



**ISCTBL 2020**

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Универзитет „Гоце Делчев“ –  
Штип

Goce Delchev University  
Shtip

Факултет за туризам и бизнис  
логистика

Faculty of Tourism and  
Business Logistics

**Трета Меѓународна Научна Конференција**  
**Third International Scientific Conference**

**ПРЕДИЗВИЦИТЕ ВО ТУРИЗМОТ И БИЗНИС**  
**ЛОГИСТИКАТА ВО 21 ВЕК**  
**CHALLENGES OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS**  
**LOGISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

**ЗБОРНИК НА ТРУДОВИ**  
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Милан Здравковиќ, извршен директор на операторот на дистрибутивниот систем во Ј.П.Србијагас, Белград, Србија – „*Supply of natural gas in COVID-19 conditions - experience and expectations*“

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Проф. д-р Татјана Бошков, професор и декан на Факултетот за туризам и бизнис логистика – „*The impact of coronavirus on global growth and global supply chain shifts*“

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### **Plenary session**

Prof. Gligor Bishev, University Professor and Chairman of the Board, Sparkasse Bank-Skopje – “*The impact of the pandemic on economic developments*”

Peter Tabak, Executive Director, Leading Regional Economist for Economics, Policy and Governance in the Western Balkans Vice-President for Policy and Partnerships, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development - “*Economic outlook for the Western Balkans during and after the epidemic*”

Milan Zdravkovic, Executive Director of the Distribution System Operator in J.P Srbijagas, Belgrade, Serbia – “*Supply of natural gas in COVID-19 conditions - experience and expectations*”

Prof. Misko Dzidrov, University Professor and Vice-rector for Teaching and Students, Goce Delcev University of Stip – “*UGD in a time of pandemic*”

Prof. Tatjana Boskov, University Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delcev University of Stip – “*The impact of coronavirus on global growth and global supply chain shifts*”

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**УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ „ГОЦЕ ДЕЛЧЕВ“ - ШТИП**  
**GOCE DELCEV UNIVERSITY OF STIP**

**ФАКУЛТЕТ ЗА ТУРИЗАМ И БИЗНИС ЛОГИСТИКА**  
**FACULTY OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS LOGISTICS**

ТРЕТА МЕЃУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА  
КОНФЕРЕНЦИЈА

THIRD INTERNATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

**ПРЕДИЗВИЦИТЕ ВО ТУРИЗМОТ И БИЗНИС**  
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13 ноември, 2020, Штип / Shtip, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## ПРЕДГОВОР

Факултетот за туризам и бизнис логистика при Универзитетот „Гоце Делчев“ во Штип, беше организатор на Третата меѓународна научна конференција „Предизвици на туризмот и бизнис логистика во 21 век“. Конференцијата се одржа на 13 ноември 2020 година на платформата Microsoft Teams, со повеќе од 90 учесници од матичната земја и странство. Оваа година Меѓународниот научен комитет брои еминентни професори од нашата земја и над 15 странски земји како Израел, Шпанија, Франција, Молдавија, Италија, Грција, Египет, Полска, Турција, Романија, Бугарија, Србија, Хрватска, Босна и Херцеговина и Словенија.

Целта на оваа конференција е да промовира поголемо разбирање на бизнис администрација, логистиката, туризмот и угостителство во однос на управувањето, економијата, образованието и претприемништвото. Ова подразбира дека фокусот на учесниците го насочивме кон најновите трендови и предизвици во врска со развојот на туризмот, менаџирањето со компаниите, пазарот на труд, можностите за придобивки и профит, изгледите за подобра конкурентност на меѓународниот пазар, што пак е императив за финансиската стабилност на нашата земја во целина.

Имено, со пристигнатите трудови и авторските истражувања се оствари целта на конференцијата - а тоа е оценувањето на тековната состојба и идните изгледи за развој на микро план што се однесува на домашниот пазар, како и движењата на глобалната економија, подготвувајќи ја бизнис заедницата за предизвиците со кои ќе се соочуваат при остварувањето на нивните цели, што де факто влијае врз одржувањето на финансиите особено во времето кое го живееме под притисокот на пандемијата.

Препораките кои се пренесоа се однесуваат како да се зајакнува капацитетот на компаниите како и промените во регулативите кои го диктираат нашиот пат кон ЕУ. Дискусиите во текот на конференцијата беа одговор на тоа како реагираа и се позиционираа менаџерите на финансиски средства во услови на голем пазарен ризик, пазарни шокови и турбуленции и како треба да се подготвуваат инвеститорите во поедини сектори. Трудовите прикажаа изгледи и кон идната интеграција на земјите од Западен Балкан, со осврт на досегашните постигнувања и идните предизвици пред овие економии како и размена на искуства на сите учесници кои сме денес присутни од повеќе земји.

Токму овие препораки треба да бидат двигател на процесите на реформата во насока на подигање на квалитетот на образованието заради поголема продуктивност на трудот, конкурентност на економијата и намалување на неусогласеноста на понудата на вештини и компетенции како и побарувачката на пазарот на труд.

Постигнувањето на овие цели е заедничка задача на сите оние што се во позиција да го дадат својот придонес за имплементација на реформите во општеството. Токму тие реформи, тие промени во начинот на пристап, методологија на работа и организација, не треба да ги правиме само за да станеме дел од економскиот блок, туку да бидат во насока да постигнеме нешто друго, многу позначајно, односно сите напори што ги правиме да бидат за остварување на повисок степен на благосостојбата на нашите граѓани, за создавање на достоинствени услови за живот и работа.

Во регионот, меѓутоа и пошироко, во Европа, искуствата се најразлични. Наидуваме на успешни, и на не толку успешни модели. Токму ваквите научните конференции, дебатите што се развиваат тука, се најдобриот начин за размена на искуства, за идентификација на предизвиците и перспективите, за споредување на моделите и третирањето на нивните недостатоци или предности, меѓутоа и презентирање

## DIGITAL MARKETING AND ITS IMPORTANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

*Natasha Miteva<sup>1</sup>; Dushica Popova<sup>2</sup>; Aco Kuzelov<sup>3</sup>*

### Abstract

*Marketing plays enormous role in every competitive business, every day of its operation. The economic crisis and world pandemic situation we are facing nowadays have strengthened its impact on companies, customers and sales. Furthermore, it became a desperate need for survival for the businesses, no matter how big or small. This paper outlines the importance of digital marketing and the effect on audience, presence, sale, growth, and employment. It gives an in depth understanding of how with the use of digital marketing tactics, the businesses can sustain and grow their customer relationship, earn loyalty, and create sustainable image. Taking all these steps towards success, at the same time benefiting from low cost and time wise strategies, businesses are learning, implementing and using each possible aspect of digital marketing in order to succeed during the difficult situation they are facing today.*

Key Words: *marketing, digital marketing, growth, pandemic, business, customers*

JEL classification: *M31*

### Introduction

Marketing and its practices have been part of the business operations for decades. For the last several years marketing activities gained even more attention especially by small and medium enterprises, realizing its impact on customers and sales. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, today we are living and operating in an unknown and unpredictable environment. People are working from home and shifting all their activities online. This new situation has forced the businesses to examine marketing activities thoroughly and practice digital marketing. Digital marketing, also known as e-marketing, has been present for the last 30 years with the invention of WWW. It has gained the most attention during world's pandemic situation, since it is perceived as the most cost-effective practices for customer attraction and business sustainability.

### History and evolution

Digital marketing in base is defined as marketing activities practiced through digital tools. For, its history of development and evolution is tightly connected with the history and evolution of technology. As a term, digital marketing first emerges in 1990s with the welcoming of widespread *Internet* and the invention of *World Wide Web* by Sir Tim Berners-Lee<sup>4</sup>. During

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/>

same year the first search engine *Archie* was launched, but at that time marketers weren't so opened for the use of digital marketing practices given the uncertainty of whether their strategies will work and unawareness of its use in general. However, already in 1993, the first clickable web-ad banners went live and marked the digital era in marketing. The following year was marked with the first e-commerce transaction over *Netmarket*<sup>1</sup> and the launch of *Yahoo!*. This year also happened one of the most important inventions in digital era that has a great impact on the digital marketing practices. It was the invention of *Cookies*, a little data files stored to an Internet users' computer while going through a website reliable for remembering stateful information<sup>2</sup>. The first cookie was designed to record user habits. In 1996 several smaller search engines went live such as *HotBot*, *Alexa* and *LookSmart*, and in 1997 the first social media site, *SixDegrees.com*, was launched. Some important milestones for the entire technology industry happened in 1998. That year *Google* was born, *MSN* was launched by Microsoft, and *Yahoo! web search* was launched by Yahoo!. The *Dotcom bubble burst* in 2000 slowed down some hopes into the digital marketing era causing some of the smaller search engines to be wiped out. The same year *SixDegrees.com* was shutdown. In 2001 the first mobile marketing campaign *Universal Music* was born, and in 2002 *LinkedIn*<sup>3</sup> was launched. *MySpace*, another successful social network, was launched in 2003 and *WordPress* was released. Next year, Google launched *Gmail* and went public, and Facebook went live. *Podcasting*, a way of audio distributing files through Internet<sup>4</sup>, also became part of the digital era in 2004. The launch of YouTube, still popular online video-sharing platform, happened in 2005 and only one year later Google acquired it under its business subsidiaries for \$1.65 billion. During 2006 Microsoft launched *MS Live Search*, *Twitter* was launched and the first *split testing*<sup>5</sup> in marketing was conducted. This year was memorable for Amazon too, which was one of the companies who lost more than 90% of its value during the Dotcom bubble burst<sup>6</sup>, because its e-commerce sales cross \$10 billion. In 2007 the #hashtag<sup>7</sup>, an idea invented by Chris Messina for participation in global conversation, arrived on Twitter and started reshaping communications on social media. Same year, *Tumblr*<sup>8</sup> and *iPhone*<sup>9</sup> were launched, a web-streaming service *Hulu* was established, and Facebook unveiled the Facebook Ads. Not so long in this digital era, in 2008, China overtook US in number of internet-users. Also, this year *Spotify*<sup>10</sup> was launched, and *Groupon*<sup>11</sup> went live. That same year *Android*, a mobile operating system, was launched by Google. In 2009, Google launched *Instant* for real-time search engine results, but its *Affiliate* network was shut down. The year of 2010 marks the launches of many social networks, such as *Pinterest*<sup>12</sup>, *WhatsApp*<sup>13</sup>, and *Instagram*<sup>14</sup>. Same year, *Google Buzz*<sup>15</sup> was launched too, but it lasted only a

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<sup>1</sup> an online marketplace, <https://www.netmarket.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cato.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Social network specifically designed to connect career and business professionals ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com))

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk>

<sup>5</sup> Creating two distinct versions of the same web page in order to test and analyze with one is more effective (Rob Stokes, eMarketing p 122)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/>

<sup>7</sup> a hash symbol as a type of metadata used by users to apply dynamic, user-generated tagging that helps other users easily find messages with a specific theme or content, <https://www.cnbc.com/>

<sup>8</sup> microblogging and social networking website <https://www.tumblr.com/>

<sup>9</sup> a smartphone made by Apple, <https://www.computerhope.com/>

<sup>10</sup> Audio streaming and media services provider, [www.spotify.com](http://www.spotify.com)

<sup>11</sup> Offer of coupons, cashback on purchases and group deals to customers, [www.investopedia.com](http://www.investopedia.com)

<sup>12</sup> Image sharing and social media service that enables saving and discovery of information on the World Wide Web using images and animated GIFs and videos, in the form of pinboards, <https://www.pinterest.com/>

<sup>13</sup> A messaging app that lets users text, chat, and share media, including voice messages and video, with individuals or groups, <https://www.pcmag.com/>

<sup>14</sup> Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app, [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)

<sup>15</sup> Microblogging and messaging tool, <https://gizmodo.com>

year. Another important milestone in the digital era for the users was 2011 when the web-use overtook figures for TV viewership among youth. It is the same year when Snapchat was launched, a multimedia messaging app by Snap Inc.<sup>1</sup>. That year Google launched *Google+*<sup>2</sup> and *Google Panda*<sup>3</sup>, and Facebook messenger was offered as a separate app. Moreover, Apple took a step forward and included *Siri*, a voice assistant, in its newest iPhone 4 launch. All these technological changes encourage a social media budget increase of 64% in 2012. During that year Google made launch of its *Knowledge Graph*, and Facebook acquired Instagram for \$1billion. One of the most popular social networking apps, Instagram, started selling ads in 2013, and LinkedIn launched sponsored content. That same year Yahoo! acquired Timblr. In 2014 Facebook acquired WhatsApp, launched its *Look Back* and started tailoring ads on LinkedIn and iWatch. The sale of ads continued among other social network applications, and Snapchat started with this process in 2014. Facebook increased its business subsidiaries acquiring WhatsApp for \$16billion. In 2015 among the most important technological evolutions are the launches of *Discover feature* by Snapchat, *Echo Home* voice assistant called *Alexa* by Amazon, periscope live streaming by Twitter, and *Meercat* live streaming. Same year, Pinterest started selling ads too. Social media platforms continue with its innovations and in 2016 Facebook introduced *Live* and Instagram its *Stories*. Google entered the voice assistant launches with its *Home voice assistant*. Users of Instagram platform raised their voice about the short time available for Feed video sharing, and as a result IGTV was born in 2018, allowing users to upload a video up to 15 minutes from mobile and 60 minutes from the web<sup>4</sup>. By 2019 voice assistants were dominant estimating that 27% of all searches are done by voice (Monappa, 2020; VentureMotion, 2020).

This process of evolution and innovation in the technological world didn't happen as a result of the pandemic which we face during 2020, even though it was impacted by. For that, it is a one that will not be stopped anytime soon, and everyone has to take an opportunity of it.

### **Definition of Digital Marketing**

To understand digital marketing, one must first understand the marketing itself; its fundamentals, objectives, purpose, and intentions. The "father of marketing", Dr Philip Kotler, defines it as "Marketing is that function of the organization that can keep in constant touch with the organization's consumers, read their needs, develop products that meet these needs, and build a programme of communications to express the organization's purposes"<sup>5</sup>. Simply stated, marketing is everything a company can do in order to get its product and/or service to the customer. To do so, traditional marketing uses different channels and media such as magazines, flyers and brochures, radio, TV ads, billboards, and newspaper. The point of using those channels is to get to the customer, satisfy a need, keep the customer and stimulate sales.

Literature wise, digital marketing is not different than the traditional marketing. For its purposes, it uses digital communication tools, but it goes beyond traditional marketing, and doesn't just create and satisfy a demand. It drives that creation and with the use of new and innovative ways it satisfies the demand. As it has been noted in the previous section, the key

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pocket-lint.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Social network by Google, <https://whatis.techtarget.com>

<sup>3</sup> An algorithm to reward high-quality websites and diminish the presence of low-quality websites in Google's organic search engine results, <https://moz.com>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-tv/>

<sup>5</sup> Kotler and Levy, 1969 p 15

ingredient to the success of digital marketing is the Internet, an interactive medium which allows exchange of value for both parties. The Internet in the process of digital marketing is not just another marketing channel, it is the place where the complete marketing scope has been practiced. Moreover, it is a new environment in which marketing and business principles can be build (Jones et al., 2011).

Given the availability of information in the digital era, people are not passive customers. They have more choice, influence, and power. As a result, businesses offer new products and/or services, practise new ways of selling, and enter new markets. In order to start and succeed in the process of digital marketing practices, businesses must first define their business and marketing strategy. This involves getting to know its environment, business, customers and competition. Since it is built on the traditional marketing, the digital marketing strategy can then be set, putting the customer at the core of all decisions. To stay focused and keep up with the changes, businesses that practice digital marketing must include continuous market research. As a conclusion, the foundation of successful digital assets is built on research, planning and strategy.

### **Advantages**

Digital marketing is practiced through digital tools, mostly with Internet, and the availability of immediate data is the most powerful advantage. It gives businesses the opportunity to track traffic driving campaigns and use the information to measure results, reports on campaigns and target marketing more effectively. Moreover, businesses can use the data to test its marketing efforts and improve them. The data can be used to understand the customers, their behavior, and how a business might influence that behavior (Ryan, 2010).

Another marketing practice that can be used even more is the CRM, Customer Relationship Management. After adopting it as an ongoing strategy to build loyalty and long-term relationship, digital marketing tactics that can be used for CRM are email marketing, online advertising, affiliate marketing, effective web development and design, social media marketing, and search engine optimization and search advertising that start with the customer intent. As one of the most useful tactics of digital marketing for the CRM is the effective analytics (Stokes & Minds of Quirk, 2015).

It is important to note that digital marketing allows easy and fast data tracking, meaning, businesses have real-time data for decision-making increasing the probability of making the best choice for the business. The possibility to track, analyze and optimize the business performance are the greatest advantages of digital marketing practices. What business operators look for when going through the tracking data are: impression, interaction, click, and action.

### **Change in digital data usage before and during COVID 19**

COVID-19, an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, was first detected on 31 December 2019 by the WHO<sup>1</sup>. Almost immediately, it affected all joints of life throughout the world. With the implementation of social distancing, various businesses were impacted too. Great number of employees were asked to work from home, and almost all people shifted their day-to-day activities online. To sustain, businesses engaged in using technology, thus using the digital marketing now more than ever.

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<sup>1</sup> www.who.int

This has been proven with the data reports that several world companies issue on a continuous time frame. Table 1 bellow summarizes some of the important data presented in the reports of DataReportal<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1: *Digital data use*

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020 (January)</b>	<b>2020 (April)</b>	<b>2020 (July)</b>
Total population	7,593	7,676	7,75	7,77	7,79
Internet users	4,021	4,388	4,54	4,57	4,57
Active social media users	3,196	3,484	3,80	3,81	3,96
Unique mobile users	5,135	5,112	5,19	5,16	5,15
Active mobile social users	2,958	3,256	3,80	/	/

*\*numbers are in billions*

Source: *adjusted from the reports by Hootsuite & We Are Social, retrieved from <https://datareportal.com/>*

Looking at the data reports of DataReportal presented in Table 1, the number of internet users increases continuously during the last several years. In April 2020 the world faced big jumps in digital activity. Mostly these changes were detected among countries with strictest COVID-19 lockdowns. There has been significant increase in social media use, accelerating adoption of ecommerce, increased time spent playing video games and watching e-sports, and some unexpected opportunities for digital advertisers.

According to the data from DataReportal reports, people during coronavirus lockdowns spend more time on their digital devices. More precisely, from 31<sup>st</sup> of March to 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2020 people increased their time spent by 76% on their smartphone or mobile phone, 45% on laptop computer, 32% on desktop computer, 22% on tablet device, 6,3% on smart watch, 17% on games console, 34% on smart TV or media streaming device, and 11% on smart speaker<sup>2</sup>. Looking closely into the data, people reported increase of 47% on social media usage, 46% on messenger services, 36% on mobile apps, 57% on watching shows and films on streaming services, and 39% on listening music streaming services. Due to the COVID-19 situation, people reported significant changes in media habits too, such as increased time of 35% watching news coverage, 23% using social media, 19% more TV on broadcast television channels, and 24% on messenger services.

One of the most popular apps, Twitter, has further analyzed its users data and offered an audience overview for the potential number of people that marketers can reach using adverts on its app. According to the data, 386 billion of people can be reached with adverts on twitter, of which 6,4% aged 13+, 39% female and 61% male. Facebook also published on its self-service ad tools that as of April 2020, 2 billion people can be reached by advertisers, assuming all of them are aged 13+ as the platform requires. Furthermore, from December 2019 to March

<sup>1</sup> DataReportal.com uses data from a wide variety of sources such as market research agencies, internet and social media companies, governments and public bodies, news media, journalists, and our own proprietary analysis, <https://datareportal.com/about>

<sup>2</sup>The numbers are from findings of a survey of internet users aged 16 to 64 in select countries, [www.datareportal.com](http://www.datareportal.com)

2020, additional 76 million people saw adverts on Facebook, and more than 3,5 billion additional clicks were noted.

As every business wants to hear customers opinion, GlobalWebIndex went further and did a research on whether the brands should advertise as normal despite the Coronavirus outbreak, and 51% of the surveyed approved it. It is important for the businesses to know that people don't expect brands to stop advertising now, but they must be careful how they do it. People now more than ever expect empathy and compassion, and their focus should be on solving problems rather than selling products and/or services.

Another important change that marketers should know is the shift on mobile internet use. During the first three months of 2020 there was an increase by 20% in the amount of time people spent using mobile devices, compared to the same period in 2019. In April 2020, 92% of the total internet users were mobile internet users, and the average daily time spend using the internet on mobile devices was 3 hours and 24 minutes.

The change in data is no different when analyzing e-commerce during the lockdowns. From the internet users surveyed by GlobalWebIndex, half of them reported spending more time on online shopping at the beginning of April 2020. Currently, the leading country is China with the highest rates of e-commerce adoption.

An important issue for marketers to keep in mind when using digital marketing tactics is the use of personal data. According to the research, 64% of internet users between ages of 16 and 64 are concerned about misuse of their personal data.

ReportalData continues with its collaboration with their thrusted third parties and analyze the collected data for the world digital activities. Their latest report dated July 2020 does not differs from the one in April 2020. As Internet usage continues to grow and people spend more time on their mobile devices, their search behaviors are evolving. Nowadays people are using voice search and image recognition services, which are an important tool for the e-commerce with particular value for brands. Another significant change in people's search behavior is the use of social networks in order to learn more about a brand and/or products. This change placed social networks at the top choice amongst internet users aged 16 to 24 for brand research. This is once more proven with the milestone Instagram and LinkedIn pass. The latest data of Instagram shows that there were new 111 million users added to its advertising reach in the past quarter. Meaning, marketers can reach 1,08 billion of people with an ad on Instagram, 51% of which are female and 49% are male. Similar, during second quarter of 2020 LinkedIn global user base was increased by 25 million, resulting with total registered users above 700 million. From marketers' point of view, with an ad on LinkedIn, 702 million of people can be reached. Even thought, during the second quarter the COVID-19 situation was somehow stable, and the lockdowns were eased, e-commerce activities continued to increase. According to the data from the beginning of 2020 until July, e-commerce transactions increased by 20%. What is even more interesting, the research shows that even after the outbreak is over, almost half of all internet users expect to take advantage of the e-commerce. An average of 50% of all age groups from the surveyed people stated that they expect to shop online more frequently even after the pandemic ends.



## Conclusion

Digital marketing emerged around 30 years ago, and has proven its effectiveness many times in numerous fields. There are great number of books that can provide marketers with the theoretical base for its best use, and training courses for more practical approaches. Furthermore, its close relationship with technology proves that there is a continuous evolution and improvement in the years to come. Clearly, digital will not replace the traditional, working from home will not replace working from office, and e-commerce will not replace the physical stores. But with all the information available for people, their behaviors are evolving, their needs constantly changing, and their preferences refining. The number of internet users shows strong growth reaching 4,57 billion people, or 60% of the population. More than half of the population is on social media. The COVID-19 pandemic made its impact too, and people are shifting to work from home and e-commerce. With so many people online, it is vital for every business to be online as well. It is an ideal time for any business to understand how these changes impact their operations, adapt their marketing processes, and re-think the usage of powerful platforms. Most importantly, businesses should take advantage of every opportunity to get to know its customer, what is important for them and what they really care about. With the digital marketing practices, all those processes are cost-effective, offer real-time data for decision making processes, thus lead to a need satisfaction, loyalty, and increased sales.

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