

Internet usage is ubiquitous across the nation. While the company's sales in retail stores and schools and athletic departments have been high, implementing an online marketing and sales strategy would boost our sales even more. There are a lot of benefits to having an online marketing and sales strategy, such as the ease, reach, and low cost, but there are also disadvantages due to the high number of online companies and security threats. However, the advantages outweigh the risks, which is why joining the online market would be a great step for the company.

Widespread Awareness

Since most people have access to the internet, listing products online for people to see and buy will attract more attention and give the company more sales. People from all over the nation and even people from other countries can search for helmets online and be directed to the website. Instead of limiting the target audience to people in the surrounding areas of the retail store, the target audience can be expanded to people in different cities and territories. Additionally, having products online allow searchers to share the links to people they know, leading to more awareness of the company's products. This type of information sharing is viral marketing, which is something that costs the company little money but gives the company more sales.

Putting the products online and maintaining the website will take effort and resources. Building a website that consumers will want to see and browse takes skill as there are features that can make the online experience much more pleasant. For instance, having tabs at the top of the website for easy navigation will be better than listing all the products on one page.

In addition to that, having a website is not enough to gain attraction. Search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing are important factors that help a website show

up for people's searches. Paying for an ad to show up on searches could also garner attention, but these ad campaigns require a lot of research to properly optimize and target the correct audience. SEO requires some research and effort, but it will be cheap to create content and optimize the website. Doing so will result in the company ranking high on search results. It will take time, but in the end, it will be like free advertising as searchers become aware of the company's product and spread the website to potential consumers.

Ease for Customers

Having the products online makes the shopping experience more convenient and easy for the customers. With all the products listed online, a customer can go on the website and see all of the available products, the different styles, and all of the descriptions and the price of the product from wherever they are. The customer can see the details of the helmet, enabling them to make an informed decision without enlisting the help of a sales associate. Customers will not be limited by store hours or even the store's inventory. If one store runs out of stock of a certain type of helmet, a customer would have to go home empty handed or drive to another store. However, with a website, a customer can see all of the helmets the company has rather than just what the individual store stocked.

Once a customer orders it online, they just have to wait for delivery. A customer will be able to buy a product without ever having to leave their home. There are options for shipping that allow customers to receive it the next day or even the same day. If a consumer has a game the next day, but their helmet broke the previous night, they can quickly go online and search up the store. After placing an order, they can wait for the product to arrive, and they will be good to go the next day. Without the website, the consumer would have to wait for the store to open, and then they would have to rush to find a replacement helmet.

Customization

One great benefit to posting products online is the ability to customize. A company can optimize their website so that the content targets each of the market segments. For example, when a student who plays on the high school curling team clicks on the website or an ad, they can be directed to the helmets that have their school's colors. If somebody was just browsing for hockey helmets, they can be directed to a broad hockey helmet selection. This makes their experience custom, and it increases the chances that they will buy the product. Since this is online, the company can see the data and make changes to help optimize the website. For example, if more people buy while on their mobile than on their tablet, the company can decrease the ad cost for tablets. This ensures that the resources go to areas that will maximize profit.

A company can also use rules-based personalization which cannot be done if a consumer goes in-person to the store. With the rules-based personalization, a consumer's behaviors can prompt different actions. Say a customer puts a helmet in their cart and then leaves the web browser. The company can make a rules-based personalization and send an email the next day to remind the customer of the item in their cart. Additionally, the company can send emails suggesting other items based on past purchases as well as coupons and special offers. This can elevate the customer's desire to buy. This would not be possible in the store as customers who pick up an item and put it back cannot be contacted afterwards.

Disintermediation

Another advantage of online marketing is disintermediation, which is when a company takes out distribution channels such as retail stores. This cuts down the expenses of stocking and maintaining the distribution channels. Customers can now be reached by the internet instead of solely at the store.

Disintermediation should be done only after sufficient research. Hastily choosing to do business solely online can result in frustration and anger from the distribution channels and the customer. For example, making the most popular helmet available only online will backfire. The sales of the distribution channels will fall, and customers who dislike online shopping or expect to see the helmet in person will find it inconvenient. Instead, a good strategy would be to put the less popular helmets solely online. This will free up space in the distribution channel to put better selling products, and the customers will not be affected. Of course, all the products can be put online for the consumer's convenience, but the popular items should not be solely online.

Proliferation

Since there are little barriers to entering the online market, that means that there is a lot of competition online. It is easy for other competitors to imitate and implement the strategies of this company. However, since this company has a wide range of customers due to the retail stores, schools, and athletic departments, maintaining and increasing our customer base online will not be as hard. Since there will be a lot of competition in the online market, the company will have to differentiate themselves from other helmet brands.

In order to succeed in the congested online market, the company should optimize the website in order to rank in search engines. The company can also inform previous customers of the new website and the convenience it brings while also implementing a referral system. If a

customer refers the helmet to another person, they both can get a special offer on their purchase. This will raise awareness and bring more sales.

Security

Unfortunately, the digital world is filled with threats such as hackers and viruses. Having a website and listing the products will not produce sales if customers think that the website is insecure. The company has to take care to keep all of the customers safe and happy in order to retain them. A bad experience can lead to a bad reputation for the company. Fortunately, there are steps the company can take to secure the website. Making the website secure through an SSL certification and using anti-malware software will help assuage consumers' wariness of the site's security.

Conclusion

Having an online marketing and sales strategy will bring the company more awareness and raise the profits. While there are disadvantages and threats such as the high number of competition, as long as the company has a good strategy and quality products, the company will experience growth and profits. The online market is a powerful tool that should be utilized as most people spend a lot of time on it. Implementing an online marketing strategy will allow the company to sell more helmets and continue to keep Canada safe.