

Internet Marketing Plan for River Island

Sample

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## Introduction

With the increase enhancement in the field of technology, it has been considered essential by the businesses to implement such technology in their business processes. Further, the increasing demand from the customers regarding the better quality of products and services delivered to their doorstep has also necessitated for the businesses to implement the e-business strategy in their business processes. E-business which is commonly known as electronic business implies the application of information communication and technology in the business processes, for the purpose of supporting various business activities undertaken by the organization. E-business does not simply mean buying and selling via internet, rather it is a much broader concept and requires the integration of business activities with the internet and related technologies so that the business activities can be performed in a superior manner. In simple words, it implies development of new ways of doing business by innovatively exploiting the various aspects of the information communication and technology. With the changing business environment, business organizations are compelled to develop new strategies and business models to remain competitive. The integration of business activities with the latest development in the field of technology enables the organization to serve its customer in a totally different manner in comparison to the traditional method of business. It helps the businesses in the achievement of competitive advantage over others by providing them the opportunity to meet the customer needs in a more effective manner. Along with the advantage that is experienced by the businesses from the rapid development in the field of technology, there are certain issues that have also emerged from the e-business policies such as security related issues, privacy, regulatory, legal and ethical issues as well. As such the integration of the business activities with the information technology should be done with great care in order to achieve maximum advantage out of it (Li 2007).

This report is basically concerned with the development of an internet marketing plan for River Island, a fashion conscious chain of retail stores. The current website of the company is basic and does not support the e-commerce transactions. As such, the report is basically concerned with the development of an internet marketing plan, which will cover various topics such as the impact of e-business strategy on the business, strategies for implementing the internet marketing plan, measures for the protection of business for minimizing the security related risk and also the future developments in the field of e-

business. Finally the report concludes with a conclusion and the recommendations on various aspects of e-business strategy.

### **Impact of E-Business strategy on Business**

In this competitive era, the successful implementation of e-business strategy can lead an organization to achieve competitive advantage over others. E-business is one of the most important ways for the businesses to leverage the new market opportunities. E-business leads to the transformation of entire business processes, as it not only considers the reengineering of the existing business processes, rather it also helps in designing and developing new ways of performing various business processes. The traditional way of doing business ranging from the sourcing of raw materials and developing new products to acquiring human resources and managing customer relationship has totally been changed with the innovation in the field of technology. E-business facilitates the establishment of real time connection with various entities such as distributors, wholesalers, suppliers, logistics providers, service providers and the end consumers. An effective e-business strategy would enable the organization to achieve efficiency in all the major functions performed by the organization with its various business entities. Thus, e-business can be an effective tool for the businesses in optimizing the flow of physical items between the supply chains, in connecting with the end consumers and also in performing the traditional functions of business in a totally new way (Gottschalk 2006).

#### *Expectation of Internet Customers:*

The success of every business depends upon how well it is able to satisfy its customers. Customer satisfaction is the prime concern for the businesses these days, as they realize that attracting new customer would cost them too high in comparison to retaining existing customers. As such, most of the businesses are eyeing to satisfy their existing customers by offering them products and services above their expectations. However, the advancement in the field of technology has further raised their expectation even more than before. In the e-business age, the expectation of the customers has totally been changed with that of the traditional business. Customers are expecting higher level of services such as timely delivery of products and services with the correct features as mentioned during the time of purchase. The transaction should be free from any kind of fraud and the processing time should also be least. They expect personalized as well as error free service through multiple channels and also the availability of service at all the times (E-Business 2010). In

In addition to all these expectations, the customers are also very much concerned with respect to the privacy and confidentiality related issues from the e-business transaction. Further, as the River Island is a fashion-conscious chain of retail stores, the customers would expect good quality of products with timely delivery because it would not be possible for them to judge the quality of the products electronically. As such, the expectation of the customers would further increase depending upon the nature of the business.

*Integration with the Existing business processes:*

For the purpose of achieving the maximum advantage of e-business strategy, it becomes very much essential that the new business processes must be integrated with the existing business processes. However, in the case of River Island, the website of the company does not support the e-commerce transaction. As such, it has been a difficult task to integrate the data with the existing business system database of the organization. The successful launch of an e-business would require the integration of core business application software with that of the e-business applications. This will help in the complete realization of benefits from e-business.

*Analysis of Logistics Processes:*

As the expectation of the customer is very high in the case of e-business, it becomes essential for the businesses to fulfill their expectation effectively. The customer usually expects the delivery of products and services at minimal time. In order to meet out this expectation, it becomes essential for the businesses to have an effective logistic system in operation, so that faster services can be ensured. In the case of River Island, as the organization is planning to integrate its function with e-business, the logistics system of the organization should be such that it ensures timely delivery of products and services. At present, the logistics process of the organization is handled by a company known as Zendor, which provides the basic core services like distribution, warehousing, call centres and return management. However, the integration of the business with the internet would require the logistic system to be more effective, as the database of the customer would expand which requires the business to respond quickly to its customer's requirements (Parazoglou 2006).

*Resources required for Website maintenance and support:*

The Website of River Island is basic and does not support the e-commerce transaction. Further, the company is also planning to market its products and services through internet which requires an effective website that supports the e-commerce transaction. As such it becomes essential for the business to make changes to its existing website, so that the company can expand its operation by approaching larger market area. The changes to the existing website in order to support the e-commerce transaction would require various resources such as a team of technical staff, who looks after the entire design and the development of the website, website project managers to look after the necessary improvements needed in order to protect it from being outdated. In addition to this, sufficient funds would also be required so that the maintenance process can be conducted in a more efficient manner (Montgomery 2009).

### **Implementation Strategy**

A proper planning is very much essential for integrating the business of River Island with the information technology. A well framed strategy needs to be followed concerning the development of website to its design, so that it would be most effective in attracting the focus of the customers. Further, the strategy should also account for the marketing and promotion strategy together with the management of supply chain activity in order to satisfy the need of the customer in a most efficient manner. A proper planning would ensure what exactly is needed to address in the website so that it would remain effective. It becomes very much essential for the retail chain store to reengineer its logistic activities so as to achieve a successful implementation of the e-commerce. The implementation of all the major tasks required for the development of website should be performed in manner that results into the achievement of overall success.

#### *Planning for Website designing:*

One of the most crucial aspects for the success of a website depends upon the design of the website. It should include everything that a customer expects from a website. In case of River Island, the website should be designed in manner that best addresses the need of its target market that includes both the male and female of ages between 18-35. As the young generation is more concerned about the latest trend in the market, the website of the fashion conscious chain of retail store should be designed in such a manner, so that it provide sufficient scope to its customer to choose from the various offering made by it. In addition to

this, the context of the website is another major area to focus. It should be designed in a manner that supports the information in multiple formats. The characteristics of the target audience should also be taken into consideration in the process of website designing. However, one of the most important aspects to be considered is that it should be easily accessible to users. For a better result, it should have high ratings so that it accounts in the top ten searches made in the web search engines. Overall, the designing of the website should be done in a most effective manner to remain effective (Palmer 2002).

*E-marketing and Promotion strategy:*

After the successful designing of the website, it becomes essential to frame an effective marketing and promotion strategy concerning the products and services offered through the website, so that the awareness can be created among the customers. An effective e-marketing strategy would help the company in attracting the interest of the existing as well as the prospective customers. There are various e-marketing and promotion strategies available through which the marketing of a brand through the web is possible in the most effective manner. However, in the development of consumer centric e-marketing strategy, it becomes essential that the consumer should be familiar with the use of ICT (Pires, Stanton and Rita 2006). In order to market its products online, River Island need to have a proper marketing strategy in operation so that the internet users can be attracted and the sales can be increased. The various marketing strategies include marketing through emails, podcasts, blogs and also through forums. These e-marketing strategies can prove to be useful for River Island to effectively market its products among its target market. As the company is planning to enter into the e-commerce, it becomes essential for the company to target as many customers as possible. This is possible through email marketing as it is an effective tool for marketing large number of customers. Further, the company can also interact with its customers through the blogs and forums. All these marketing strategy would be helpful for the River Island over a short period of time, but in order to market its product and services over a longer period of time, the long term marketing strategies such as article marketing, social networking and social bookmarking would be quite effective (Internet Marketing Strategy 2010).

*E-supply Chain Management Strategy:*

One of the most important factors in the e-commerce is the supply chain management. It helps in the coordination of activities starting from the procurement of raw materials to delivery of finished product to the final consumer. It should be such that overall efficiency can be achieved in the entire business performance of the organization. In case of e-commerce, the expectation of the customers is usually higher with respect to speed of delivery of products and services. As the retail fashion chain store, River Island is planning to use information technology for e-commerce; the importance of supply chain management has further increased. As such, it becomes essential for the organization to integrate its e-commerce with the supply chain management system (Gunasekaran and Ngai 2004). However, as the River Island occupies around 300 high street stores, with most of these situated in the United Kingdom, the decision of the company to integrate its operation with the information technology would impose various issues for successfully performing its various functions, especially the supply chain management. As such, the company could decide for outsourcing its supply chain function in order to achieve efficiency. This strategy will help the retail store in effectively fulfilling the expectation of its customer in a most effective manner (Wagner, Fillis and Johansson 2003).

#### *Integration with the Existing System:*

As the existing website of the company is basic and does not support the e-commerce transactions, the priorities concerning the implementation of e-commerce transaction with the existing system is quite high. This is because, the existing system does not require too much of modification for the purpose of enabling the e-commerce transactions. As such the cost that the company needs to incur is also quite low. Thus all the aspects are quite favorable for the company to implement and integrate with the existing system.

#### **Protection of Business**

Security of business has been considered to be one of the major threats from e-commerce. The protection of the domain name, the name of the company, trade marks and intellectual property has been the primary issue in e-commerce transactions. In order to protect the domain name against the unauthorized use, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers have issued two documents named as “Dispute Resolution Policy” and “Rules for Uniform Domain Name Disputes Resolution Policy”. Further, the intellectual property that represents the skills and knowledge of the employees of the organization is also

in danger from the e-commerce transaction (INTERNET LAW - How Can I protect My Company's Domain Name? 2008).

*Risk from E-business and measures to control:*

Although e-commerce has lots of advantages in terms of wide access to market and easy reach to customers, there are certain disadvantages as well with such business process. The e-commerce transaction would result into lots of risks to the organization. As the performance of the transaction in the e-commerce depends upon the information technology, the technology failure would become a major risk for the businesses to handle. Further, the increasing activities from the computer hacker are a major threat to the security related aspects of the business. In addition to this, credit cards and payment fraud, mistakes on the part of the employees by way of accidental deletion of some of the important data, risks from viruses, Trojans etc are the other major risk of e-commerce system.

The risks in the e-commerce transaction can be controlled by having an effective management system in operation. The activities that would result into security threats can be controlled by having certain policies in place. By having effective policies, it would be quite clear to the employees as to what is expected of them. This will help in reducing the mistakes from them. Certain standards should also need to be followed regarding the procurement of PC's and also the firewalls should be properly installed in to protect from the hackers and viruses. Technical controls, standards, policies and procedures can be developed and reviewed in a fully functional information security management system (Managing risk in e-commerce 2010).

### **Future Development in E-Business**

*Mobile technology and impact of XHTML on E-business:*

There are ample of scope for the future development in the E-business. The advent of mobile technology has a potential impact on the mobile commerce. It becomes possible for the users to make purchase and also to make payment with their mobile phones, provided it is supported by internet. In simple words, m-commerce enables the users to exchange data, products and services via the mobile phones (Mariga 2003). The impact of XHTML language is also huge in e-business as it allows the service providers to be first in the market with

respect to their service. Thus it enhances the speed of the transaction which allows the service provider to effectively respond to the market requirements (Grigonis 2000).

*Impact of supply chain integration and e-business on international competencies:*

The integration of supply chain using the internet is quite effective for the businesses to address the need of the customers in a most effective manner. It enhances the speed of information between the members of the supply chain which ultimately results into the speediness in the transfer of physical articles between them. The international competency of the business organization also improves because of e-commerce, as it enables them to have an access to the international customers. Thus they get a chance to serve the needs of international customer which results into the increased sales and ultimately the profit (*Internationalization of E-Commerce*).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

A brief discussion on the implementation of E-commerce at River Island provides a brief idea about the various opportunities and the issues available to the organization. The opportunities are in terms of wide access to the market that allows the company to serve even the international customers, but at the same time there are certain threats from the e-commerce to the organization. These threats are in terms of technological failure, risk from hackers etc. However, these risks can be controllable by having certain policies and standards in operation. Overall, the integration of the company's business with the information technology is quite effective for the company to achieve high growth.

It has been highly recommended to the River Island to implement such information technology as it will enable the organization to achieve high growth in terms of increased customer database. Further, the company has basic website, although it does not support the e-commerce transaction, but the company need not have to incur huge costs for enabling the e-commerce transaction facility into its existing processes. As such, it would be a profitable deal for the company to integrate its business process with the information technology.

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