towards acceptance of facebook advertisements and this research has fundamentally concentrated on filling these gaps.
Friend recommendation plays a crucial part in motivating people towards going to an event but there is a general literature available and a research is required to determine differences in attitudes based on Gender, Age and status type. Moreover, apart from emails it is not clear whether people open and read spam e-mail. Hence, through this research the researcher will aim to fill up the gaps in the literature and determine the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin.

Not every event is there for everyone therefore focusing on the target market becomes important for the event organizers. Therefore, differences in search behaviors of people have to be analyzed so that event organizers can focus on those channels for that specific group. Besides, usage of channels, the most used channels and frequency of use are key parameters that can help in answering the research Question. Moreover, there is not much clarity on the attitudes of people towards SMS promotional messages.

Apart from all the above different key success factors for event organizers in Dublin have to be ascertained without which the research question cannot be answered.

### 3.5 Methodology Introduction

The following section is based on the research methodology that will be applied all throughout the investigation with the aim to answer the research Question i.e. “What are the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin?” The research will follow process as detailed by Saunders et al. (2016, p.124) in research onion that can be seen in the below figure.

![Research Onion](image)

**Figure 5:** Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2016)

Saunders et al. (2016) defines research as “something that people undertake to find out things in a
systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge". Research "onion" is classified into six stages: philosophy, approach, choice, strategy, time horizon and techniques & procedures.

This model suggests a comprehensible structure for the appropriate strategies to address a research question. According to the research 'onion', as shown in figure, the entire process is in the form of an onion comprising of various layers.

This chapter details the research process adopted and further gives an explanation of the data collection and data analysis methods that will be employed, including a justification for the selection of approach and method.

The sampling method that will be used is discussed by the researcher and most importantly the research has been done ethically and major ethical issues that were addressed have been detailed. Moreover, the section continues with a discussion of the limitation of the methodology.

### 3.5.1 Research Philosophy

As per Saunders et al.(2016,p.124) ,research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. There are 5 major research philosophies: positivism, Critical realism, Interpretivism, Post-modernism and pragmatism.

The pragmatism philosophy has been followed as both Quantitative and Qualitative are valued. Because the researcher is using both Qualitative and Quantitative data collection techniques, the research will be associated with pragmatism as this philosophy influences mixed method research design. For a pragmatist the adoption of one of the philosophical position may be unhelpful and do not see it as end of their continuum and they may choose whichever philosophy or a mixture to help them proceed with their research.(Tashakkori and Teddlie,2010 cited in Saunders et al.,2016,pp.169-170)

Creswell (2003,p.12 ) states that Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and this applies to mixed methods research in that researcher draw conclusion from by weighing quantitative and qualitative data equally. It employs strategies that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Approach</th>
<th>Knowledge Claims</th>
<th>Strategy of Inquiry</th>
<th>Methods</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Postpositivist assumptions</td>
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<td>Measuring attitudes, rating behaviors</td>
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<td>Qualitative</td>
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<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Emancipatory assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>Pragmatic assumptions</td>
<td>Mixed methods design</td>
<td>Closed-ended measures, open-ended observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Four Alternative Combinations of knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry and methods Source:(Creswell,2003,p.20)
3.5.1 Research Approach

Inductive and deductive approaches are the two key categories of research approach that can be implemented by the researcher. For the purpose of this study inductive approach has been employed by the researcher.

As not much theory is available regarding events and strategies that event organizers can employ, an inductive research is required to come out with a strong conclusion. Hence the researcher wants to explore a topic and develop theoretical explanation once data is collected and analyzed. An inductive research is intended to allow meanings to emerge from data that is collected to identify patterns. (Saunders et al., 2016, pp. 51-52)

Deductive approach is not being used as the principle of hypotheses forming and testing is what underpins this approach. Using this approach a researcher conducts a tight experiment or other careful controlled research design to test the hypotheses with measurements and statistics (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 75).

Creswell (2003, p. 9) suggests that the process of Qualitative research is largely inductive and the researcher generates meaning from the data collected. In addition, Brannen (2008, p. 48) states that many surveys are descriptive and some Quantitative research are directly concerned with theory generation.

Saunders et al. (2016, p. 145) states that if a research starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon and further a theory is generated or build then the researcher is using an inductive approach. In other words in Inductive approach the data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework.

As not much theory exists in relation to the research Question that is being examined, it has prompted researcher to use an inductive approach.

3.5.2 Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2016, p. 177-179) define research strategy as a plan of how a researcher will go about answering his or her research Question. There are 7 different approaches to research strategy that a researcher can employ. These are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research.

For the purpose of this study the researcher has chosen survey strategy. Survey has been chosen as they allow the collection of standardized data from a sample population without incurring lot of expenditure besides allowing easy comparison. Not only the surveys are considered authoritative but it can easily be explained and be understood by the participants. As per Bryman (1989, p. 85) Survey is associated with Questionnaires and interviewing.

Davies (2007, p. 51) suggest that within Quantitative research there are two methodologically related but very different approaches: Survey and Experimental research. The author further states that the research carried out as a survey will emerge with a finding that describe and interpret aspects of current psychological social reality and that’s what our aim is, to find the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin. Using survey, user’s attitude and response towards digital marketing channels can been determined to proceed towards a conclusion.
This research will employ mixed-method approach by using the questionnaire as a quantitative and interviews as Qualitative data collection technique. The mixed method employs three general strategies (Creswell, 2003, p.16):

1. Sequential
2. Concurrent
3. Transformative

The researcher has followed concurrent procedures where both Quantitative and Qualitative data were converged to provide a comprehensive analysis. In this procedure the researcher collects both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information to interpret overall results (Creswell, 2003, p.16).

Moreover, Quantitative data helps in examining relationship between variables which are measured numerically and analyzed using a range of statistical and graphical techniques (Saunders et al., 2016, p.166).

As per Cooper and Schindler (2008, p.185-186), Qualitative studies may be combined with Quantitative ones to increase the perceived Quality of research especially when a Quantitative study follows a Qualitative one and provide validation for the Qualitative findings.

### 3.5.3 Research Choice

As per Saunders et al. (2016) a researcher can choose from two different research methods that are Mono and Multiple. The researcher has chosen mixed method that includes the use of both Quantitative and Qualitative data collection.

![Figure 7: Research Choices](Saunders et al., 2016, p.167)

Qualitative data gives rich explanations but no verifiable evidence whereas Quantitative data gives verifiable evidence but provides fewer explanations. A mixed method approach overcomes the short comings of using individual methods in isolation. Hence mixed methods have been chosen. (Cameron and price, 2009)
Similarly Creswell (2003, p. 5) states that mixed method constitute of both Quantitative and Qualitative methods where Quantitative is used to collect numbers and Qualitative is used to collect words and combining both these approaches leads to better understanding of the research problem.

Mixed method is a rich field for the combination of data because with this design words, pictures and narrative can be used to add meanings to numbers (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 21 cited in Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3).

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Some Probing, Interviewer Driven</td>
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<td>Generates, Develops</td>
<td>Tests and/or Generates, Develops</td>
</tr>
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Table 1: Table: Choosing a research design Source: Domegan and Fleming (2007, p. 69)

Domegan and Fleming (2007, p. 24) state that research design is an overall blueprint, guideline, plan of action for the rest of the research process and classified into three types of research i.e. Exploratory, Descriptive and Casual. For the purpose of this research both Exploratory and Descriptive research has been used by the researcher.

Mc Givern (2006, p. 53-54) states that Exploratory research is used to explore an issue or a topic. Besides, the purpose of descriptive research is to answer more clearly the research Question. Descriptive research aims to build a picture of a market, set of customers, a set of experiences and can be used to examine some of the key issues faced by marketers. Therefore the researcher has used both exploratory and descriptive research in order to answer the research Question more evidently.
3.6 Primary Data Collection

3.6.1 Qualitative data collection: Semi Structured Interviews

Out of the three types of interviews: structured, Semi-structured and un-structured, Semi structured interviews were conducted by the researcher.

As per Saunders (2016, p.391) in semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of themes and possibly some key Questions to be covered. Moreover, the order of the Questions may also be varied depending on the flow of the conversation.

The survey Questions can be classified into two groups: closed and open ended. In closed Questions list of acceptable responses is provided to the respondent whereas these are not provided in case of open ended Questions. The Questions consisted of open ended Questions as we get more detailed information by using these types of Questions besides it allows the researcher to obtain answers that are unanticipated. However, there is a disadvantage of using open ended Questions that it can take a longer time to answer the Questions properly (Fowler, 2009, p.100).

3.6.2 Advantages of interviews

Interview responses are readily accepted and thus provide credible support for the argument. Different Questions can be asked if something interesting emerges. Interviews are social interaction. It enables to ask supplementary Questions to clarify or extend answers given and to explore any unexpected or apparently contradictory answers (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 368).

3.6.3 Disadvantages of interviews

The method is not simple. Interviewing and afterwards analyzing interview data takes high level of skill. Skills include establishing and sustaining rapport asking Questions clearly and without influencing answers, steering the interview and listening. Interviews are time consuming. It can take a long time to arrange interviews, travel and reschedule. Time required for interviewing restricts the sample size. (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 369).

3.6.4 Population

The researcher interviewed 3 different people who are responsible for promoting events for their respective organizations. Face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted for the first two interviewees and audio was recorded. A face to face meeting with third interviewee was also done but he agreed to reply to the questions over email.

The three interviewees were
1. Andrea Leyden (Digital Marketing executive at the Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin 2)
2. Sujay Nandkumar (Ex Founder and president of the NCI cricket club and member of Irish University Cricket Association Governing Body)
3. Kartik Kweera (Team Leader, Conference and Events, Clarion Hotel, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22)

All the three interviewees are from different backgrounds i.e. Marketing, Sports and Entertainment respectively. Their different background would help researcher come out with a more definite
conclusion.

3.7 Quantitative data Collection: Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a standard set of predetermined questions presented to the people in the same order. Questionnaires are a means of asking large number of people about what they think feel or do. Self-administered Questionnaires were used because it enabled the researcher to contact participant who might otherwise be inaccessible. Besides, these kind of surveys are considered more impersonal and provides more anonymity when compared to any other communication mode (Cooper and Schindler, 2008, p.226-227).

![Type of Questionnaire](image)

Source: (Saunders et al., 2016, p.440)

The Questionnaire consisted of 23 Questions. The Questionnaire consisted of nominal Multiple-Choice single response scale, Multiple-choice multiple response scale and to understand the attitudes of people a five-point-likert scale was used. Questionnaires were all closed ended that provided a number of alternative answers from which a respondent can choose.

3.7.1 Advantages of Questionnaires

Respondents generally see them as an acceptable approach and can be distributed without much expense to a large number of people. Moreover, their return gives lots of data to analyze and include in the final report (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 334).

Questionnaires are relatively cheap to produce and require much less time to administer than individual interviews.

Questionnaires save time because individuals can complete them without any direct assistance or intervention from researcher. By using emails a broad geographical area can be surveyed. Besides, people may be more willing to be truthful because their anonymity is virtually guaranteed. As stated by Salkind (2006, p.138) important points have been assumed when designing a Questionnaire.

- The Questionnaire has been designed so that it does not demand a lot of time, expense and effort of the respondent.
- The Questionnaire has been designed in direct context to the purpose of this research.
- The Questionnaire contains interesting and engaging Questions that also highlights the
author's enthusiasm about the topic.

3.7.2 Internet Questionnaires

These Questionnaires can be sent over email and SMS in the form of hyperlink (weblink). The advantages of using Internet Questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2016, p.476) are

- The Questionnaire can easily be delivered as a hyperlink within an e-mail, SMS and on social media.
- The recipients can be contacted in advance advising them to expect a Questionnaire
- Unlike paper Questionnaires the visual appearance will help ensure a high level of response. Electronic Questionnaires can be significantly cheaper than hard copy Questionnaires. Moreover, they allow sending pre-survey notice of the Questionnaires.

The advantages of e-mailing Questionnaires are obvious as you can send out large number relatively cheaply. You can send pre-Questionnaire notification and reminder to those who have not returned their completed Questionnaires. Mails and social were chosen as through these channels a larger crowd can be approached and in- spite of expected low response rate a significant amount of answered Questionnaires can be received back. (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 358)

3.7.3 Disadvantages

The main disadvantage is that you will be limited in your sample group to those who have access to email or the internet and then to those who have the technological capabilities to complete the form. Questionnaires are an effective way to gather large Quantities of information from groups of people provided they are well designed and distributed. A poorly designed Questionnaire can generate misleading information or even no information at all. (Cameron and Price, 2009, p. 358-359)

The research purpose and research objective must determine the content of the Questions asked. Questions must be understandable by the audience.

The visual representation of the Questionnaires has to appeal to the respondent group. Well designed and well executed Questionnaires can produce a large Quantity of valuable information. They can generate Quantitative data to inform managerial decision making.

As stated by Saunders et al.(2016, p.477-478) following points were considered before sending the Questionnaire

- Hyperlink to the Questionnaire was emailed with a cover letter explaining the receivers the purpose of the research
- The hyperlink was sent as part of email rather than attached file as these can contain viruses. Emails were not sent to multiple mailing lists as this is likely to result in individuals receiving multiple copies of the email

3.7.4 Pilot Testing
As per Saunders et al.(2016, p.473) prior to sending the Questionnaires a pilot test was done with the help of one of the respondents. The pilot test was done to ensure that the respondents have no problem in answering the Questions and also to ensure that the hyperlink was functioning properly and there was no problem in recoding the data.

### 3.7.5 Sampling - Selecting Respondents

Bryman and Bell(2003,p. 93) define sample as the segment of the population that is selected for investigation.

Cameron and Price(2009,p.226) state that for Quantitative research the bigger the sample the better it is but up to a certain point. The size of the sample should depend upon degree of variation, the sort of analysis that is intended to be carried out and type and strength of conclusion that the researcher is seeking.

Blumberg et al.(2005,p.228) suggest that there are several compelling reasons for sampling, including

- Lower cost
- Greater accuracy of results
- Greater speed of data collection
- Availability of population elements

The above points were considered when selecting the respondents. The non-probability sampling technique was used due to time constraint and involved people that the researcher had direct access to. The sampling included not only event organizers but students and working professionals as well as they tend to go to different events regularly.

The data was collected from the above samples as they are the ones who are more involved in events and hence there will be a higher probability of collecting an accurate data thereby leading to a definitive conclusion. It could be said that purposive sampling is used by the researcher as judgment was made to select samples that will best enable to answer research Questions. (Saunders et al.,2016,p.301)

In order to collect the data the Questionnaire was sent through e-mail to more than 400 students by DBS student society head Adam Crowther. Besides, the Questionnaire was floated on DBS society facebook page. In addition, the researcher sent out the Questionnaire to different professionals in Dublin.

The respondents were requested to forward the survey to their friends and relatives in Dublin, therefore it could be said that snowball sampling technique was also used by the researcher. (Saunders et al.,2016 ,p.303)
3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Analysis of Qualitative data

The nature of the Questions and the following discussions meant that data will be captured by audio recording the conversation. Once the interview was done researcher typed the taped transcript of the conversation.

There are different approaches towards analyzing Qualitative data comprising of Grounded theory method, template analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis etc.

The researcher has chosen Thematic Analysis because it allows searching for patterns across different data sets that have been collected. Thematic analysis can be helpful in integrating related data drawn from different transcripts; identify patterns; produce a thematic description; develop and test explanation and theories based on patterns.

Thematic analysis can be used irrespective of inductive or deductive approach. As the researcher is using an inductive approach the themes under consideration would be linked to the existing theory.(Saunders,2016,p.579)

3.8.2 Analysis of Quantitative data

Data Analysis procedures can be divided into two stages first, creation of Questionnaires and second, translation and interpretation of results. The Questionnaire was created through online tool survey monkey. The researcher mainly used the 5 point Likert scale. As the researcher analyzed the attitudes of people the data was categorized into different demographic information. The data was further analyzed with the help of bar chart and pie chart. The analysis was also done to show the relationship between variables.

3.9 Research Ethics

Cooper and Schindler(2008, p.35) define Ethics as “norms or standards of behavior that guide moral choices about our behavior and our relationship with others”.

Diener and Crandall(1978,cited in Bryman and Bell,2003) have broken down ethical principle in business research into 4 main areas

- Whether there is harm to participants
- Whether there is lack of informed consent
- Whether there is invasion of privacy
- Whether deception is involved

Keeping the above points in mind, all the data has been collected from respondents in an ethical manner and with full consent. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants was maintained at all times. None of the respondents had access to answers of any other respondent; hence the data collected was not influenced by what the consensus of the majority was.

Permission was taken before sending out emails to the staff and students of DBS, However, the permission for sending out Questionnaires to all staff members was not granted hence respecting this decision only DBS student were sent the Questionnaires.
As the researcher required DBS students to participate in the survey a request was sent to the DBS society head and appointment was fixed so that the mails could be sent to more students through a perceived reliable source.

Each respondent was explained purpose behind research study through a cover letter that was not only sent along with the Questionnaire link on the emails but also on the social media.

Moreover, Saunders et al.(2016,p.244) states that primary data should not be made up or altered and results should not be falsified. In addition, the findings should be reported completely and correctly irrespective of whether they contradict expected outcomes.

### 3.10 Limitations of Methodology

The practical issues that were faced was sending emails to event organizers and convincing them to give an interview. Another issue in data collection was that the response rates on emails and social media was less as there was no financial incentive given to the participants.

A longitudinal time horizon .i.e. conducting this research over a longer period of time would have been more productive and would further give validity to the conclusion. Due to time constraint the sample size was not large enough.

Further, there is lack of theory and journal articles in relation to events. A lot has been discussed about digital marketing in previous researches but not much related data is available in terms of digital marketing of events.

Another limitation to this research was relying on the truthfulness and reliability of the responses from the participants hence this research counts on the information participants contribute and that they do not affect research outcomes by answering otherwise.

Schema.org being relatively new not much data was available regarding the same. Although the researcher looked at this area it's been difficult for him as there is not enough literature available. Moreover, as one of the objectives of the researcher was to determine the importance of implementing schema for event organizers in Dublin, not many people know about it and it was difficult to find an expert opinion on this topic therefore only Quantitative method was used to answer this objective whereas for other objectives both Qualitative and Quantitative research was used.

### 3.11 Conclusion

The above section presented and analyzed the key methods used for the completion of this dissertation. Moreover, a justification was provided for using each of these methods. It also included the rationale behind the research objectives and hypothesis generated from the literature review. This chapter not only highlights the model that has been used to answer the research Question but also details the research ethics and limitations encountered during the course of this dissertation.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

Not only there are fewer research papers in relation to events but there is also not much clarity from the existing literature about the acceptance of different marketing channels and consumers attitudes towards these channels. There is no particular framework that clearly highlights the digital marketing effectiveness and strategies for event organizers. Hence, this research addresses these issues and the finding of this research will go into the existing pool that would further set specific agendas for future research.

The first objective is to determine the importance of implementing schema for event organizers in Dublin and this can be answered only through Quantitative research as the topic is relatively new and researcher could not get the expert opinion on the same, hence the researcher will have to analyze users search behavior to come out with the findings and therefore the findings of Qualitative research method will be used to answer objective 2,3 and 4. In addition, Quantitative research will also be used to find answers to Objective 2, 3 and 4. The findings of both Qualitative and Quantitative research will be converged to come out with a more validated answers as it is important to know the perspective of both the event organizers and the respondents in order to see if they are on the same page.

4.2 Findings of the Qualitative research method

This section addresses objectives 2, 3 and 4 by conducting semi -structured interviews with 3 event organizers in Dublin. Hence the Qualitative findings are strictly in relation to event organizers in Dublin and events held in Dublin. The comments from all the interviewees have been analyzed, moreover, similar patterns and differences have been identified.

4.2.1 Research Objective 2

To determine the best digital marketing channels for event organizers in Dublin

The digital marketing channels that gets best results for event organizers in Dublin.

The interviewees were asked about the digital marketing channels they use and channels which gives them the best results. All the interviewees stated that E-mail worked best for them and they prefer using emails more than any other channel. Facebook was also a preferred channel by two of the interviews as they use it quite extensively but it was the second best preferred channel after emails.

Miss Andrea stated that they do not use facebook and considers only email as an effective channel.
Moreover, Miss Andrea also stated that “We tried promoting through social media such as twitter for example and Linked in but they both have their disadvantages and they did not really prove their effectiveness to cover the cost especially and the reach is not high enough for either channel so email would be the number one channel through which we can link with our audience”

Email works best for her and she does not really use social media because the type of audience she reaches out for are professionals and they tend to use email a lot more. According to her, the audience use social media for relaxing and do not use it for work so it does not make any sense to connect with them on social media.

Conforming with the same, Mr Kartik suggests that “We interact with elderly audiences mostly via emails. While students are contacted through social media as they are immensely active on it.”

Even Mr Sujay suggest that it’s not appropriate to send them messages on their facebook accounts, though they do have account for their cricket club but preferably emails should be used.

This is in similar lines with (Difflay et al.2011) who stated that the respondents typically ignored placed advertisements because they are there to be social and not to look for ads. Moreover, this is contrary to the findings of Danaher and Rossiter(2011) who stated that traditional channels work better than emails.

A per Mr Sujay Nandkumar facebook is very important for them “Very, Very important but again we have lots of people come down to watch the tournament and support the tournament itself and that is just because of facebook because our target market being student’s, young lads between 18 and 30”

Mr Sujay further stated that youngest being his target market facebook is the marketing tool for him as it helps to get adds viral like reaching their friends, friends to friends, to family, relatives, etc.

Likewise Mr Kartik feels that “facebook plays a vital role in marketing strategy since almost all young groups are immensely active on Facebook, and this becomes easier for us to explain and promote our event as the message is sent across their friend’s network”

This is contrary to the findings of Lilley et al.(2012) who found that members on facebook avoided data sharing practices.

Mr Kartik uses facebook ads as well and has been getting good response while Miss Andrea uses Google Adwords and she further stated that it’s very hard to find keywords for events planning and although she has two Adwords campaign running, it’s the email that gets her the best results.
4.2.2 Research Objective 3

To determine the success factors for event organizers in Dublin

Different factors for different events

After discussion with all the three interviews it can be said that success factors vary by event type. For example if it’s an outdoor event then weather plays an important factor. Selecting a suitable time when it’s not raining and Ireland’s weather being unpredictable, the outdoor event organizers have to look into it and plan their events accordingly.

Moreover, for indoor event organizers car parking, the venue size, beautification and the level of service are important factors.

But the most important factor that was mentioned by two of the interviewees was the location. A centrally located venue helps in attracting most of the people.

Moreover, Mr Kartik stated that reviewing the type of events that are being hosted is also very crucial. He further stated that as a lot of Asian students are coming to Ireland, and there are not enough events that interest this category of audience; so they hosted Bollywood Night in March 2016 which attracted Asian students in good numbers. Thus, hosting events that people are looking for and targeting those audiences is also an important success factor.

Timing of events

Summers was found to be less busy as most of the people go out on holidays especially professionals so selecting an appropriate audience at an appropriate time is also a crucial factor for event organizers.

Miss Andrea stated that “summer would be bit risky as most people go on holidays, so we will prefer all events majorly to be held post summer to attract more audiences”

Besides, planning events well in advance is an important factor. As per Mr Sujay, when asked about number of days before he starts his marketing campaign stated that “weather is a great factor and once you get the word out there and then what days suits them and then what days suits you and what days the grounds are available and so on and so forth. There are a lot of factors, a lot of cog wheels that are moving, they all have to fit in at the same time. It all comes early 2-3 months in advance”

In addition, Mr Sujay and Mr Kartik, both emphasized on the fact that events for students should be hosted at a time when they do not have their exams. Mr Kartik stated that he cannot plan any of the events during office hours and college timings, thus most of his events tends to be on weekends or bank holidays.
**Reminder messages and their frequency**

Mr Kartik stated that "Yes, we do send reminders a day before the event "."It is very important as some of the audiences may miss the event if they don’t get a reminder. Due to their day to day activities they may not remember the date and time of event and thus it is very important to send reminders so that we don’t lose those customers.”

As per discussion with Mr Sujay, a sporting event requires teams to be updated on a regular basis so it becomes a necessity for the event organizer to keep in touch more frequently where as for other kinds of events bombarding the customer frequently may be perceived negatively. Hence, sending reminders a day before an event is a better option.

However, Miss Andrea stated that they do not send reminder, therefore Quantitative research will be used to further authenticate the answer.

### 4.2.3 Research Objective 4

**To find the differences in attitudes based on gender, age and status types**

*Event organizers preference of marketing channels for different audiences*

Two interviewees had a specific set of audiences that they communicated with. For example Mr Sujay Nandkumar communicated with college students and most of his audiences were males.

Miss Andrea communicated by and large with women. Moreover, Miss Andrea stated that the audiences she communicates with are older professional women who are highly educated and she created promotional messages that would appeal to them.

But, Mr Kartik interacts with everyone and does not have a specific set of audience, so his point of view would be very crucial in order to answer this question

According to Mr Kartik, “Yes Age is an important factor. Most of our clients are above 40+ working professionals and they are not very active on social media. We generally contact them over emails whereas social media works best when we host an event for a younger crowd”

In addition, both Miss Andrea and Mr Kartik use phone calls as well in order to contact their audiences.

This is in line with the findings of Seungwon (2011, p.285-286), who suggests that older group use traditional communication methods and have shown least adoption of social media.

So, there is an indication that difference exists in attitudes based on age and profession but there is not much clarity that differences in attitudes exists based on gender hence quantitative research will be used to further validate the answer.
4.3 Findings of the Quantitative research

The Quantitative research findings were revealed through the analysis of 106 Questionnaires that were completed by the respondents. As the objective of the research is to find the best digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers in Dublin, the quantitative research becomes an utmost importance in order to determine the attitudes of people towards digital marketing channels. Moreover, as objective 1 could not be answered through qualitative research and to further validate the findings of Qualitative research, Quantitative research becomes significantly important. In total 23 Questions were asked in pursuance of answers to the objectives.

4.3.1 Demographics of participants

Question: Indicate your age group

In order to obtain information about the ages of the respondents they were asked to select the age bracket that they belong to. Majority of the respondents (49.06%) were in 26-30 age bracket followed by 18-25(31.13%).These two age brackets commutatively accounted for 80% of the sample population. 7.55% of the respondents were in 31-35 age bracket followed by 6.60% and 5.66% in 40+ and 36-40 respectively.

![Age group of respondents](image)

Figure 9: Age group of respondents

Gender distribution of the participants

Question: Indicate your Gender

![Gender of respondents](image)

Figure 10: Gender of respondents
Overall, 106 participants took part in the survey out of which 57 were males and 49 were females which accounted for a percentage of 53.77% and 46.23% respectively.

**Respondents Type**

As majority of the event goers are young people consisting of students and working professionals the survey was distributed among the students of DBS and other working professionals in order to come out with accurate findings. In addition, the survey was sent to over 400 students by email and was also floated on the DBS student society facebook page. We noticed that there was only one unemployed participant. The majority of the respondents were students who accounted for 72.55% of the survey respondents and rest 26.42% were working professionals.
4.3.2 Research Objective 1: To determine the importance of implementing schema for event organizers in Dublin

Question: Google is the most preferred search engine used by me?

![Figure 12: Respondents preference of Google search engine](image)

The question was asked to highlight the importance of implementing Schema for event organizers in Dublin. The Question becomes even more important as Google is the only search engine that gives rich snippet result for “Events”.

It is evident from the above figure that Google is the most preferred search engine with 96.23% of the respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. 1.89% people were neutral and only 1.89% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. We noticed that none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. The survey highlights the significant dominance of Google search engine.
**Question: I generally do not look beyond the first page of Google search results?**

![Bar Chart](chart1.png)

This Question addresses the importance of visibility on the web. The Question becomes even more important as rich snippet results for events are displayed at the top of the search results. The results show that 62.27% of the people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. However, 19.81% were neutral and only 17.93% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Question: I tend to click first on the links with rich snippets i.e. thumbnail pics, details, reviews and ratings than normal blue links on the Google search page and sponsored links**

![Bar Chart](chart2.png)

The Question aims to identify the users search behavior on search engine and further signifies the importance of implementing Schema. Majority of the respondents i.e. 56.19% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. 25.71% were neutral and only 18.09% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
**Question: I search for new events on**

[Chart showing search channels and percentages: 50.49% for Search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.), 15.53% for Event based websites (meetup.com, eventbrite.com, etc.), 33.98% for Social Media.]

Figure 15: Channels on which respondents search for events

The Question intended to identify the channels where people search for events so that event organizers could focus on those channels. The results show that a significant number of people i.e. more than half the respondents (50.49%) search for new events on search engine. A good number of respondents (33.98%) search events on social media and only 15.53% search for new events on event based websites. In case the respondent searched for events on some other channel, an additional text field was provided to the respondents where they could type the answer. 3 valid answers were entered. The three respondents reported that they searched for events on Dublin event Guide, The Guardian and Facebook.

**4.3.3 Research Objective 2: To determine the best digital marketing channels for event organizers in Dublin**

**4.3.3.1 To find whether email and mobile marketing will be effective for event organizers in Dublin**

**Question: I check my emails daily**

[Chart showing email usage frequency: 78.30% for Strongly Agree, 16.98% for Agree, 2.83% for Neutral, 1.89% for Disagree, and 0% for Strongly Disagree.]

Figure 16: Usage frequency of emails
The Question aims to ascertain the importance of email as marketing channels. Majority of the respondents i.e. 95.28% strongly agreed or agreed that they check their e-mails daily. Contrary to this only 1.89% disagreed and 2.83% were neutral. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Question: I tend to forget an event if I do not get a reminder**

![Diagram showing responses to the question](image17)

The Question assesses the importance of sending reminders to the people. Majority of the respondent’s i.e. 56.6% agree or strongly agree with the above statement. However, 29.24% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 14.15% were neutral.

**Question: I would prefer to get information and reminder about upcoming events of my interest on**

![Diagram showing respondents preference of channels](image18)

55
The Question proposes to ascertain the Importance of Emails and SMS as a marketing channel. The results show that email is the most preferred channel where people would like to get information and reminders about upcoming events. In addition, a quite significant number (32.08%) of the respondents would like to get the information and reminders on both Email & SMS. 11.32% selected only SMS. Contrary to these, 11.32% would not like to receive information and reminder on either channel.

**Question: I open and read spam e-mail only if it is of interest**

![Figure 19: Respondents attitude towards Spam e-mail](image)

The Question aims to inspect the attitudes of people towards spam email. A significant number (42.45%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they read spam emails if it is of their interest. 18.87% were neutral while 38.68% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.
4.3.3.2 To determine the best social media channels for event organizers in Dublin

Question: I am online on social media

![Figure 20: Frequency of Social media use](image)

The Question aimed at ascertaining the importance of social media marketing for event organizers in Dublin. The results clearly suggest that majority of the respondents i.e. 90.47% of them are online on social media either every day or almost every day and very few i.e. 5.71 % of the respondents reported that they are rarely online on social media. Only 1.90% of the respondents reported that they are online on social media once a month and more than twice a week each.

Question: I am most active on (you can select more than one option)

![Figure 21: Social media Channels on which respondents are most active](image)
The Question aims to identify the important social media channels where event organizers should focus on. A large percentage of respondents i.e. 88.12% of the respondents reported that they are most active on facebook followed by linkedin (33.68%) and Instagram(30.69%). However, it is found that not many respondents are significantly active on other channels. Moreover, an additional field was provided to the respondents in case they were active on some other channel. In total 10 comments were observed. 4 respondents reported that they were active on snapchat, there was one entry for Tumblr, Youtube and whatsapp each. Rest 3 of the respondents reported that they are not active on social media.

**Question: I come across new events mostly through**

![Figure 22: Channels through which respondents come across new events](image)

The figure above suggests that most of the respondents come across new events through facebook followed by Email with 84.47% and 62.4% selecting these two options respectively. Youtube, SMS and linkedin had almost same share of people with 22.33%, 21.36% and 20.39% selecting these options respectively. 14.56% selected Instagram and rest other channels had selection percentages in single digits. Again for this question a text field was provided to the respondents in case they would like to enter some other channels. 13 responses were received. Eventbrite, news paper, coworkers, friends online news outlet e.g. guardian.co.uk, snapchat, face to face, word of mouth, whatsapp were some of the answers mentioned by respondents.
4.3.3.3 To determine whether facebook advertisements will be beneficial for event organizers in Dublin

**Question:** I pay attention to the sponsored facebook advertisements that appears on the right hand side of the facebook page

![Figure 23: Channels through which respondents come across new events](image)

The Question intends to determine the importance of facebook ads for event organizers in Dublin. Majority of the respondents (52.83%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. However, 24.53% were neutral and 22.64% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

4.3.4 Research Objective 3: To determine Success factors for event organizers in Dublin

**Question:** I prefer going to an event more than once if it is of my interest

![Figure 24: Respondents interest towards going to an event more than once](image)

The Question intends to highlight the attitudes of people towards going to an event. 76.42% of the respondents agreed to the above statement. Contrary to this very few i.e. 4.71% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.18.87% of the people were neutral.
**Question: It motivates me to go to an event if the audience size is large**

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about motivation to go to an event if the audience size is large.]

Figure 25: Respondents interest towards going to an event if the audience size is large

Similar to the previous question, even this Question aims to highlight the attitudes of people towards going to an event. 48.12% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it motivates them to go to an event if the audience size is large. However, 33.02% of the people were neutral to this and 18.87% disagree or strongly disagreed.

**Question: It motivates me to go for events if my friends are going**

![Bar chart showing responses to the question about motivation to go to an event if friends are going.]

Figure 26: Respondents attitude towards going to an event if friends are going

The Question aims to identify the importance of friends as a motivational factor. The results indicate that 82.08% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that it motivated them to go to events if their friends were going. Contrary to this, mere 2.83% of the people disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement and 15.09% of the people were neutral.
**Question: I get positively influenced by friend suggestion on social media to go to an event**

![Figure 27: Influence of friend suggestion on social media](image)

Similar to the previous Question even this Question aims to identify the influence of friends. The above figures show that 61.32% strongly agreed or agreed with the above statement. However, only 10.38% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. 28.30% of the people were neutral to this statement.

**Question: I can easily suggest a friend an event through (you can select more than one option)**

![Figure 28: Channels through which friends can be suggested easily](image)

The Questions intends to examine the ease of use of different marketing channels. The results suggest that people can suggest events most easily through facebook with 83.96% of the respondents selecting this option followed by Email, Sms and LinkedIn with 52.83%, 42.45% and 12.26% of the respondents selecting these options respectively.
**Question: What de-motivates me going to an event most**

The Question aims to find the most de-motivating factors that prevent people from going to an event. Cost is the major factor with more than one third (33.96%) of the people selecting this option. Event timing is another major factor with 28.30% of the people selecting this option. 20.75% selected transport facility and 13.21% suggested that incomplete event information de-motivates them towards going to an event. However, only one respondent reported that event duration is the de-motivational factor.

**Question: I would prefer to go to events on weekdays in**

The Question aims to find the time preference of people to go to events. Majority of the respondents (53.77%) prefer evenings to go to events on weekdays. 18.87 preferred night, 9.43% stated that they could go anytime. Very few preferred morning and afternoon with only 9.43% and 8.49% preferring these timing respectively.
**Question:** I would prefer to go to events on weekends in

![Pie Chart](chart.png)

**Figure 31: Respondents time preference to go to events on weekdays**

Similar to the previous Question, the aim is to find the time preference of people to go to events. Time is not an issue for people as 33.02% suggested that they could go to events any time. The preference of evenings and night is still on a higher side with 29.25% and 17.92% people selecting these two options respectively. 16.98 preferred afternoon and very few i.e. 2.83% opted for morning.
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

The Gaps in the existing literature concerning with the attitudes of people towards digital marketing channels and lack of literature related to schema and events have been addressed in this dissertation. The use of mixed methods has helped the researcher to converge the data collected by both Qualitative and Quantitative methods and interpret the overall results.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Research Objective 1: To determine the importance of implementing schema for event organizers in Dublin

The findings suggest that it is important for event organizers to have schema implemented in their websites as most of the respondents search for events on search engine and this is one area where event organizers are lagging behind. Schema being relatively new is not known to many and this was evident from the interviews. Event organizers can have it implemented so as to have rich snippets in the search results that would further result in a better click through rate.

In line with findings of Ahmed et al.(2013), the findings of this research reveal that Google is the most preferred search engine used by people, hence implementing schema becomes even more important for event organizers because Google is the only search engine that currently gives rich snippet results for “Events”. Earlier Google did not have events as entities but now they cover this.

In keeping with the findings of Chen(2014) majority of the respondents reported that they do not look beyond first page of Google so relying on the old SEO techniques seems to be obsolete as the competitors tend to improve their page rankings and hence this again highlights the importance of implementing schema in order to get rich text results.

Adding to the findings of Lo et al.(2014) who suggested that searcher spends longest observation time on the organic search results, this research further reveals that that rich snippet results attract people more than normal blue links and sponsored link; therefore this also helps to ascertain the importance of implementing schema. Moreover, it is invariably important for event organizers who do not have a website, to host their events through platforms which have schema implemented.

5.2.2 Research Objective 2: To determine the best digital marketing channel for event organizers in Dublin

5.2.2.1 To find whether email and mobile marketing will be effective for event organizers in Dublin or not

From the literature it was not perceptible whether email as a channel would be accepted by the people and this has been validated from the survey results.
Conforming to the findings of Lin (2015), the findings of this research are encouraging as most of the respondents would like to receive emails regarding events. Almost everyone agreed to the fact that they check their emails daily and as emails is the most preferred channels on which people would like to receive information and reminders about the upcoming events of their interests, it can be said that email marketing is an effective channel for event organizers.

In keeping with Joshu (2012), majority of the respondent reported that they opened and read spam emails if it was of their interest. Therefore, this further ascertains that emails will be an effective channel for event organizers, but as spamming is considered as unethical the researcher does not suggest sending emails randomly to many unknown people.

In addition, it was evident from the interviews that Email is the number one channel that gives best results to the organizers. This further validates the findings.

Besides, not only on emails but many of them would like to receive information and reminders about the upcoming events on both Emails and SMS. This is in confirmation with the findings of (Dix et al., 2016) who state that acceptance of SMS advertising is positively associated with intention to receive the message and further behavioral responses. From the interviews it was clear that event organizers are not utilizing SMS as a marketing channel and thus this research reveals that event organizers should definitely start using SMS to reach their audiences. Moreover, it become easy for people to forward those messages to their friends and considers both email and SMS as an easy channel to suggest a friend an event.

It is very important for the organizers to review the type of events that they host. From the interviews it was evident that a diversified look is required towards the type of events that are being hosted. The event preference may vary for different segments of society and organizers should focus on events that the specific category of audiences are looking for and should target them.

Once of the advantages of using facebook is that it gives reminders and this feature of facebook makes it the most valuable social media channel as it was clear from the survey that people tend to forget an event if they do not get a reminder.

5.2.2.2 To determine whether facebook advertisements will be beneficial for event organizers in Dublin

The survey results show that facebook ads are neglected by majority of respondents with only 20% respondents paying attention to them. This is contrary to the findings of Yousif (2012) who stated that respondents showed a great deal of interest in advertising messages on facebook. However, one of the event organizers uses facebook ads and gets a good response. There is a contradiction in the findings of Quantitative and Qualitative research hence, it cannot be determined whether facebook advertisement will be useful for event organizers and a further more detailed research is required to come out with conclusive findings.
5.2.3 Research Objective 3: To determine Success factors for event organizers in Dublin

A very high percentage of people tends to forget an event if they do not get a reminder. Hence it becomes crucial for event organizers to send reminders to their audiences and it’s not about bombarding them daily with messages, but sending them reminder messages a day before the event date.

The biggest motivational factor for audiences seems to be their friends and this motivates them to go to the events to which their friends are going.

This is in lined with Moise and Cruceur(2014) who found that the respondents change their behavior if it is an event they are interested in and are likely to transmit the details of the event, further, announcing their intention to go and may attract other participants.

Moreover, respondents have informed that they can easily suggest an event to a friend through face book followed by emails and sms and hence marketers should use these channels as audiences may be motivated through e- word of mouth, besides, the events can be forwarded to someone looking for similar kind of events.

Majority of the people like to go to events where audience size is large and hence declaring the number of people coming to the event could be a positive factor. Almost one third of the audiences were neutral to this and not many disagreed. Hence it can be said that if more number of people are going to the events it enhances the credibility of the events and hence event organizers should focus on highlighting this.

Timing is also an important factor and event organizers should organize events that suit their target audience. Moreover, outdoor event organizers should proactively consider weather conditions.

Apart from timings, cost and transport facility are two major factors. Besides, from the interviews it was found that a centrally located event is preferred more. In case the event is not centrally located then complete public transport facility, details and preferably a map should be provided.

5.2.4 Research Objective 4: To find differences in attitudes based on gender, age, status type

Cross tabulation was done in order to find answers to this objective. It was found that females are more motivated to go to events if their friends are going with 89.59% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to 74.55% in case of males. Females prefer to go to events more than once if it is of their interest than males. In contrast to females, males are more motivated towards going to an event if the audience size is large.

Overall every one responded that they can easily suggest an event to a friend through facebook but if we see the second most used channels then SMS was found to be more preferred among females whereas males preferred Email more than SMS.
Moreover, when asked what channels would they prefer both males and females preferred Emails.

However, most of the females wanted to get the information on both email and SMS compared to Males.
Cost was the major factor among majority of the males for getting de-motivated for going for an event. Contrary to this, event timing was a major factor among females for not going for an event.

Surprisingly all the respondents confirm that they open and read spam emails if they find it interesting. Moreover, majority of the respondents disagree that they do not pay attention to the facebook advertisements.

Undoubtedly facebook is the most used channel but there is a difference among genders when it comes to second most active channel.

Females are most active on Instagram followed by linkedin and Google+. However males are more active on LinkedIn followed by Instagram.

Most of the working professionals come across new events through emails followed by facebook and SMS. However, when it comes to suggesting an event to a friend Emails and SMS are considered after facebook.

The most de-motivational factor among working professionals that we came across was the transportfacility.

People above 40+ mostly do not get motivated if the audience size is large with only one strongly agreeing and rest being neutral and disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Moreover, event organizers can use this as a strategy as most people tend to forget about an event if they do not get a reminder

Age was found to be an important factor and event organizers will have to strategically plan their digital marketing campaign. We did not get enough samples from the Questionnaires but it was clear from the interview that most of the people above 40+ are not very active on social media and would prefer to get updates on email.

From the interviews it can be concluded that there are differences in attitudes based on age and profession as one of the interviewees created special promotional messages that would appeal to the older professional women. In addition, one of the interviewees stated that age is an important factor as people above 40+ are not very active on social media and social media works best when marketing events for a younger crowd.
5.3 Conclusion

Email, Facebook and SMS are found to be the best digital marketing channels for event organizers in Dublin.

One more important finding of this research was that a significant number of people prefer to click on rich snippet results so implementing schema becomes invariably important.

An important finding of the research was that people go to events more than once if it is of their interest. Event organizers can create a data pool of event participants and can further communicate with them regarding the upcoming events. This way they may have a fixed set of clientele apart from others.

There are very few people who search for events on event based websites like meetup.com, eventbrite.com etc and it becomes important to reach them.

Search engine and social media are the two channels on which most of the search for events is made hence it becomes invariably important for event organizers to be visible from these channels.

Differences in attitudes were found based on Gender, age and status type and thus organizers should choose the marketing mix and strategies that suit their target market.

5.4 Recommendations for Practitioners

5.4.1 Frame work

Having done this research from a practical context, the event organizers would be best advised to follow this particular framework that the researcher has developed.

Having a fixed and growing clientele is very important for event organizers. Once an event has been planned the marketing should begin by mailing the already existing customers registered with the organizers. Moreover a message should be sent on the registered contact number. Further, the event should be floated on social media specially facebook. As the aim of an event organizer is to increase the clientele, social network like facebook can act as a tool that can help increase the clientele as friends going to an event is reflected on the facebook profile of others that may influence others in the network as well. Moreover, a friend can be suggested an event through facebook easily.

All this creates a chain reaction and the message is sent automatically to a larger network. Reminder should be sent over Emails and SMS a day before the event and once a new customer comes in the details could be taken in the already existing pool and can be used to send information about any new event in future.
Moreover, we don’t have conclusive evidence to prove that Facebook ads will be beneficial for event organizers but considering their low cost the organizers may opt for these ads initially and can continue with it if these ads bring positive results for them.

5.4. 2 Event Organizers should also use SMS for marketing

The event organizers are not utilizing mobile marketing and it was evident from the findings of the Quantitative research that people would like to receive information and reminders through SMS and hence it becomes very important for event organizers to market through this channel. There are many advantages of marketing using SMS. As people carry mobiles with them the marketing message should reach and be read instantaneously irrespective of individual’s location. Moreover, people feel that they can easily suggest a friend an event through SMS and hence the marketing messages could be forwarded by people to their friends, thus acting as e-word of mouth. The ease of forwarding messages makes SMS marketing a priority for event organizers. Besides, people tend to get attracted towards an event if their friends are also going and hence one message could result in many lead generations. A reminder message a day before an event should be sent to make sure that people come to events as the result shows that people forget about an event if they do not get a reminder.

5.4.3 Other Recommendations

Most professionals go on vacation during summers and even students have their schedule packed so it becomes important for an event organizer to host event at a time when there is a higher probability of them coming to the event. It is very important to know your audiences and should plan the marketing campaign in such a way that it influences people to come to events.

5.5 Recommendation for future research

5.5.1 Research required to ascertain the Effectiveness of Facebook Ads for Event Organizers

From the research disparities were found between Quantitative and Qualitative research findings. The quantitative research findings show that majority of the people do not pay attention to the Facebook ads whereas one of the interviewees stated that they gets good response from Facebook ads and it works in favor of them. Therefore a separate in depth research is required to come out with a conclusion.

5.5.2 Other Recommendations

As the researcher interviewed different event organizers from different background it was evident from the interviews that marketing campaign had to be customized for different event types. Hence a separate research is required based on the event types. Due to time constraint a general view of the industry was brought forward and further research could be done in respect to marketing of different event based on event types.
5.6 Finally

Building a pool of customers is one of the biggest success factors for event organizers as people as people repeatedly go to the same events if it is of their interest. Hence, communication is what matters the most and more than communication it is the type of medium chosen to communicate that matters.

Email was found to be the most preferred channel by the audiences followed by facebook. Both these channels are being used extensively by event organizers but people would also like to receive messages through SMS and event organizers are not utilizing this channel.

The SMS marketing is an important avenue that would prove to be beneficial for event organizers in Dublin.


Chapter 6: Self-Reflection

6.1 Introduction

This section highlights the researchers learning during the MBA course. A review of different learning styles has been done and researchers learning style has been identified using these learning style models. Learning style, as used by Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1992), describes an individual’s preference for understanding their experiences and transforming those experiences into knowledge.

6.2 Kolb’s Experimental Learning

Kolb (1984) defines learning as” a process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of learning”.

Kolb’s (1984) theory on experiential learning has been well accepted as an efficient academic model of learning. Kolb’s experiential learning theory provides clear mechanisms of teaching and learning design, which are strongly underlined with the constructivist view on the way people construct their knowledge (Abdulwahed and Nagy, 2009).

Kolb’s experiential learning theory works on two levels

1. Four stage cycle of learning
2. Four learning styles

![Figure 32: Kolb’s Four stage cycle of learning](image-url)
Kolb (1984) suggested that an effective learner should have four types of abilities:

Concrete Experience ability (CE)
Reflective Observation ability (RO)
Abstract Conceptualization ability (AC)
Active Experimentation ability (AE)

Figure 33: Kolb’s learning Cycle

An excellent learning takes place when a learner has sufficient balance of the four stages of the learning cycle i.e. Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation.
The vertical axis represents the knowledge grasping dimension, by which knowledge can be grasped through the Concrete Experience extreme or by the Abstract Conceptualization or by a mix of both.

The horizontal axis represents the knowledge transformation. According to Kolb, an individual should first detect, portray, or grasp knowledge, and then a phase of construction should take place to complete the learning process. This construction is a conversion of the grasped knowledge into a mental model.

An individual can choose a preferred style that best suits him or her. As seen in the figure Kolb (1984) suggested four learning styles.

**Diverging**: These people prefer to watch rather than to do. They are sensitive and prefer to work in groups. These people perform better in a situation that requires brainstorming for idea generation. They listen with open mind and like to receive personal feedbacks.

**Assimilating**: For these kinds of people, concept and ideas are more important and they prefer a concise and logical approach. They are less focused on people and are more focused on ideas and abstract concepts.

**Converging**: People with converging learning styles are more attracted towards technical tasks and problems than interpersonal and social issues. They are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. These people like to experiment with new ideas and work with practical issues.

**Accommodating**: People with this kind of learning style like to do it’ hands-on’ and relies on gut instinct rather than logic. These kinds of people prefer to work in teams to complete a task.

### 6.3 Honey and Mumford’s Learning Styles

Honey and Mumford’s (1992) Learning Styles Questionnaire closely corresponds to Kolb’s (1982) model. Similar to the Kolb’s learning cycle Honey and Mumford proposed four different learning styles.

![Honey and Mumford’s Learning Styles](image)

*Figure 34: Honey and Mumford’s Learning Styles*
The Learning Style Questionnaire by Honey and Mumford measures four different learning styles:

**Activist:** Activists involve themselves in new experiences without bias and tackle problems by brainstorming. They move from one activity to another as the excitement dies down. They act first and consider the consequences afterwards. They rush into action without preparation and take immediate obvious action that may involve unnecessary risks.

**Reflector:** People with this characteristics tend to be cautious and thoughtful who like to stand back to consider experiences and inspect them from many different perspectives. They prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. They are slow to decide and do not jump to conclusions. They are good listeners and hold back from participation.

**Theorists:** Theorists are disciplined and tend to be perfectionist who won’t take it easy until things are in order. They integrate their observations into complex but logical models based on analysis and objectivity. They like to analyze and integrate and have a low tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity.

**Pragmatist:** Pragmatists are practical people who are keen on trying out new ideas, techniques and theories to see if they work in practice. They optimistically look for new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They like to get on with things and proceed quickly and confidently on ideas that catches their attention. They are fundamentally practical, down-to-earth people who like to solve problems and make realistic decisions.

There is a strong similarity between Kolb’s learning style and corresponding Honey and Mumford (2000) style

Activist = Accommodating

Reflector = Diverging

Theorist = Assimilating

Pragmatist = Converging

**6.4 Self-reflection**

The test proposes that the **researcher is a reflector as well as a theorist.** The researcher learns from previous experiences, gathers information and analyzes data before making any decision. For example, the researcher had to look at the previous dissertation and few sample dissertations provided by the supervisor to determine the structure and time that has to be devoted to complete each section. The researcher planned out each and every section in advance before writing the dissertation. The researcher listened carefully to the instructions of the supervisor and implemented them.

The researcher is a theorist in a sense that he is disciplined and carries out his work in a systematic way. The researcher had a strategy from the beginning to complete this dissertation on time. The researcher had a clear idea as to what his research would be and followed a very concise and logical approach in order to come out with a conclusion. The researcher followed a very clear approach and
even provided a conceptual framework based on analysis so this further ascertains that researcher is a theorist.

6.5 Self assessment and learning from the course

This section entails the learning that has been gained from the two semesters of MBA program as well as from the dissertation. The entire MBA course was great learning phase and different skills were learned during at each and every stage of the MBA course.

6.5.1 Time management skills

Time management is the most important skill that the researcher has developed during his MBA tenure. This required proper planning and using time wisely. This became even more challenging for me as I was also doing a part-time job. To secure good marks in assignments it required me to dedicate lot of time reading different articles and looking for data available in DBS library. Not only this but presenting our assignments in an appropriate way also important and it required me to give some extra time to the assignments. With a tight schedule it was also important to attend all the classes so that I was in terms with the requirement of the assignments and I am glad I did so.

6.5.2 Research skills

It was initially difficult in the first semester but it became easy for me especially by learning different search tricks from library classes. Moreover, using Zotero tool was very crucial for storing links and referencing which made my research work easy. The research was the most challenging assignment for the researcher. The researcher will be enrolling for DBS e-library database even after the end of the course as he considers it to be an important source of information that would prove to be immensely important for his future endeavours.

6.5.3 Interpersonal skills

The MBA program consisted of many group projects and presentations that greatly helped the researcher to develop interpersonal skills. One of the marketing group projects required researcher to contact any small medium enterprise and develop a marketing campaign for them. This required researcher to interact with the owners of many businesses in order to convince them to provide information.

In addition, lot of discussion was required with the lecturer and dissertation supervisor that helped the researcher in grooming interpersonal skills.

The researcher conducted interviews with professionals and this involved a good interaction with them before the interview to explain them about the research aim and type of Questions that will be asked.

Earlier the researcher used to hesitate sometimes in taking help from others but the research had
to initially interact with the lot of people and take suggestions in order to come down to a topic. During the course of the MBA program the researcher interacted with a lot of people including staff and students and feels that he does not hesitate anymore and this has become one of his strengths that could prove to be vital in successful execution of my goals.

6.3.4 Leadership Skills

The researcher came across different leadership traits that are required to lead a team when working with members from different cultures. He also learned how leaders should adapt to the environment and change their leadership style based on the cultural trend in order to get the best results.

The researcher worked with students of different nationalities for his group project and experienced differences in cultures and learned how to manage them. Working with people from different back grounds has indeed helped the researcher to broaden his mind and has further acted as a catalyst to improve his leadership skills.

6.3.5 Language skills

The MBA course helped the researcher to develop the language skills as English is not the native language of the researcher. The MBA course gave researcher the opportunity to meet people from different ethnicity and English being the common language, it helped the researcher to improve the English language skills. Moreover, throughout the entire course the mode of study was English as it involved academic writing for assignments and dissertation and this immensely helped the researcher to improve his language skills.

6.3.6 Analytical Skills

The research required the researcher to analytically analyze the data to come out with the findings. The analysis part is something that the researcher will have to do in his professional life and hence the analytical skills learned will prove to be useful in a professional environment and will further help the researcher in important decision making. The researcher attended a special session organized by DBS to learn the SPSS tool. Moreover, the researcher used excel, word and adobe a lot for his assignments and this will definitely be helpful for him in his future endeavors.

6.3.7 Self Discipline

Self Discipline is something that was required by the researcher to complete this dissertation .It required the researcher to spare 3-4 hours to the dissertation on daily basis and few extra hours on weekends.

The entire MBA course was a lifelong learning for the researcher. Studying abroad in a different country the researcher had to adjust a lot in order to excel in the MBA program. The researcher had to follow an entire different educational structure and not only adjusting but adjusting quickly was the requirement.
6.4 The future

Not only the MBA program has helped the researcher to work hard but during the course of the MBA the researcher has learned different leadership traits that are required to lead a team when working with members of different cultures.

The researcher got an international exposure and also learned about the policies and regulations of the European Union. The researcher gained knowledge about the accounting procedures required to run a business and learned how business strategies should vary based on economic situation.

As the researcher wants to be an Entrepreneur, the MBA course has helped him to broaden his mind, and now he fully understands as to what his approach should be when starting up a business.
Chapter 7: Bibliography


27. Gaber and Wright (2014) ‘Fast-food advertising in social media. A case study on Facebook in


Chapter 8: Annexure

8.1 Appendix 1: Interviews (Qualitative research)

1. Which digital marketing channels do you use to market your events?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar (Ex Founder and president of the NCI cricket club and member of Irish University Cricket Association Governing Body)

Answer: Well we used email for starters, we used facebook quite extensively.

Miss Andrea Leyden (Digital Marketing executive at the Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin 2)

Answer: We tried promoting through social media such as twitter for example and Linked in but they both have their disadvantages and they did not really prove their effectiveness to cover the cost especially and the reach is not high enough for either channel so email would be the number one channel through which we can link with our audience

Kartik Kweera (Team Leader, Conference and Events, Clarion Hotel, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22)

Answer: We use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LikedIn, Emails.

2. Do you use adwords, facebook ads or any other paid ads?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: Unfortunately not due to budget restrictions, we didn’t

Miss Andrea Leyden

Answer: At the moment we are really doing Google Adwords and two different types of campaigns running which are remarketing campaign, we remarket our adds through either play adds or events for people who missed previously published adds on websites or social medias. And second type of add is research campaign adds with keywords, it’s really very difficult to find keywords in event planning to correct audience. We are charging them with offer of 10% off so that we can re-promote them afterwards

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: We use facebook ads

3. Which digital marketing do you think gives you the best results and why?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: For starters we used emails quite extensively and well we contacted all colleges directly and through IUCA (Irish university cricket association) which is very supportive of our events and towards the latter half once we had few colleges signed in and hooked up as you might say we pushed it extensively to the tender market there through Cricket Lienster and through Cricket Ireland for example all through facebook, through their facebook pages and also there are effective clubs just where we get popularity of our event and it attracts a lot more people
Miss Andrea

**Answer:** For us it definitely emails and it’s the type of audience that we reach out they are professionals they are older they use emails a lot they use their social media for relaxing and don’t use social for work purposes so does not make sense to connect with them on social. We have tested it, it does not work for us so it’s definitely emails.

Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** Facebook and direct email gives us best result, we generally get instant replies within a short span of time which is reliable and confirmed.

4. **Do you have loyal clientele who always want to come to your events?**

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

**Answer:** Well would not say loyal clientele. Again it is in their best interest to participate. Again it is cricket tournament the more you play the more you enjoy, more experience and more practice you get and again it’s kind of a platform for the universities tournaments, the IUCA organized tournaments.

Miss Andrea

**Ans:** We would say Yes, we do have a loyal clientele who always want to come to plan the events here in hotels and specially lot of businesses are very close to hotel they would like to come in host their events.

Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** Yes we do have some loyal clients who always like to come to our events over and over. If there is an event related to fitness or if there is any yoga class then our regular customers generally get attracted and they do come as well.

5. **How do you contact these customers?**

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

**Answer:** As I told you earlier initially we sent out emails and again once they are hooked in send then regular reminders and stuff. Facebook is a big medium, we contacted teams, what would suit them, what times their exams, being a college tournament you have to take these things into consideration, the timeframe we have for the tournament is very small so we like accommodating it if possible the more the people participate, the more the people enjoy the the bigger our tournament is.

Miss Andrea

**Ans:** We send out promotions by email/newsletter which is a broad way of reaching our customers and also do cold call to see if people have any upcoming meetings.

Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** We contact our customers through email, phone calls and face to face meeting.
6. Do people register for getting emails and SMS?
Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: you kind of mean periodical emails - ‘Yes’
Well once we do have the contact for college, sports officers emails address then we directly contact them. Initially, we contact anybody in college we to get the word out there that there is going to be a tournament and once we did then was eventually contacting the right person giving them the information they needed or required

Miss Andrea:

Ans: Not SMS and then emails yes and through cold and warm calling we take the details and we haven’t tried that before.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Yes people do register for getting e mails and SMS.

7. How do you make new customers and what strategy do you employ to attract new customers?
Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: Well again it is a cricket tournament for startups and our tournament was supported by the IUCA so we had the backing of the IUCA and we publicized in the market in such a way that playing our tournament gets experience, exposure and also know your opponents in the IUCA organized tournaments. The IUCA organized tournaments our tournament being the biggest event for colleges in terms of cricket tournaments on annual basis so our tournament worked kind of warm-up for them and worked for us as well so it worked in our favour and worked for them as well so its kind a win-win scenario.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: Well a two dimensional portal we use one way we sent u email and we do cold calling and cold calling will be one to get new customer in this part of the city and other thing we would do is personally meet people.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Identify local businesses that serve the same market segments. Targeting the audiences of different groups. We generally try to give them the best possible offer in a precise manner.

8. How many days before an event do you start your marketing campaign?
Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: 2 months I would say. 2-3 months because again weather is a great factor and again once you get the word out there and then what days suits them and then what days suits you and what days the grounds are available and so on and so forth. There are a lot of factors lot of cog wheels that are moving, they all have to fit in at the same time. It all comes together quite early 2-3 months in advance.

Miss Andrea:
Ans: Well, we promote two event planners rather than to people, actually you know we don't really promote the event so we actually promote to get into the hotels and host their events.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: 4-5 weeks before

9. What frequency of marketing communication do you think is good?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: You mean periodically keeping in touch with them. - Yes

Well again email for starters once again once we know who we talk to and who we contact to you email them. It's not appropriate to send them Facebook messages on their personal accounts they do have Facebook account for their cricket club we do send out information on that but preferably emails which we did regularly because keeping them in loop of changes and again it a lot of teams playing in the tournament and lot of teams travelling down, say our tournament was in Dublin so we had Cork, Queens, Galway, so three teams coming from three parts of the country so again keeping them informed because logistics is a big issue for them. We keep them informed on a periodic basis and also our sponsors and stakeholders.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: I think it depends on the channel email definitely once in a month is enough. The target audience they are very business professional and we don't want to them with emails

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: We send out communication once every week to notify our customers of our upcoming events.

10. Do you send reminders over emails and SMS and how important is sending reminders?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar

Answer: We did send reminders as I said earlier we have to keep everyone informed and keep everyone in loop. It is imperative one college is out of the loop on certain things then kind of causes a lot more problem so trying to run the tournament as smoothly and again it is our tournament and they are playing in the tournament so it our responsibility to keep them interested, passing out information is key.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: We don't send reminders, no.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Yes, we do send reminders a day before the event over emails and SMS. It is very important as some of the audiences may miss the event if they don't get a reminder. Due to their day to day activities they may not remember the date and time of event and thus it is very important to send reminders so that we don't lose those customers.
11. Do you use SMS?

Mr Sujay Nandkumar
Answer: No

Miss Andrea:
We don't send SMS

Mr Kartik Kweera
Answer: Yes we do but only for the customers registered with us.

12. Do you have different target audience for different events and do you vary your marketing strategy for these different audiences?

Answer: Well target audience for cricket, college level cricket we have a niche, so we have young lads playing cricket who are interested in playing cricket and more so south asian population who are interested in it so more so international students. So that would ideally be the target market but anybody who is interested in cricket definitely so and men more so because women’s game in college arena and progressing such standards we cannot have all womens tournament. As far as I know we have two colleges for womens team so having a two team tournament would be impractical so men more so and that would be the audience. Just one set of audiences so we did not have to vary it much but more so again these people are on facebook across social medias for example it creates more awareness about the tournament when you are publicizing it on social media so again twitter we did not use twitter as much but we sent out twitter burst quite periodical, we had 10 days countdown 20 days countdown and so forth.

Andrea:
Ans: I would say we have different audiences in terms of event planners rather than our events so it depends on type of events, for example we have lot of cosmetic companies who come here to do workshops so that would be one type of group of people and we have people who are doing brain storming sessions. Sometimes we have board meetings and sometimes people coming here to do interviewees and we have various kind of audiences and we create offers to target those audiences.

Mr Kartik Kweera
Answer: Yes, we have student audiences, elderly people and it varies according to the type of events. We interact with elderly audiences mostly via emails. While students are contacted through social media as they are immensely active on it.

13. Do you see gender, age, profession as an important factor for selecting your marketing channels?

Answer: Being college tournament the niche would be college students and again as I told you earlier women’s sports for cricket specially is not progressing to such a standard that we could accommodate a womens team. So men and college students would be the niche.
Miss Andrea:

Ans: Well, I would not say for selecting our marketing channels but selecting the messaging to the people. We have lot of women audience and they would be little bit older and they will be professionals and will be very highly educated so we create offers that would appeal to these kind of people.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Yes Age is an important factor. Most of our clients are above 40+ working professionals and they are not very active on social media. We generally contact them over emails whereas social media works best when we host an event for a younger crowd.

14. What other factors do you think motivates a potential customer to come to your events?

Answer: Local for starters again we have teams travelling down from cork, Queens and Galway, so three teams coming from three different parts of the country so logistics, keeping it in an ideal central location that suits everybody and the tournament goes on for two weekends so there is that social bit as well. You can’t play cricket at night you have to play it during the day so the evening part of it, you keep their accommodation and ground should be central so they can go out and enjoy their after games events and it’s also socializing. Yes we are certain college we gonna go with that college so people get to mingle with lads, students from other colleges and it brings that social element into play and cricket being a sport that can be played when it’s not raining and you never know when it’s going to rain in Ireland. So weather, ground, location and also accommodation for these people, food etc all these things are moving in cog wheels, it all has to fit in perfectly.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: One factor the Car parking is one of the factor, room size and level of service but also location we have a central location in Stephen greens so that is considered as well.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Special offers, free lifetime membership in our gyms swimming pools and daily yoga classes for loyal customers. Every event we host varies with different types of audiences. For example football events might attract most of EU students and few other audiences. However, to attract more and more Asian students and members, we planned for Bollywood Night in March 2016 which attracted a lot and all sorts of audiences and that too in good numbers.

15. How important is 'event timing' a factor when planning your event?

Answer: I think it is the biggest factor in fairness because again college cricket period and cricket season is a very small time frame in fairness I think cricket season starts towards end of April and we has 10 may be 20 days off before all colleges start their exams so that 10-20 days you have lot of tournaments and then weather coming into it, it’s a very small time frame weather being a very big factor

Miss Andrea:

Ans: The Calendar year and the promotions to I will say summer will be less busy because lots of people go on holidays and everything Quietsens up
Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** Of course, event timing matters a lot, especially for working people and student audiences. We cannot plan any of the events during office hours and college timings, thus most of our events tend to be on weekends or bank holidays. Also it is important to organize events for students when they do not have exams.

16. How do you effectively communicate with your audiences?

**Answer:** Emails being the biggest again Facebook not much. More so facebook for publicing the event and not targeting the audience but general audience but emails once we have the correct person to contact then they are kept in the loop and they know what’s happening.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: Again, I would say email is the main source and then we should organize an event with someone should have very close contact over email and phone.

Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** Through emails, phone calls and social media

17. How important is Facebook to you?

**Answer:** Very, Very important but again we have lots of people come down to watch the tournament and support the tournament itself and that is just because of Facebook because our target market being student’s, young lads young lads between 18 and 30, they all are on Facebook. Everybody for example on Facebook and their friends and their family so on and so forth it is widened so Facebook is the marketing tool for us.

Miss Andrea:

Ans: Don’t use Facebook

Mr Kartik Kweera

**Answer:** It plays a vital role in marketing strategy since almost all young groups are immensely active on Facebook, and this becomes easier for us to explain and promote our event as the message is sent across their friend’s network.

18. Do you have any idea about Schema.org?

**Answer:** Unfortunately, not

Andrea:

Ans: Not much, No.

19. Do you have website?
Answer: No we don’t we did have the facebook page, pretty much college sports works on a very small budget so had only enough budget to actually have a website and maintain and again the versatility of college sports for example is that there are certain students there for certain years and once they graduate then there is not probably enough people to continue the club so there are ups and downs say 2 years with the cricket club 2 years later there is probably no cricket club, probably no one knows what cricket is so there is no continuity of it so no point in having a website in practical.

20. Any suggestions for event organizers in Dublin?

Answer: well have your niche sorted, have your niche market, target them and use as many social media channels as possible as many marketing tools as possible and you know once you have that then you kind of and again events it’s such a way that your continuity like we organized two tournaments and the first one was on our own, so we organized an national level tournament wasn’t as big, but second year we co-hosted a tournament so we had fund raiser and lot of spectators involved. So bigger, better, the more new things we have, the more bigger games you have, the better.

Mr Kartik Kweera

Answer: Organizers must observe and identify if the majority of people are following any specific events. As in we have organized Bollywood Night to attract Asian crowd. Similarly, other organizers must plan accordingly may be one after the other like Chinese New year, Japanese festive, A night at Eifel tower, etc as these kind of events gather diverse people.

8.2 Email cover letter

Hi All,

Hope this mail finds you well.

As part of my curriculum, I am undertaking a survey on the analysis of digital marketing channels and strategies for event organizers. The survey is designed to gather information on the nature and behavior of people in term of digital marketing and their ways of searching for events. It is hoped that the result of the survey will give a broad view of best digital marketing channels and strategies that event organizers in Dublin can use.

I would be grateful if you would participate in this project by completing the questionnaire provided at the link "https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FV8PRFX”. The Questionnaires ask you about the way you look for events and general information regarding usage of digital marketing channels. The Questionnaire is short and should not take more than 4 to 5 minutes to complete. I also request you to forward this mail to your friends in Dublin so that I get a larger sample to come out with a definite conclusion.

The information collected in this survey will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will only be used to produce statistical tables. It will not be possible to identify the responses of any individual from the results produced.
I would very much appreciate your co-operation in the survey. If you have any Queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following number 0899440620.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anuj Gupta