

Factors Affecting Online Marketing in Laugfs Engineering with Special Reference to Small and Domestic Civil Construction and Customer Point of View

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a) Background

Online marketing has marked a revolutionary progress in customer - seller relationship rather than traditional strategies and methods used in marketing. The major reasons behind the effectiveness of online marketing are reduced expenses, effective communication, flexibility and competitive advantage. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to address customers all over the world. Experiencing modern advancement in marketing, Laugfs Engineering (Pvt) Ltd is also now setting their steps into computer based marketing campaigns. Recently, Laugfs Engineering has launched a system of online marketing and the customers are allowed to search for relevant information through the company website.

b) Research problem

Laugfs Engineering is basically expecting a higher rate of customer attraction through online marketing along with their traditional marketing system. It is observed that, most of the customers searching the company website, had problems such as the information related to method of construction and estimated budget of the final product. Moreover, Laugfs Engineering is spending a considerable amount of money on maintaining the system of online marketing. Therefore, not achieving the expected goal in obtaining new projects successfully through online marketing, has become a critical problem for the company. In this research, it is aimed to identify the Factors affecting online marketing in Laugfs Engineering with special reference to small and domestic civil construction and customer point of view.

c) Objective

The main objective of this research is to find out the factors affecting online marketing system of Laugfs Engineering with regard to customer point of view.

d) Research methodology

In order to have a prior knowledge and sound understanding beforehand, several previous researches done on the same field, were taken into consideration.

A company website acts as an online brochure for a company. Further they state that, a good company website is very useful, as clients first go through it to know about the Contractor, before giving the project to that company. (Ahmed, Ahmad & Azhar, 2002) Several national and European R&D-programs within construction ICT have made substantial contributions to making the construction sector more efficient. (Ekholm & Molnar, 2009)

50 customers using the services of domestic civil construction of Laugfs Engineering in Mabima, in Colombo district were selected as the sample for this research using the snowball sampling method. Basically, questionnaires, interviews and observations were used to collect the data. Collected data were analyzed by using qualitative methods and percentage analysis method.

e) Key findings

According to the collected data, findings are as follows. As per demographical data, 66% of the sample were in the age group of 16 – 35 and 82% of the sample were educated equal to or above degree level. 94% of the sample used bank loans as their funding source. 90% of the sample were newly married couples.

It is found that they were interested in searching for company related details, but 58% of the sample is unable to collect required details from the website. 74% of the sample is not able to get a sound idea about the company through their website within a short period of time.

Following details represent what customers have searched from the web site and availability of those details. 94% of the total sample wanted to get an idea about the design of the building using sample designs, but only one observation was there for availability of sample design. 90% of them wanted to get an idea about the cost (or entire expenses) of the building but there were no findings on the web site. 80% of the samples wanted find out information about the appearance of the building in mode of photographs or similar projects completed in the recent past. 76% of the total sample were satisfied about the given design and 40% of the total sample needed to search information about the duration of the building construction process exploring durations of past projects but there were no relevant details on the web site. Further, 6% of them have browsed the website without having proper idea.

Considering clarification related data, it is investigated that, 90% of the customers have inquired clarifications related to a given design. But 84% of the answers from the company were lacking required details. 92% of customers needed clarifications for costing of the project but 62% of them are dissatisfied. Consequently 60%, 80% and 86% searched for clarifications on duration, quality and photography but 52%, 55% and 46% were not satisfied.

f) Conclusion

There is a vast gap between what customers searched for and what the company has provided on their website. As a result of that, the information given on the website, are below the average level of customer satisfaction. This can be identified as one of the major factors that affects online marketing in Laugfs Engineering.

Due to the lack of provided information on the website, the customers tend to require more details from the company. But most of the times, enough clarifications are not provided by them. This also leads the customers into dissatisfaction. It is also identified as another factor that has an influence on online marketing.

In conclusion, it can be identified that, there is a considerable effect on the customer attraction rate of Laugfs Engineering (Pvt) Ltd due to the above mentioned factors.

g) References

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- 2) Ekholm, A & Molnar, M, ICT development strategies for industrialization of the building sector, *ITcon*, vol. 14, 2009, p.429-444.