

DIGITAL MARKETING AND PERFORMANCE OF REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY IN RWANDA - A CASE OF ULTIMATE DEVELOPERS LTD

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Abstract:

Background: Organizations adopt advanced advertising worldwide to cut costs, boost sales, and enhance customer relationships. In India and Africa, digital marketing transforms customer interaction. In Rwanda, real estate drives economic growth through initiatives like the Kigali Masterplan and secondary cities' development. As a result, the researcher felt it was important to investigate the impact of digital marketing on the performance of real estate in Rwanda, using data from Ultimate Developers Ltd.

Materials and Methods: The study population comprised 553 staff, contractors, and customers of UDL Plc. A sample size of 138 was determined using Slovin's formula, with 114 well-filled responses returned. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Descriptive research design, correlation analysis, and multiple regression were employed, utilizing SPSS version 27.

Results: Regression analyses revealed significant findings: Website marketing contributed 69.7%, Social media marketing contributed 77.3%, and Content marketing contributed 62.6% to the performance in UDL. Customer perceptions were found to moderate the relationship between digital marketing and performance.

Conclusion: The study rejects hypotheses Ho1, Ho2, and Ho3 while accepting Ho4 at a 5% significance level. It recommends that UDL improve its website for an enhanced customer experience.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Performance, Real Estate, Rwanda*

1. Introduction

Today, the vibrant business setting has resulted in marketplaces that can be characterized as increasingly turbulent and unstable and has caused many organizations to seek competitive advantages that aid them to exceed customers' expectations and boost their market and financial performance [1]. Organizations worldwide are increasingly embracing advanced advertising strategies to minimize costs, increase market value and sales, create solid customer relationships, all for the intention of developing themselves in domestic and new markets.

Globally, according to Bryant (2021), many American businesses have developed their websites and promoted them via their social networks as a result of the market becoming more digitally oriented. This has given businesses new opportunities to capitalize on their competitive advantage in the market. The author affirms that a key tool for the expansion of a company's performance and development is digital marketing. It is an effective functional model that helps firms perform better by absorbing outside knowledge and information, managing customer relationships, and having access to data from other marketplaces[2].

In India, [3] state that digital Marketing has changed the way businesses and other companies converse with their customers. Digital marketing may be used hand in hand with traditional marketing strategies to get closer to their target customers more than ever before. Consumers can choose and buy things more readily and easily today thanks to the availability of a wide range of products from various developers.

The authors reaffirm that companies are able to grow into new markets, provide new services to their customers, connect with their audiences with new techniques and therefore compete on the same level with bigger companies. Marketers working with these companies develop new skills and use digital marketing to their advantage to enhance their competitiveness as a company[2].

In the African context, Digital technology is behind the change on how buyers relate to products and markets. It is not just the reprogramming of computers that is being done; consumers are being changed themselves. Consumers via the internet expect everything to be customized – from the products and services they purchase, to the information they are looking for, even to the price they are ready to pay. They would like to involve the producers in the kind of struggle that characterizes the street marketplace[4].

Regionally in Kenya, [5]claimed that successful companies long relied on referrals to publicize their products and services, but with the increase of digital marketing, now focus has moved from exchange of products and toward delivery of service, interaction, connection, and customer relations. Advancements in technology networks in marketing, and changes to the permanent media environment brought about by digital platforms and gadgets have all aided this transition.

E-commerce, also referred to as electronic commerce, provides various new means for people and the business sector in Tanzania to collaborate, interact, buy and sell products. So, new digital marketing efforts must be made in order to enhance those new marketing instruments. Electronic commerce empowers market players to evaluate, and purchase products using diverse online sales networks. Businesses naturally begin their online presentations by introducing themselves and their customer-focused goods and services in order to assist other sales networks[6].

[7] Discovered that digital advertising serves as a significant channel for businesses to reach out to both current and potential clients in Rwanda.

So, establishing clear goals for digital marketing can help with operational decision-making for advertising programs so that the desired message may be properly sent to the audience.

Asserts that through market expansion, improved transactional efficiencies, and increased information sharing effectiveness, digital marketing enhances Rwanda's sales, internal operations, and relationships with customers and suppliers[8].

The Real Estate Industry is a key industry and a prospective vehicle to lead to the economic growth of Rwanda as stated by the National Strategy for transformation program[9]. The sector in the past has added 647 billion Rwandan Francs to the national Growth Domestic Product of Rwanda in 2019, the industry has also grown by 4%, it is due to the continuous expansion of private buildings and communal works[10]. Amongst the outstanding opportunities within the industry is the execution of the City of Kigali Masterplan that is comprehensive, acting as the footing for more definite planning at the District level as well as the Central Business District. This offers the ultimate unconventional sustainability in the use of land[10]. Also, Rwanda has allotted six secondary cities which are Huye, Musanze, Muhanga, Nyagatare, Rusizi, and Rubavu to cater for their development and growth. These cities mentioned above also offer numerous opportunities especially in the development of the Real Estate industry and infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture according to the Second Rwanda Urban Development Project[11].

Thus, the researcher felt the necessity to review the influence of digital marketing on the performance of real estate in Rwanda using data from Ultimate Developers Ltd. The organization seeks to transform Rwanda's real estate market as a developer of residential buildings. The distinctive Vision City neighborhood, its centerpiece project, is the largest affluent suburb in Kigali and all of Rwanda. UDL is pursuing sustainable, intelligent, and robust estates.

2. Materials and methods

The study was based on several theories, including the Social Media Engagement Theory, the Technological, Organization, and Environment Framework, the Competitive Advantage Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study population comprised 553 staff, contractors, and customers of UDL Plc. The sample size of 138 was determined using Slovin's formula, but only 114 respondents returned well-filled responses. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect primary data in this study. Descriptive research design, correlation analysis, and multiple regression were used to assess the data using SPSS version 27.

3. Results and Discussions

Based on the precise research objectives, the study's findings are presented in the section that follows. Statistical terms like frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized in the descriptive analysis. The presumption was that the factors were more significant as evaluative criteria the higher the score. The following was the interpretation of the mean and standard deviation: Mean between 1.00-1.99 implies that very low mean (i.e., the fact does not appear), Mean between 2.00-2.99 implies that low mean (i.e., the fact appears less), Mean between 3.00-3.99 implies that moderate mean (i.e., the fact appears moderately), Mean between 4.00-4.50 implies that high mean (i.e., the fact appears more) and mean between 4.51-5.00 implies that Very high mean (i.e., strong evidence of the existence of the fact). Standard deviation less or equal $0.5(\sigma) \leq 0.5$ implies that homogeneity otherwise heterogeneity.

Views on Website marketing (WM) in UDL

The study sought to assess the website marketing in UDL. The respondents were questioned if they agreed or disagreed with the statements with regard to Website marketing. Findings are presented in the table 1.

Table 1: View on Website marketing in UDL

Statement on website marketing	SD		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
The Website of UDL is functional, responsive and user friendly	15	13	21	18	20	18	32	28	26	23	3.29	0.72
UDL's Website content ensures that its audience continuously receives new information that is relevant to them.	8	7	12	11	17	15	45	39	32	28	3.71	0.65
UDL's website contains high-quality and original content material that resonates with its audience	9	8	9	8	20	18	45	39	31	27	3.70	0.64
The website of UDL has a sales page where visitors can book services and lists reviews	3	3	5	4	4	4	41	36	61	54	4.33	0.47
The website of UDL promotes the organization's services in a clear and memorable way	12	11	15	13	15	13	40	35	32	28	3.57	0.71
Overall Mean											3.72	

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table 1 presents the results of a survey assessing respondents' perceptions of the functionality, content quality, and promotional effectiveness of UDL's website. The study found that 28% of respondents found the UDL website functional, responsive, and user-friendly. However, there was a range of perceptions, with 39% agreeing that the content regularly provides new and relevant information. 39% agreed that the content is high quality and resonates with the audience. 54% strongly agreed with the sales page, and 35% agreed that the website promotes the organization's services clearly and memorably. Overall, the results suggest that UDL uses website marketing moderately in its digital marketing strategy.

Views on Social Media Marketing

The purpose of the study was to determine how respondents felt about the social media marketing utilization in UDL. To that end, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with various claims made regarding these techniques. The results are displayed in table 2.

Table 2: View on Social media marketing in UDL

Statement on Social Media	SD		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
Through social media, UDL Ltd communicate with its prospects and get vital information through their feedback	-	-	2	2	5	4	40	35	67	59	4.51	0.39
The social media allow UDL to connect and share information with a larger audience	4	4	8	7	11	10	37	32	54	47	4.13	0.51
Thanks to social media, UDL Ltd heavily influence customers by their interaction and co-creation with the company.	-	-	5	4	10	9	41	36	58	51	4.33	0.44
Social media allows UDL to quickly address customers' inquiries	2	2	11	10	4	4	42	37	55	48	4.20	0.47
Marketers in UDL are alert 24 hours a day because of the sudden outcomes and high intensity of bad	7	6	15	13	5	4	32	28	55	48	3.99	0.56

customer evaluations based on a single customer's negative review

Overall Mean	4.23
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Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table 2’s results showed that 59% of respondents strongly agreed that UDL Ltd communicates with prospects and receives vital information through social media. 47% of respondents agreed that social media allows UDL to connect with a larger audience, while 51% believed that social media heavily influences customers through interaction and co-creation. 48% of respondents agreed that social media allows UDL to quickly address customer inquiries. However, 48% of respondents strongly agreed that marketers in UDL are alert 24 hours a day due to sudden outcomes and high intensity of negative customer evaluations. The overall view of respondents on social media marketing was high at 4.23, indicating that UDL uses social media marketing extensively in its digital marketing activities. Overall, respondents had different perceptions of the role of social media in UDL's digital marketing activities.

Views on Content Marketing in UDL

The study sought to assess perception of respondents on the Content marketing in UDL. The respondents were questioned if agreed or disagreed with the statements with regard to Content marketing within UDL. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Views on Content marketing in UDL

Statement on Content Marketing	SD		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
N=114	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
UDL has an effective content marketing which clarifies key stories to be communicated to customers	14	12	17	15	18	16	40	35	25	22	3.39	0.74
UDL’s content market is strategize to attract its target market	12	11	15	13	16	14	39	34	32	28	3.56	0.67
Content market promotes UDL by providing customers with personalized, location-and time-sensitive information	14	12	19	17	10	9	41	36	30	26	3.47	0.71
Content marketing of UDL always meet consumers’ subjective standards	11	10	15	13	11	10	44	39	33	29	3.64	0.69

UDL content marketing is adjusted on the customers' channel choices	12	11	20	18	11	10	35	31	36	32	3.55	0.72
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Overall Mean **3.52**

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table 3's results showed that 35% of respondents agreed that UDL has effective content marketing, which clarifies key stories to customers. 34% agreed that UDL's content market is strategized to attract its target market, while 36% agreed that it promotes UDL by providing personalized, location- and time-sensitive information. 39% agreed that UDL's content marketing meets consumers' subjective standards, while 32% strongly agreed that it is adjusted on customers' channel choices. The overall view of respondents on content marketing in UDL was moderate, indicating that UDL considers moderately content creation within their digital marketing. The results suggest that respondents have differing opinions on the effectiveness of UDL's content marketing.

Views on the Organizational performance in UDL

The study sought to assess perception of respondents on the organizational performance in UDL due to digital marketing. When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the assertions made about organizational performance, the respondents' responses are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Views on the Organizational performance of UDL

Statement on Performance	SD		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
Due to digital marketing, UDL Ltd is increasing significantly its quantity of units sold during the normal operation	2	2	10	9	2	2	55	48	45	39	4.15	0.51
UDL can now quickly produces more leads and sales due to its Digital marketing	2	2	4	4	11	5	40	35	57	50	4.28	0.47
Digital marketing has allowed UDL to better promote its products/service to potential customers	1	1	8	7	11	10	50	44	44	39	4.12	0.54
In the last 2 years, the market share of UDL has increased due to its digital marketing	1	1	9	8	14	12	40	35	50	44	4.13	0.52

Due to digital marketing, UDL Ltd has created long-term relationships and deep bonds with customers	3	3	7	6	10	9	35	31	59	52	4.23	0.49
Digital marketing helped UDL in developing the consumer acceptance of its service.	7	6	11	10	11	10	37	32	48	42	3.95	0.58

Overall Mean												4.14
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Source: Primary Data (2023)

Regarding the performance of UDL due to digital marketing, the results from Table 4 reveals that that 48% of respondents believe that digital marketing has significantly increased UDL's unit sales during normal operations. 50% strongly agree that digital marketing has enabled UDL to quickly produce more leads and sales. 44% also believe that digital marketing has allowed UDL to better promote its products/services to potential customers. In the last two years, UDL's market share has increased due to digital marketing, with a high mean of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.52. 52% of respondents strongly agree that digital marketing has created long-term relationships with customers, with a high mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.49. 42% of respondents strongly agree that digital marketing has helped UDL develop consumer acceptance of its service, with a moderate mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.58. Overall, the study indicates that digital marketing has an impact on UDL's organizational performance.

Views on the Consumer Perception in UDL

The study sought to assess perception of respondents on the Consumer Perception, which is the moderating variable in this study. When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the assertions made about Consumer Perception, the respondents' responses are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Views on the Customer perception of UDL

Statement on Customer perception	SD		D		N		A		SA		M	SD
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%		
The service provided by UDL is of utmost value	7	6	4	4	11	10	36	32	56	49	4.14	0.54
Customer of UDL perceive that the cost aligns with the value they receive from UDL	9	8	18	16	15	13	33	29	39	34	3.66	0.67

UDL has built stronger customer loyalty and satisfaction along the years	4	4	9	8	10	9	51	45	40	35	4.00	0.71
Customer in UDL receive fair value in exchange for their payment.	9	8	11	10	18	16	34	30	42	37	3.78	0.69
The process or procedures used by UDL in its dealings with customers are fair	10	9	12	11	11	10	36	32	45	39	3.82	0.72
Overall Mean											3.88	

Source: Primary Data (2023)

When considering the moderating variable customer perceptions, results in Table 5 The study found that 49% of respondents strongly agreed that the service provided by UDL is of utmost value, with a moderate mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.67. 34% also agreed that the cost aligns with the value received from UDL, with a moderate mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.67. 45% agreed that UDL has built stronger customer loyalty and satisfaction over the years, with a moderate mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.71. 37% of respondents agreed that customers receive fair value in exchange for their payment, with a moderate mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.69. 39% of respondents agreed that the process or procedures used by UDL in its dealings with customers are fair, with a moderate mean of 3.88.

Table 6. ANOVA between Content marketing and performance

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
3	Regression	7.221	3	1.805	62.454	.001b
	Residual	4.307	110	0.023		
	Total	11.527	113			

a. Predictors: (Constant): Content marketing

b. Dependent variable: Performance

The findings in the Table 6, indicate that the overall model was significant shown by F statistic of 62.454 and p-value calculated =.001 is less than Critical p-value =0.05 level of significant. Therefore, this implies that the variables Content marketing Strategizing, Content marketing Production, and Content marketing Distribution had significant contribution to the variation of performance in UDL. Therefore, it can be concluded that Content marketing (Content marketing Strategizing, Content marketing Production, and Content marketing Distribution) has significant contribution on performance in UDL. Therefore, Ho3 which states that there is no statistically significant contribution of content marketing (Content marketing Strategizing, Content marketing Production, Content marketing Distribution) on the performance in Ultimate Developers Ltd is not accepted at all levels of significance.

Table 7: Test for Multicollinearity

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Website marketing	0.803	1.245
Social media marketing	0.896	1.678
Content marketing	0.661	2.167

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table 7, indicated that all the independent variables were not highly correlated with each other as indicated by the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) of below five. Since all 3 variables has VIF which is less than 5 indicating that there is no multicollinearity. Therefore, all variable of predictors were included in the model.

Testing of normality: To ascertain whether the data was accurately modeled and regularly distributed, tests for normality were run. Both groups' samples came from populations with the same distributions, which is the null hypotheses. The data is normal if the Kolmogorov-Sminorv test's Sig. value is larger than 0.05. The data considerably deviate from a normal distribution if it is less than 0.05. (Zikmund *et al*, 2013).

Table 8: ANOVA between Social media marketing and performance

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	7.221	3	1.805	62.454	.004b
	Residual	4.307	110	0.023		
	Total	11.527	113			

a. Predictors: (Constant): Adequacy of information shared, Frequency of interaction, and adjusted marketing campaigns

b. Dependent variable: Performance

The findings in the Table 8, indicate that the overall model was significant shown by F statistic of 62.454 and p-value calculated =.000 is less than Critical p-value =0.05 level of significant. Therefore, this implies that jointly the variables of Social media marketing (Adequacy of information shared, Frequency of interaction, and adjusted marketing campaigns) had significant effect to the variation of performance in UDL. Therefore, it can be concluded that Social media marketing has significant influence on performance in UDL. Therefore, H02 which states that there is no statistically significant influence of social media marketing (Adequacy of information shared, Frequency of interaction, Adjusted marketing campaigns) on the performance in Ultimate Developers Ltd is rejected at all levels of significance.

Table 9: Estimated Regression Coefficients for moderating effect model

	R 2 -Change	F	df 1	df 2	P
ZDM*ZCP	0.147	8.251	3	110	.000

Model		Standardized			T	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coef. B	Std. Error	coef. Beta		
3	(Constant)	0.099	0.275		0.36	0.022
	Z-score DM	0.798	0.077	0.535	1.414	0.000
	Z-score CP	0.184	0.050	0.224	3.677	0.000

DM*CP	0.264	0.197	0.124	1.339	0.003
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- a. Dependent Variable: Performance
 b. ZDM: Z score for digital marketing
 c. ZCP: Z score for Customer perceptions

Source: Generated into SPSS 27

R² change was triggered to show Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s): results of the test of highest order unconditional interaction presented in Table 9, yielded a significant R² change, $\Delta R^2 = .147$, $F(1, 100) = 8.251$, $p = .0000$. R² change denotes existence of moderation. This therefore is an indication that customer perceptions moderated the relationship between digital marketing and performance among real estate companies in Rwanda.

An examination of the results of step 3 of the hierarchical regression (Table 9), revealed the following information on moderating influence of customer perceptions: Digital marketing ($\beta = 0.535$, $p = 0.002$) was a significant predictor of performance because significant value was less than .05; this means that digital marketing has a significant effect on performance of real estate companies.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that digital marketing has a positive and significant impact on the organizational performance of UDL. The results of the hypotheses tests in Tables 7, 8, and 6 show that the null hypotheses Ho1, Ho2, and Ho3 are rejected at a 5% level of significance. This is because the study found that the variables of website marketing, social media marketing, and content marketing have a significant effect on the variation of organizational performance in UDL. The results in Table 9 confirm that Ho4, which states that customer perceptions have a moderating effect on the relationship between digital marketing and the performance of UDL. As a result, the objectives of this research were successfully achieved.

7. Recommendations

In line with some weaknesses found within the research, therefore the following recommendation are proposed to improve performance of UDL:

1. The findings revealed that only 28% of respondents, agreed that the Website of UDL is functional, responsive and user friendly, with moderate mean 3.29. However, the respondents' perceptions varied, as demonstrated by heterogeneous standard deviation = 0.72. This is not bad, but this measure is the lowest mean in this study, thus the study recommends that UDL may improve its website in order to make it user friendly for its customers.
2. The findings also revealed that only 35% agreed with the statement that UDL has an effective content marketing which clarifies key stories to be communicated to customers, with moderate mean=3.39 and heterogeneity SD=0.74, indicating that respondents agreed with the statement but had different perceptions upon it. The study recommends that UDL enhance its content by producing contents, which clarifies key stories to be communicated to customers.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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