

ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN GROWTH OF SMALL ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a key element of growth and development prospects for all countries and it is most relevant to transition countries. A nation how so ever rich in material resources, cannot prosper if its resources are not put to productive use, for this purpose, energetic entrepreneurs are needed who can contribute effectively for national prosperity. The only solution is promotion and development of Entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurship aims at making an individual a job provider and not a job seeker. Small businesses are either services or retail operations like grocery stores, medical stores, trades people, bakeries and small manufacturing units. These small businesses are independently owned organizations that require less capital / workforce / machinery etc. In India near about 97% of all businesses classified as small, 2.9% is Medium scale & only 0.2% Large businesses (Source: Quora accessed on 23 Nov.19 at 2:12 pm).Hence the need arises to foster small businesses through efficient use of IT to cover larger geographic areas with social sites so that small entrepreneurs can market their products & services to a large population more quickly and conveniently.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, distribution channel, entrepreneurs, interactive marketing, GDP etc.

INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days, Digital marketing is need of the business and through the social media one can expand their business turn over. Through Digital Marketing anyone can reach the customers conveniently. Customers also fulfill their demand by buying their products online and it is time savvy process. Digital Marketing is the term used for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of products or services using digital technologies to reach the viewers, turn them into customers, and retain them.

Researchers chose this topic considering that small businesses in rural areas also might be facing many problems due to online shopping trend by customers. According to changing business environment and consumer demand preferences and trends small businesses need to understand the importance of Digital Marketing. Because small business digital marketing helps your business flourishes and prospers in today's global market.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The small entrepreneurs in study area focusing only on off line sales practices, which automatically brings constraints of fall in sales in this technological era. Most of the small entrepreneurs are not educated enough to respond questionnaire and also they hesitate to share information.

RATIONAL BEHIND THE STUDY

Above statement of problem compelled the researchers to study the thoughts and knowledge of entrepreneurs about online sales modes, and to know their willingness to learn IT techniques for growing business beyond their local areas.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Being a large area a detailed and vast study of small entrepreneurs of entire Palghar District would require more time and work .Thus researcher has used convenience random sampling in Palghar district in Maharashtra.

OBJECTIVES

- To study importance of IT in growth of small businesses
- To understand what is the opinion of small entrepreneurs about using IT in business
- To awareness in what areas IT assistance would overcome problems of small entrepreneurs
- To find how and by whom these entrepreneurs could get technical assistance.

HYPOTHESIS

- Small businesses in rural area are affected due to emerging trends of online marketing

- Young entrepreneurs prefer to learn application of ICT in enhancing sales

METHODOLOGY

Researchers used primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data has been collected from small entrepreneurs in the form of questionnaire. Our targeted sample size is 75 small entrepreneurs but received responses are only 32.

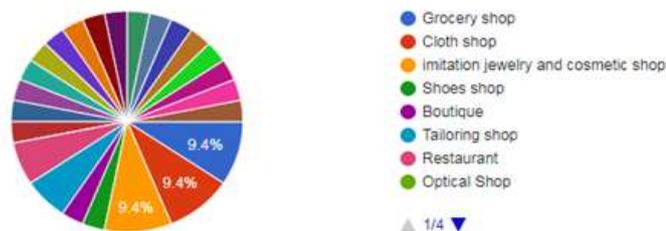
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

Palghar is 36th District of Maharashtra state in India. Palghar District is located on North side of Mumbai. Palghar is 25km away from National Highway No.8 (Mumbai –Ahmadabad Highway). The sea coast approximately 20km away from the Palghar municipal limit, is surrounded on North side by the village kolgaon, Nandora & Morekuran, West side by village Kharekuran and Dhansar, South side by Mahim & Varkhunti and East side by village Chahade, Shelavali & Ambadi. Tarapur Boisar industrial area is situated on North side about 12km away from palghar, is a more tribble populace living in remote areas. It includes the tribal dominated talukas of Mokhada, Jawahar, Talasari, Vikramgad, Wada, Dahanu & Vasai. Hence it is necessary to know the role of IT in entrepreneurship of local public in study area.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Type of business

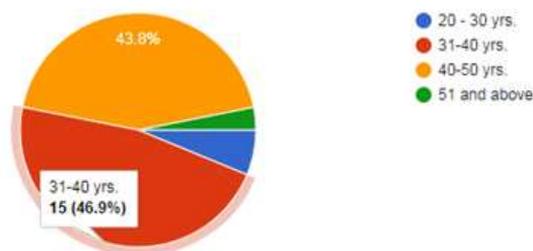
32 responses



Above diagram shows that variety of small entrepreneurs are considered for study. These businesses are running into a very tiny set ups, with limited capital requirement.

Your Age Group

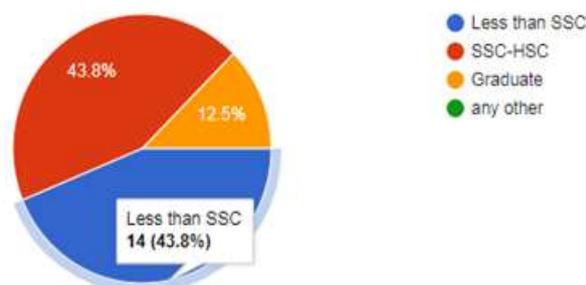
32 responses



As per above data it is clear that approximately 47% respondents are young age group i.e. 31 to 40 years, and around 44% are of 40 to 50 years clearly shows attraction of youngsters towards small enterprises.

Your Qualification

32 responses



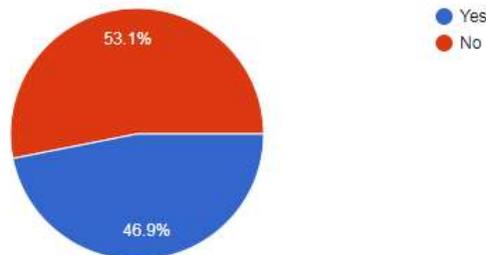
By observing above diagram it is clear that more than 80% of small business owners are not even graduate. It takes us to the thought that less percentage of graduates are attracted towards small businesses.

Do you know about online shopping?
32 responses



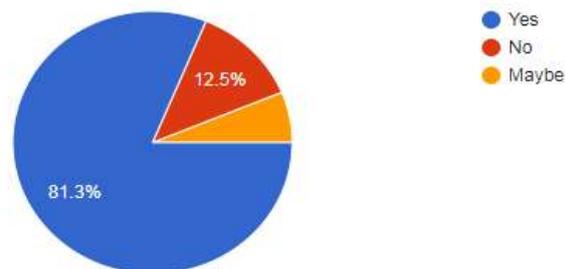
It is clear with above figure that about 97% of entrepreneurs are aware about the Online shopping.

Do you accept that online shopping is also one of the reason to decrease your sale?
32 responses



Only 46.9% respondents agree that online shopping is one of the reason to decline sale. Others don't agree to this.

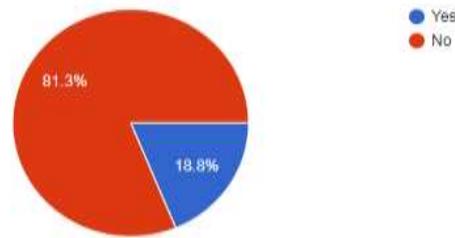
Do you want to enter in online market?
32 responses



81% respondents are interested to enter in online market though most of them don't agree that right now online marketing affected their sales but still as a precautionary measure they are ready to learn technology to improve sales.

Do you know how to use Digital techniques to sale products?

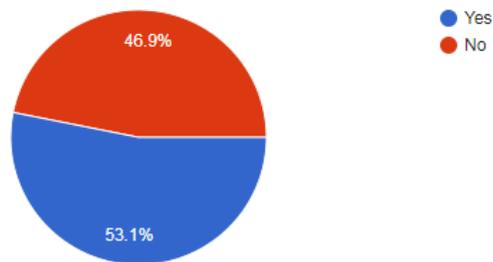
32 responses



81% of respondents are unaware about digital techniques to sale their products. Also we have found that very less number of respondents is aware about it as they are techno-literate.

Would you like to develop your own website to sale your product?

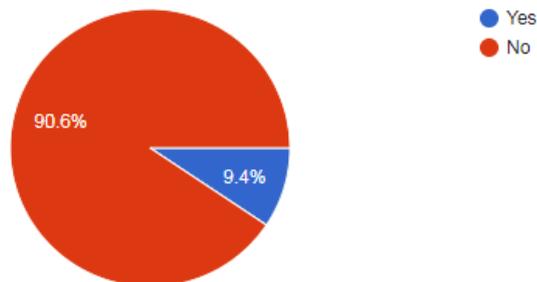
32 responses



53 % of small businesses wants to develop their own website whereas 47% of them are not interested create own website.

Do you know the procedure to sale your products online?

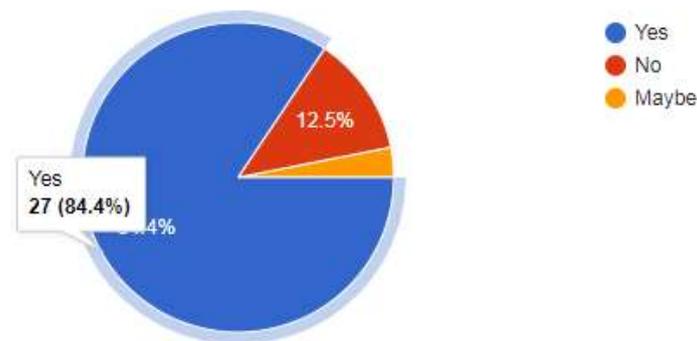
32 responses



81% respondents wants to sale products online but they don't know the procedure to sale their products online.

Would you like to get free training by any agency to sale your products online?

32 responses



84% respondents want to get training to sale their products online.

• List Of Indian Digital Marketing Agencies Who Provide Assistance Exclusive To Small Businesses:

1. DOT COM INFOWAY

2. Niswey
3. SEOVally Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
4. WebGuruInfosystems Pvt. Ltd.
5. Sweans Technologies
6. SEO.com
7. IndiWork Software Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
8. WebbyMonks
9. Cibirix
10. King Crescent

• Maintenance of distribution channel is a problem for most of the respondents hence they are satisfied with traditional business practices.

SUGGESTION:

- To study importance of IT in growth of small businesses
- To understand what is the opinion of small entrepreneurs about using IT in business
- To spread awareness in what areas IT assistance would overcome problems of small entrepreneurs
- To find how and by whom these entrepreneurs could get technical assistance.
- Digital marketing awareness campaign can be started by Government as well as Private Agencies.
- Small businesses should shift to digital promotional techniques instead of traditional advertising and promotional methods.
- Considering the fact that the study area of Palghar District, basically covered by Tribal region hence customers as well as sellers are yet not affected due to online market. Researchers would like to recommend strongly that marketing agencies must approach small businesses in the study area and acquaint them with the current global market scenario. This would definitely help them in future though they are not affected right now.
- Management Skill development courses should be provided to overcome the problem of the maintenance of distribution channel for quick delivery.
- Through our research it is found that most of the entrepreneurs are less educated therefore few certificate courses should be developed by the government linked with local ITI (Industrial Training Institute).

CONCLUSION

Considering the fast-paced world this is the time for small entrepreneurs to initiate digital marketing strategies with traditional direct marketing to be strong enough to face future uncertain risks. Though yet it has not touched to the sales margins of the small businesses in the tribal-rural areas but as the pace of technology growth is very-very high, one cannot assume that the situation remains same and consumer preference will definitely change in future with increasing literacy rate.

Hence for holistic development of business men in rural area they are supposed to choose digital marketing in addition to traditional promotional and advertisement methods. Growth and development of small entrepreneurs would only help to increase GDP of our country. It will improve standard of living of customers as they will get improved quality of goods and services as per there convenience.

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