

Biljana S. Ilić¹
Bojana Ostojić²
*Educons, University of Kamenitz,
Faculty of project and Innovation Management
“Petar Jovanovic”, Belgrade*

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COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT USING DIGITAL SOFTWARE TO INCREASE SALES

Abstract

Digital marketing is the practice of using digital platforms and technologies to advertise a good, service, or brand to make influence on a target market. To attain company objectives, this type of marketing uses a variety of methods and tactics. When the emphasis is on product promotion and communication with potential customers, email marketing is one of the most significant aspects of digital marketing and continues to score highly in communication channels. To rank the digital platforms, or software, that are most frequently available on the Serbian market and used to advertise a variety of goods and services, the paper will research the opinions of senior managers of enterprises and firms in Serbia. The analysis was conducted using the multilinear regression technique. The study's findings may have an impact on Serbia's efforts to manage digital platform services better. The project makes a minor contribution to the use of digital communication technologies for enhancing the current digital platform offerings, particularly in the central part of the country. As a representative example, the study includes the city of Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, where various firms and companies that use various digital software for their needs operate.

Key words: Digital Marketing, E-mail Marketing, Digital Platforms, Service Management, Managers, Serbia.

JEL classification: M150.

МЕНАЏМЕНТ КОМУНИКАЦИЈОМ УПОТРЕБОМ ДИГИТАЛНОГ СОФТВЕРА ЗА ПОВЕЋАЊЕ ПРОДАЈЕ

Апстракт

Дигитални маркетинг је пракса коришћења дигиталних платформи и технологија за промовисање робе, услуга или брендова како би се утицало на циљно тржиште. Ова врста маркетинга користи различите методе и стратегије у циљу постизања циљева компаније. Када је фокус на промоцији производа и комуникацији са потенцијалним купцима, маркетинг путем е-поште је један од најважнијих аспеката дигиталног маркетинга и наставља да се истиче у свим каналима комуникације. У циљу рангирања дигиталних

¹ bilja0110@gmail.com, ORCID ID 0000-0001-6137-8478

² bojanaostojic2002@yahoo.com, ORCID ID 0000-0001-6731-431X

платформи, односно најчешћих софтвера на српском тржишту који се користе за промоцију различитих роба и услуга, у овом чланку ћемо испитати мишљења виших менаџера српских компанија и предузећа. Анализе су обављене коришћењем техника вишеструке линеарне регресије. Налази студије могли би да утичу на напоре Србије да боље регулише услуге дигиталних платформи. Рад даје одређени допринос у коришћењу дигиталних платформи и комуникационих технологија, а фокус је на централном региону земље. Као репрезентативан пример, студија обухвата град Београд, главни град Србије, где послују многобројне компаније које користе различите дигиталне софтвере за своје потребе.

Кључне речи: *Дигитални маркетинг, Е-маил маркетинг, Дигиталне платформе, Управљање услугама, Менаџери, Србија*

JEL classification: *M150*

Introduction

Digital marketing and email marketing are closely related and are often used together as part of an overall marketing strategy (Alcakovic et al., 2021). E-mail marketing is considered by many to be an outdated method of Internet marketing, implying that nowadays advertising is done only and only through social networks (Ostojic et al., 2021). The same email marketing is tied to old-fashioned companies that are still not in step with the present. However, if used correctly, this form of advertising can be very beneficial for a business. Email marketing is one of the key elements of digital marketing and provides organizations with a direct channel of communication with users via electronic mail (Miletic et al., 2020; White, 2017). Digital marketing and email marketing are connected in several ways (E-mail Marketing): a) Integration into the marketing strategy, b) generating leads, c) increasing engagement, and d) measuring results. Email marketing is an important tool in digital marketing that enables direct and personalized communication with users, resulting in greater engagement and increased sales (Ilic et al., 2022). The surveyed companies that use digital platforms, and therefore communication via e-mail in Serbia, are as follows: Delta Holding - members of Delta Holding are engaged in agricultural production, food production, export, import, representation of foreign companies, distribution of consumer goods, car sales, real estate development and the development of new technologies. Delta Holding realizes its business through five organizational units: Delta Agrar Group, Delta Food Processing, Delta Real Estate Group, Delta Distribution and the division of new technologies (Delta Holding); Zlatiborac organization within the food industry, which deals with the production and sale of dried meat products in Serbia and beyond. Leader in the production of authentic cured meat specialties (Zlatiborac company); The Tourist Organization of Serbia (TOS) - also uses available platforms to communicate with its users and market the Serbian tourist product. The activity of the Tourist Organization of Serbia is aimed at positioning the tourist product of Serbia on the domestic and foreign markets and tourism valorization of Serbia's comparative advantages, such as its geostrategic position, historical, cultural, and natural identity (Tourist Organization of Serbia); Bambi Požarevac is a company engaged in the production of confectionery products and is considered one of the leading brands in Serbia, as well as in the region of the Western Balkans (Bambi Company). Is it possible to "improve"

the services of new technology? What else can be offered to the users of services in the field of modern communication digital marketing platforms? Is it possible to improve business with the help of e-marketing software? These are some of the questions that the author will try to answer by making a modest contribution in the part related to the management of software for e-marketing. This study aims to highlight common characteristics and problems related to the attitude of senior company managers about digital platforms, based on the most common software or platforms for e-marketing in Serbia. The study in one way highlights how to improve digital services and communication with users.

Theoretical backgrounds and Literature review

Phillip Kotler, known throughout the world as the father of modern marketing, defined marketing as follows (Kotler & Lejn, 2017): “the science and art of research, creation, and delivery of value to satisfy the needs of the target market, while gaining profit.” Marketing recognizes unmet needs and wants. It defines, measures, and quantifies the market size and potential profit. It indicates which parts of the market the company can best satisfy, and based on that it creates and promotes appropriate products and services” (Kotler & Lejn, 2017). Email marketing is a marketing method used to send marketing messages via electronic mail to communicate with a target audience. The evolution of email marketing includes the development and changes in the way this communication channel is used over the years (Stallings, 2004). The very beginnings of email marketing date back to the early days of the Internet, when organizations sent mass, generic messages via electronic mail without a clear goal or personalization. However, as technology has evolved, email marketing has become more sophisticated and customer-oriented (Ilic et al, 2019; Simonovic et al., 2017). The evolution of digital direct marketing has ranged from direct mail, through telemarketing to the latest phase of online marketing, which is social media marketing and mobile marketing. Electronic mail has changed its importance in digital communication, but it is certainly still very popular, sustainable, and different from other forms of communication through the media (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). According to the authors of Chaffey & Smith, marketing campaigns launched on the site support advertisements that are segmentally different from traditional advertisements. From the point of view of digital marketing, they determined that several basic methods of Internet marketing can be launched on any site (Chaffey & Smith, 2017): Banner, Email Marketing, Newsletter, and Blog marketing. Email marketing is one of the most profitable marketing methods, where you get in direct contact with the audience through an email service provider. This method also includes how the organization addresses an unknown audience to turn them into potential clients. Today, email marketing includes properly segmented and targeted messages that are tailored to the specific interests, preferences, and needs of users (Gavric et al., 2015; Bojkovic, 2009). This can be achieved through personalization of messages, automated campaigns, testing, and content optimization (Ostojic et al., 2020; Simonoviv et al., 2012). In addition, email marketing integrates with other digital channels and marketing tools to create a cohesive and aligned marketing strategy (Perisic et al, 2005). Defining email marketing is the process of sending relevant and timely messages via electronic mail to achieve marketing goals (Ostojic et al, 2021). This may include sending promotional offers, product updates, personalized messages, newsletters, automated message series, and more. The goal is to capture the recipient’s attention, prompt

them to take action, improve engagement and, of course, increase conversions and sales (Ilic & Nikolic, 2019; Rimal & Real, 2005).

Research results and Discussion - Digital software for e-communication in Serbia

Email marketing software is a key tool for effectively managing, designing, automating, and analyzing email campaigns. They help companies and businesses reach their target audience, personalize messages, track results, and optimize their marketing efforts (Gajic et al., 2015). For the success and improvement of the sale of services and the quality of email messages, it is certainly crucial to list the most famous and most used software in Serbia - these are (Paulo et al., 2022): 1) Mailchimp - one of the most popular email marketing software that offers a wide range of features for managing subscriber lists, designing emails, automating campaigns, and tracking results. 2) Klaviyo - is specifically targeted at e-commerce and provides advanced email personalization features based on customer behavior. It also can integrate with various e-commerce platforms. 3) Constant Contact - popular email marketing software that offers a simple interface, email design tools, and campaign automation. It also provides the ability to manage subscriber lists and monitor analytical data. 4) SendinBlue - comprehensive software that, in addition to email marketing, also offers SMS marketing, campaign automation, CRM tools, and much more. It also has affordable plans for small and medium-sized businesses. 5) Campaign Monitor - email marketing software that stands out for its user interface and intuitive tools for designing emails. 6) GetResponse - Email marketing software that offers a wide range of features including subscriber list management, campaign automation, landing pages, webinars, and analytics. Campaign Monitor and Get Response digital software were used to a much lesser extent in Serbian business and therefore will not be included in the research, that is, they were not considered. Belgrade, which occupies much of the country's center region, is not only the nation's capital but also a major European city with a high level of appeal to foreign investors (Belgrade). The largest corporations in Serbia have their headquarters in Belgrade, which is also the area of Serbia that is thought to be the most developed. All news on world accomplishments and innovations first reaches Belgrade before spreading to other regions of the country. The same is true of emerging technologies and advances, including digital marketing, a component of contemporary information technology. Modern technologies require knowledgeable human resources, or human resources who have received proper training and education. Serbian businesses, which served as research subjects in the paper, are typical in terms of their quality management personnel (Przulj & Vemic-Djurkovic, 2010). The top management of four large companies, Deltaholding, Zlatiborac, Bambi, and the Tourist Organization of Serbia, has a total of 170 employees in the positions of senior managers and top managers. These are the human resources that use information technology the most and communicate the most using digital software. It should be noted that these respondents are also the biggest users of e-mail Marketing. They use e-mail marketing to advertise new products and services, expand the market, as well as communicating with other personnel structures within the company. The respondents were sent a questionnaire to their email address, with a note that their answers will be

used exclusively for scientific research and that they will be strictly confidential. As email marketing has evolved from the mass sending of generic messages to customized and targeted campaigns, the top management of companies has also evolved (Feld et al., 2013). E-mail Marketing, as well as users of digital software, is an important tool in digital marketing, as it allows top managers to communicate directly with users and achieve marketing goals through e-mail (Kumar & Salo, 2018).

Methodology

The multinomial regression method was used in the paper. An anonymous questionnaire was created to conduct interviews with software users. Out of 170 employees in senior top management positions, 148 respondents completed the questionnaire, making up the study's total sample size of 148 top managers. Eight questions were put to them, seven of which were general and concerned subjects such as gender, age, how frequently respondents opened marketing emails from other businesses, whether they believed that newsletters influenced their decisions to purchase certain goods, how frequently respondents clicked on "Call to Action" (CTA) links, whether respondents used one of the provided platforms (Mailchimp, Klaviyo, Constant Contact, SendingBlue) in their business, and which of the four offered software (platforms) sent the clearest messages. The questionnaire's final question asked about how managers in the workforce rated various digital platforms/software. The participants rated the offered features of the platforms on a scale ranging from 1 - extremely low rating to 6 - extremely high rating, mentioned platforms: Mailchimp, Klaviyo, Constant Contact, and Sendinblue. So, in the paper, the authors investigated the predictors of the behavior of the respondents, in this case, top managers, during the use of the software. The authors believe that the analysis will assess the following characteristics: Discounts and promotional offers; New products and services; Personalized offers according to the interests of the company; Free samples or gifts; Attractive design. Relevant content for the interests of the company - be significant for determining the best-selling e-mail marketing software in Serbia. When setting up the analysis, top managers who indicated they were for Mailchimp (group 1) were treated as the reference group (or base category) against which the other groups were compared. The SPSS program and Multinomial logistic regression were used in the analysis, which is normally used when the researcher models the relationship between two or more independent variables. This is also perhaps the most common form of regression in the research literature for comparing more than two groups of logits. Multiple logistic regression is used when the dependent variable is not binary and/or the categories are not ordered or arranged (Menard, 2002). Let the dependent variable Y_{ij} be given where there are four choices. And let two independent variables be given X_{i1} I X_{i2} , where i is the number for the i -th sample element. The multinominal logit model is represented by Eq 1:

$$P \left(X_{ij} \geq \frac{j}{X_{iy}, X_{i2}} \right) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \beta_2 X_{i2})}} \quad (1)$$

gde $j \in (1, \dots, n)$, $a_j \in (0, 1, 2, 3)$

In this case, the evaluated coefficients are $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ i β_4 . This shows that in the specific case, the number of coefficients to be evaluated is $j - 1 + K$. Evaluated coefficients are $\beta_0, 0, \dots, \beta_{j-1}, 0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_j$ for parameters $\beta_0, 0, \dots, \beta_{j-1}, 0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_j$.

When a person i chooses (outcome/option) j , the score is taken into consideration in the discrete choice theory, where observations represent managers and they represent choices. The option with the greatest score is the anticipated pick (Darroch & Ratcliff, 1972).

The primary objective of the study was to forecast the actions of senior managers and users of four pieces of software in Serbian businesses based on the following predictors or regressors: gender, age, the opening of marketing communications, belief about the value of newsletters in decision-making, and utilization of links. Using the platforms Mailchimp, Klaviyo, Constant Contact, and SendingBlue, determine which Call to Action (CTA) communicates the clearest messages. In addition to the multiple logistic regression method, a descriptive approach was used for this portion of the investigation. Of the total 148 respondents, 54 respondents were female, while 94 respondents were male. The number of people by age ranged from 20 to 60 years old - with most managers being over 25 years old (133). Marketing messages are opened by all 148 top managers/respondents. The 110 surveyed top managers believe that newsletters have a great impact on making decisions about purchasing certain products (mainly products that are related to the company's operations). Only 50 respondents use the Call to Action link. Mailchimp software is used in their daily work by 31 respondents (employed top managers), 43 respondents said Klaviyo, 36 respondents used Constant Contact, and 38 respondents said SendinBlue - shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Structure of respondents who use E-marketing software

		N	Percentage
Softver	Mailchimp	31	20.9%
	Klaviyo	43	29.1%
	Constant Contact	36	24.3%
	SendinBlue	38	25.7%
Total		148	100.0%

Source: author's analysis

Mailchimp software users were taken as a reference group (I group), because there were the fewest of them, but they gave the strongest arguments (in writing) why, in their opinion, Mailchimp is the most favorable software. The other three groups of respondents in the analysis were compared with this group, i.e. the groups of respondents who use Klaviyo, then Constant Contact, and SendinBlue. Since the respondents' arguments for Mailchimp were by far the strongest, the authors wanted to investigate why the other respondents also do not use this software in E-marketing. The software was compared based on the three strongest parameters of the respondents: personalized offers, free samples, and based on relevant content for the company's business.

Table 2: Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitt.Crit	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	322.071			
Final	244.879	77.193	18	.000

Source: author’s analysis

Table 2 shows “Model Fitting Information” - which is made up of the likelihood ratio chi-square test that includes all predictors to a model that considers only the intercept (Darroch & Ratcliff, 1972) Statistical significance indicates that the full model represents a significant improvement in fit over the null model, as can be seen [$\chi^2(18)=77.193, p<.001$]. The Deviance and Pearson Chi-Square tests are shown in Table 3, labeled “Goodness of Fit,” and they can be used to assess how well a model fits the data. Results from tests that are not statistically significant are signs that the model fits the data well (Field, 2017). Based on the example for social researchers of how to execute multinomial logistic regression, the outcome is mixed, claim Field and Petrucci (although they did not always agree) (Osborne, 2015).

Table 3: Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	294.691	237	0.006
Deviance	225.294	237	0.697

Source: author’s analysis

According to Pearson’s chi-square test, the model does not entirely fit the data ($\chi^2(237)= 294.691, p=0.000$), whereas the Deviance chi-square does indicate a good fit ($\chi^2(237)= 225.294, p=1.00$)

Table 4: Pseudo coefficients of determination

Cox and Snell	0.406
Nagelkerke	0.434
McFadden	0.189

Source: author’s analysis

Pseudo coefficients of determination are displayed in Table 4. These pseudo-R-squared values are used to approximate the values of the regression’s coefficients of determination. About 40% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by this model (Ladyzynski et al., 2019; Petrucci, 2009).

Table 5: Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	29.606	3	0.000
Discounts/promotion	1.811	3	0.613
New Products	6.023	3	0.110
Personalized offers	16.216	3	0.001
Free samples	11.217	3	0.011
Attractive design	2.682	3	0.443
Relevant content	16.816	3	0.001

Source: author’s analysis

The results of the likelihood ratio tests of the overall contribution of each independent variable in the model (software) are presented in Table 5 - Likelihood Ratio Tests (Saura et al, 2021; Zhao & Mao, 2018).

It should be emphasized that when a variable is included as a factor, the outcome is regarded as an omnibus test of that variable (Leung & Tsou, 2019).

The table demonstrates that tailored offers, free samples, and pertinent information are the model’s most significant predictors (regressors), using the typical statistical error threshold of 005%. In other words, these elements have a role in deciding which software to use for e-marketing.

This would imply that future users of the software might select the most suitable option for their task based on these factors. Other factors are not taken into account since they lack statistical significance. The findings from Table 6 contain a comparison of each user group with the reference group (group I, users of the Mailchimp software).

The regression coefficients, in particular, highlight the predictors that significantly distinguish top managers between those assigned to Klaviyo (represented by number 2 in this part of the model) and those assigned to Mailchimp (group 1); between those assigned to Constant Contact (represented by number 3) and Mailchimp users; and between those assigned to SendinBlue (represented by number 4) and once more the managers who are determined for Mailchimp. The regression coefficients (given in the log-odds metric) are found in Column B. The odds ratios are in the Exp(B) column (Cummings, 2009; Bland & Altman, 2000).

The first set of coefficients is a comparison between Mailchimp users (reference group - I) and Klaviyo users (group 2). Only the factor “relevant content for the interests of the company” was a significant predictor (B=1.154, standard error (s.e.)=0.413, p<.005) in the model, because managers who gave a higher score to this variable were probably more committed to Klaviyo and less so for Mailchimp. The odds ratio of 3.172 shows that for every unit increase in “content relevant to the company’s interests”, the odds for Klaviyo increased (that is, the odds decreased for Mailchimp).

Increasing the factor “relevant content to the interests of the company” gives a three times greater chance that users will be more satisfied with the Klaviyo software

than with the Mailchimp software. The second set of ratios is a comparison of a reference group of Mailchimp users versus the Constant Contact software.

From the table 6, it can be concluded that with the ConstantContact software compared to the Mailchimp platform (software), managers gave higher ratings for the predictors of personalized offers and relevant content for the company. In other words, the result of 0.464 for personalized offers ($B=0.868$, $s.e.=0.395$, $p<.005$), means that the chances of using ConstantContact are lower compared to Mailchimp, with every increase in satisfaction with personalized offers, the chances for Mailchimp increase. Relevant content is also important for Constant Contact compared to Mailchimp.

In other words, the odds increase by almost three times in favor of ConstantContact ($B=3.152$, standard error (s.e.)= 0.474 , $p<.005$)-

Table 6: The final result of MLR (Multiple Logistic Regression)

Softver		B	Sig.	Exp(B)
2 Klaviyo	Intercept	-6.006	.000	
	Discounts/promotion	.149	.724	1.161
	New Products	-.673	.154	.510
	Personalized offers	.608	.088	1.836
	Free samples	-.306	.553	.737
	Attractive design	.513	.252	1.670
	Relevant content	1.154	.005	3.172
3 Constant Contact	Intercept	-9.865	.000	
	Discounts/promotion	.663	.203	1.940
	New Products	-.175	.713	.840
	Personalized offers	-.868	.049	.464
	Free samples	.883	.152	2.418
	Attractive design	.460	.428	1.585
	Relevant content	1.148	.015	3.152
4 SendinBlue	Intercept	-2.752	.066	
	Discounts/promotion	.275	.495	1.317
	New products	.341	.392	1.407
	Personalized offers	.142	.667	1.153
	Free samples	-.732	.117	.481
	Attractive design	.636	.130	1.889
	Relevant content	-.009	.980	.991

Source: author's analysis

The third set of coefficients represents the comparison of SendinBlue and Mailchimp software. According to all predictors, personalized offers, free samples, and relevant content - SendinBlue and Mailchimp software are almost equal, in other words, managers give almost the same ratings for both software. The statistical categorization used to identify which group of respondents is the most appropriate for making outcomes predictions (representative group) is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Classification table

Observe	Predicted				
	Mailch.	Klaviyo	Constant	Sendin Blue	Percent
Mailch.	19	4	3	5	61.3%
Klaviyo	4	26	4	9	60.5%
Constant Contact	1	24	8	3	22.2%
Sendin Blue	6	14	4	14	36.8%
Overall Percent.	20.3%	45.9%	12.8%	20.9%	45.3%

Source: author's analysis

In reality, the model indicated that 19 out of a total of 31 senior managers that are identified for Mailchimp will be users of this software, which is what the analysis anticipated would happen in 61.3% of situations. In 60.5% of the cases, the analysis projected future Klaviyo users. In 36.8% of the situations, top managers who will employ the SendinBlue program were forecasted. According to the model, senior managers were using ConstantContact software in the least favorable scenario, which was predicted with only 22.2% accuracy.

The authors highlighted and emphasized the following based on their results. According to the top managers selected for the Mailchimp - reference group, the software Mailchimp and Klaviyo are the most popular and highly rated among Serbian top managers for the following reasons: Because the Mailchimp software package made it possible to link and optimize practically all business sectors, the process of deploying it completely changed the organization where they work; The adoption of Mailchimp software reduced the need for external data sources, and the system also made sure that the entire organizational process was completely transparent; This accelerated business operations and increased accuracy in day-to-day work.

Conclusion

It is vital to emphasize that specialist software for e-marketing is of paramount importance for business, as well as for general communication inside and outside of organizations, based on the analysis of the conducted research and the responses of top managers in Serbia. The following details are important for businesses producing this specialist software to be aware of: To enable a distinct picture of the business, it is important to link with the software, systems, and processes within the organization; To use software to streamline monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting and to provide users with more control over cash flows; The software could facilitate more intelligent sales by accelerating the offer-to-payment process and enabling better control over the full sales process; Using software is required to automate organizational operations, secure documents, and guarantee the security of information flow at the corporate level; Business software should make it possible to take charge of the supply chain and improve customer service for the organization.

The continual investment in staff education, particularly among senior managers who are the primary decision-makers for crucial business choices, is vital for the installation of appropriate

software. The needs of the company should be taken into consideration while implementing or expanding e-marketing software. For example, it is possible to connect to data sources and services - Excel files, SharePoint lists, and CRM records with the help of Microsoft PowerApps software. However, the authors highlight the limitations of this study, noting that only four sizable Serbian businesses that conduct business both domestically and abroad were included. To assess how much e-marketing platforms are actually used in Serbia and how effectively the workforce is trained and familiar with them, the study might be expanded to smaller companies, specifically small and medium-sized businesses in Serbia. The usage of e-marketing software in Serbia's less developed regions, such as the Eastern and Southern portions of the country, may also be recommended as a topic for some future research.

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