

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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**DIGITAL MARKETING – WAY TO SIGNIFICANCE****SEMILA FERNANDES****ASST. PROFESSOR****SYMBIOSIS INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
BENGALURU****VIDYASAGAR A.****PROFESSOR****SYMBIOSIS INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
BENGALURU****ABSTRACT**

Often we see both the students and faculty not to mention the executives who are involved in Digital Marketing use digital marketing interchangeably with Search Engine Optimization (SEO). It is the process by which all the milestones of basic marketing are sacrificed at the altar of appearing high in the results page. This paper tries to sift through this basic misunderstanding and tackles the situation head on. Using the marketing interpretation of the word 'significance', the paper tries to differentiate between significance that SEO brings about and what actually should digital marketing bring about based on the core concept in both the approaches which is relevance and authority. It embeds this understanding into the popular digital marketing model "RACE" – Reach, Interact, Convert, Engage.

**KEYWORDS**

internet marketing, digital marketing, RACE model, SEO.

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the questions often asked by the current young digital marketers is: "Does good SEO (Search Engine Optimization) lead to good marketing or does it work the other way round?"

This paper critically evaluates the 2 options. Today, Digital Marketing is looked on by some as the only way to reach and engage customers and hence their starting point is about SEO and its cousins SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and SMM (Social Media Marketing).

But is this all into digital marketing?

SEO seems to have overshadowed the underlying tried and tested marketing principles. Has SEO become a corner stone of digital marketing and its sole objective is ranking of the webpage in the SERP (Search Engine Results Page).

Smaller companies with low advertising budgets and start-ups who rely heavily on SEO as a way to reach their potential customers have fallen into this trap. They employ people who are now popularly known as "search-nerds". These "nerds" assure the start-up that SEO is the way to go and the fees they demand are just not reasonable. There are only two possible outcomes to this:

1. The ranking has gone up to a point where all the start-up's business is only because of the ranking and without this, their business collapses like a pack of cards or
2. The ranking despite several months of employing and paying the search-nerd has shown no improvement in the ranking. Has the arrival and dominance of search engines changed the very dynamics of marketing?

But marketing in its purest form is about reaching the audience (awareness), interacting with the potential customers, converting some of them as customers and engaging with them for upselling and/or cross-selling.

**THE PURPOSE**

SEO by definition strives to increase the position in the SERP. It does not actually take into account the competition – as understood in the offline space. For example – A hotel when it is advertised, its service in the brick and mortar space, knows it is competing with other hotels offering similar or related services.

But in the online scenario, the key phrase used by the hotel could in addition to competing with the brick and mortar will also have to compete with travel agencies and other aggregators who offer discounted stays based on ticketing.

This makes SEO slightly less effective for segmentation as understood in the offline market.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Technology and the evolution of marketing are closely related. Innovative marketers embrace the excitement which technology provides thereby supporting the very purpose of connecting with the TG (target audience). Thus technology explores ways of moving to the mainstream which is adopted by marketers through standard marketing practices (Ryan and Jones, 2012).

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is defined as the process of enhancing the website's importance in the various search engines so as to appear higher in the SERP (search engine results page). SEO supports the very cause of creating quality content which results in providing relevant results to the users. However the book also speaks about the statement that it is not the "be all and end all" (Mercer, 2011).

RACE (Reach, Interact, Convert and Engage) model was created by digital marketers to manage the various activities in the internet marketing space. Since in digital marketing, there is a challenge to get prospects interact and participate, the full customer lifecycle or in marketing termed as the marketing funnel is complete through the RACE strategic planning model (Chaffey, 2015).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research paper is an original work and is purely based on the idea thought about by the researchers. Various Digital marketing websites like followerwonk, Quora, Google, Ubersuggest etc. have been adopted in the paper which brings the flavor of Digital Marketing.

The first part of the study focuses on the marketing interpretation of the word 'significance'.

The second part of the research paper differentiates between the significance that SEO (Search Engine Optimization) brings about and what actually digital marketing should bring about based on the core concept in both the approaches which is relevance and authority.

The final study embeds this understanding into the popular digital marketing model "RACE" – Reach, Interact, Convert, and Engage.

**DATE ANALYSIS****Marketing interpretation of the word 'significance'**

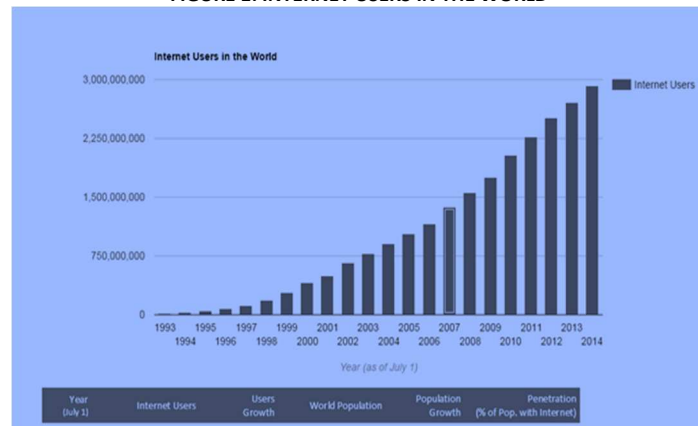
As per dictionary definition of Significance, "Significance is about being worthy of getting attention." We can broaden this definition to include "from people who may or may not buy but will always spread the word."



But then SEO also strives to deliver significance to the customer through a combination of relevance of the website to the keywords/phrases searched for, and also the authority the website commands, by the number of its back links - number of other websites who are connected to the site, in addition to several other parameters. This is where the similarity ends.

As of today there are over 3 billion\* internet users as indicated in Figure 1 (Internetlivestats, 2015) and typically they are spread across the continents with difference in tastes, culture etc. For a digital marketer, to address this audience becomes a virtually impossible task not to mention that it may not serve any meaningful purpose. SEO here is akin to finding a needle in the haystack. One can never determine the true purpose of the searched phrase, especially if it is not long-tailed.

FIGURE 1: INTERNET USERS IN THE WORLD



Source: The screenshot is from internetlivestats.com

In marketing, the researcher looked at a segment; the offering is most suited for, then determined the target audience and finally communicated to them with a well-defined positioning statement. So why not use the same principles in digital marketing too.

#### **Significance that SEO brings about and what actually digital marketing should bring about**

From the huge audience in the internet, it is imperative to glean out those who are most likely to be attracted to our message/product/service. In other words, finding an intersection that addresses the people who require the functional benefits of our offering and the same time have an interest that makes them stand out from the rest. For example, way back in the sixties, Rolls Royce looked at this intersection too. Rolls Royce was certain that only the wealthy could afford its car but it went a step ahead and also looked at people who would appreciate the virtually noise free performance of the car. This resulted in the now legendary campaign:

**"At 60 miles an hour ..... electric clock"**

FIGURE 2: ROLLS ROYCE CAMPAIGN

The Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud—\$12,995

**"At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock"**

What makes Rolls-Royce the best car in the world? "There is really no magic about it—it is merely patient attention to detail," says an eminent Rolls-Royce engineer.

1. "At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise comes from the electric clock," reports the Technical Editor of *Time* magazine. Three mufflers tune out sound frequencies—acoustically.
2. Every Rolls-Royce engine is run for seven hours at full throttle before installation, and each car is test-driven for hundreds of miles over varying road surfaces.
3. The Rolls-Royce is designed as an owner-driven car. It is eighteen inches shorter than the largest domestic cars.
4. The car has power steering, power brakes and automatic gear-shift. It is very easy to drive and to park. No chauffeur required.
5. The finished car spends a week in the final test-shop, being fine-tuned. Here it is subjected to 96 separate checks. For example, the engineers use a stethoscope to listen for axle-whine.
6. The Rolls-Royce is guaranteed for three years. With a new network of dealers and parts-depots from Coast to Coast, service is no problem.
7. The Rolls-Royce radiator has never changed, except that when Sir Henry Royce died in 1933 the monogram RR was changed from red to black.
8. The coachwork is given five coats of primer paint, and hand rubbed between each coat, before nine coats of finishing paint go on.
9. By moving a switch on the steering column, you can adjust the shock absorbers to suit road conditions.
10. A picnic table, veneered in French walnut, slides out from under the dash. Two more swing out behind the front seats.
11. You can get such optional extras as an Espresso coffee-making machine, a dictating machine, a bed, hot and cold water for washing, an electric razor or a telephone.
12. There are three separate systems of power brakes, two hydraulic and one mechanical. Damage to one system will not affect the others. The Rolls-Royce is a very safe car—and also a very lively car. It cruises serenely at eighty-five. Top speed is in excess of 100 m.p.h.
13. The Bentley is made by Rolls-Royce. Except for the radiators, they are identical motor cars, manufactured by the same engineers in the same works. People who feel diffident about driving a Rolls-Royce can buy a Bentley.

**PRICE.** The Rolls-Royce illustrated in this advertisement—(a.b. principal ports of entry)—costs \$12,995.

If you would like the rewarding experience of driving a Rolls-Royce or Bentley, write or telephone to one of the dealers listed on the opposite page.

Rolls-Royce Inc., 10 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y., Circle 5-1144.

March 1959

Source: Business communication: From Principles to Practice ISBN: 9781259026164

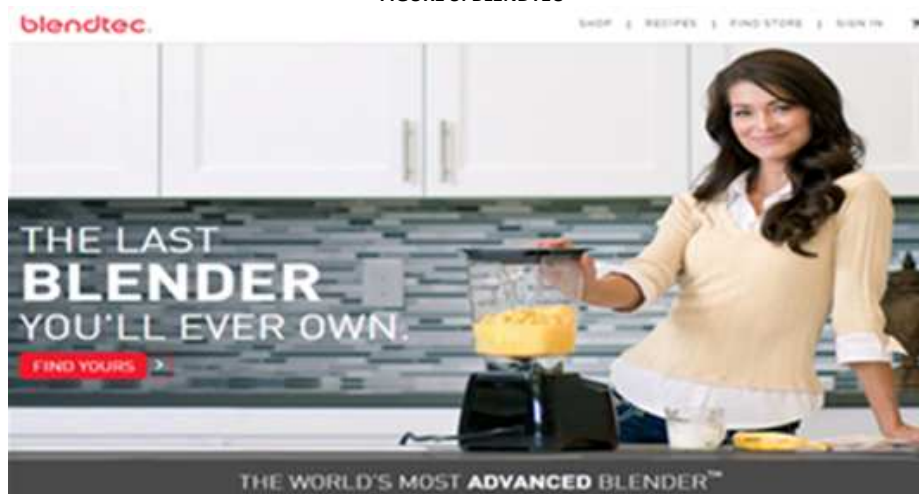
Never, from the time our civilization began, did marketers get a chance to address customers individually, at least not until now. Social media, forums, blogs, RSS has made this possible. Therefore, the question the researchers asks is, will SEO be able to provide this opportunity or should the learning from the Rolls Royce example be used by determining a niche every time and talking to them as a manageable group or even individually, if possible.

In other words, the research feels that the significance can be achieved through communicating specifically to an audience which has to be addressed not on what they are searching for but by finding out certain commonality of interest that makes that target audience stand out from the rest.

There are several instances of this on the net where companies have managed to isolate a niche and addressed them specifically. Blendtec, located in Utah, USA (Figure 3) is one company that through such an effort shot to be a leading brand in blenders in the US within a very short time.

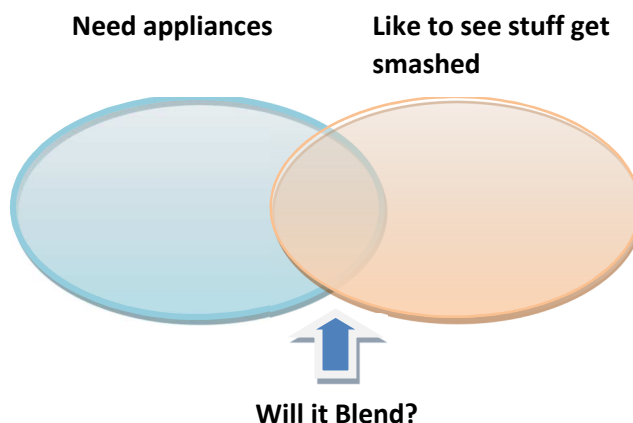
With its now famous campaign “Will it Blend”, it addressed an audience that wanted a blender but also had an inherent desire to seeing things “smashed”. The first video that went viral cost the company just USD 50 and resulted in sales going up by 1000% within a year.

FIGURE 3: BLENDTEC



Source: www.blendtec.com

FIGURE 4



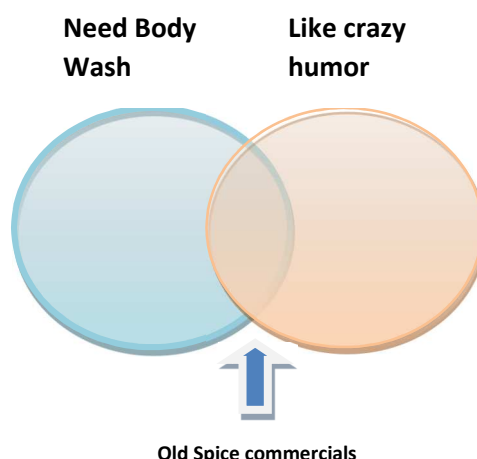
Source: Creation by the researcher

The objective of the company to position its product capability of having strong and sharp blades was well served with every video they launched on the YouTube and the viewership even more spectacular. By blending every Apple Product launched so far, they garnered views exceeding 15 million and overall viewership of over 50 million.

The other unexpected outcome was the huge gain in position in SERP, it achieved in a short period of time. Good marketing clearly led to good SEO!

Just like Blendtec, another brand to achieve quite similar outcome was Old Spice by exploiting some “quirkiness” in people who wanted a body wash and deodorant. Using Terry Crews as their model and exploiting the need for **crazy humor**, Old Spice commercials became a rage in YouTube and gathered over 12 million views for some of its videos.

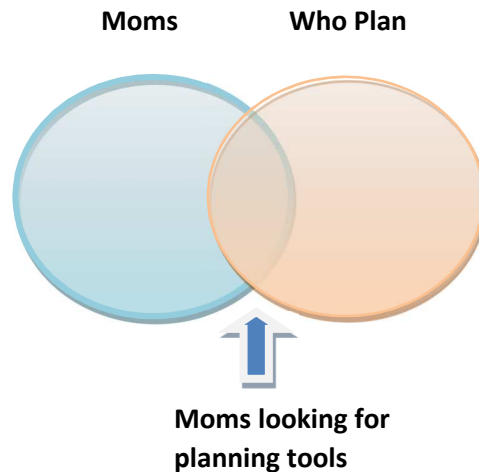
FIGURE 5



Source: Creation by the researcher

Another company momagenda.com made use of “moms” and “the need to plan” by allowing them to download printable versions of the agenda planner.

FIGURE 6



Source: creation by the researcher

All of these brands in addition to enjoying a huge “word of keyboard” also had the distinction of going high up in the SERP for a whole lot of keywords and phrases simply because of the buzz they created in the social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

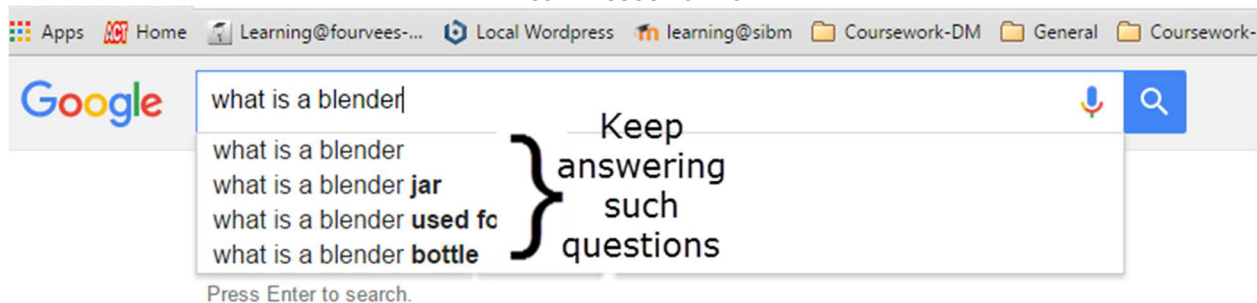
#### Digital marketing model “RACE” – Reach, Interact, Convert, and Engage

One of the more popular digital marketing frameworks is the RACE model where R stands for Reach, A stands for interAct, C for Convert and E for Engage. While the examples above have clearly managed to satisfy the Reach element, it is clearly not enough.

The next logical step would be to find ways of **interacting** with the audience and this can be done quite easily through smart use of the search engines and social media.

By entering “What is a blender” in Google search we can see enough suggestions that pop up. By just answering these questions at the appropriate forums with a backlink to your site, we would have established the twin objective of not only being significant but also getting into the interactive phase with the potential consumer.

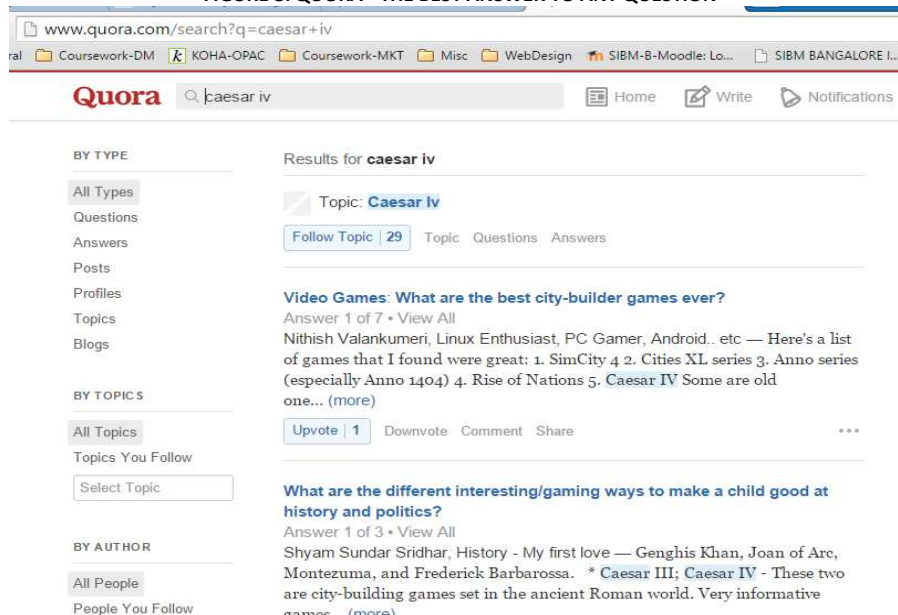
FIGURE 7: GOOGLE SEARCH



Source: The creation is from Google.com

Let us suppose, we were interested in reaching out to people who were interested in strategic management and who were also interested in video games because we want them to read our blog on “Lessons in marketing strategy that video games provide” we could actually go to site like Quora.com and find out such an intersection and answer as many questions that we can and start interacting with the targeted audience with links to our website.

FIGURE 8: QUORA - THE BEST ANSWER TO ANY QUESTION



Source: The creation is from Quora.com

Another interesting site which consolidates the suggestions offered by the Google search tool is [www.ubersuggest.org](http://www.ubersuggest.org). This offers the marketer to answer and interact with the target audience on a much larger scale.

FIGURE 9: UBERSUGGEST

## Übersuggest - Suggest on steroids!

is marketing

English/USA Web

Suggest

Select all keywords

[Update about the recent Google announcement](#)

↑ is marketing + a

- is marketing a good major
- is marketing a hard major
- is marketing a good degree
- is marketing an operating expense
- is marketing a bad major
- is marketing advertising

↑ is marketing + b

- is marketing boring
- is marketing bad for society
- is marketing bad
- is marketing bullshit

↑ is marketing + c

- is marketing capitalized
- is marketing considered overhead
- is marketing coordinator entry level
- is marketing class hard
- is marketing career right for me
- is marketing class easy
- is marketing creative

300 suggestions found.

original \_ a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Source: The creation is from [www.ubersuggest.org](http://www.ubersuggest.org)

It provides the marketer to answer in a combination of ways and thus make the brand/product even more tangible and useful to the potential customer. What's more, social media provides an ideal plank to handle both the requirements of reach and interaction at once. For instance, if you are looking for people who are interested in a particular topic but at the same time you want only those who are in a particular city and you may also want to look at their interests/occupation etc, Twitter provides a simple solution to this. One such popular "search engine" for Twitter is a tool called Followerwonk. This provides the marketer with easy to use drill downs and choices and thus increases the precision and relevance of the search. The illustrations below looked at a situation where we are searching for people interested in digital marketing, who reside in Bengaluru and they are teachers by profession and they love playing video games.

FIGURE 10: FOLLOWERWONK

followerwonk

A free app

SIGN IN WITH Link your Moz account

Search bios Compare users Analyze Track followers Sort followers

Who are you looking for? Whether it's new talent, customers, or just friends, we help find whom you're after.

digital marketing search Twitter profiles Do it

Location: Bengaluru/kolkata See example

Name: See example

URL: See example

Min following: Max following: Min followers: Max followers: Min tweets: Max tweets:

Twitter users with "digital marketing" in their profiles

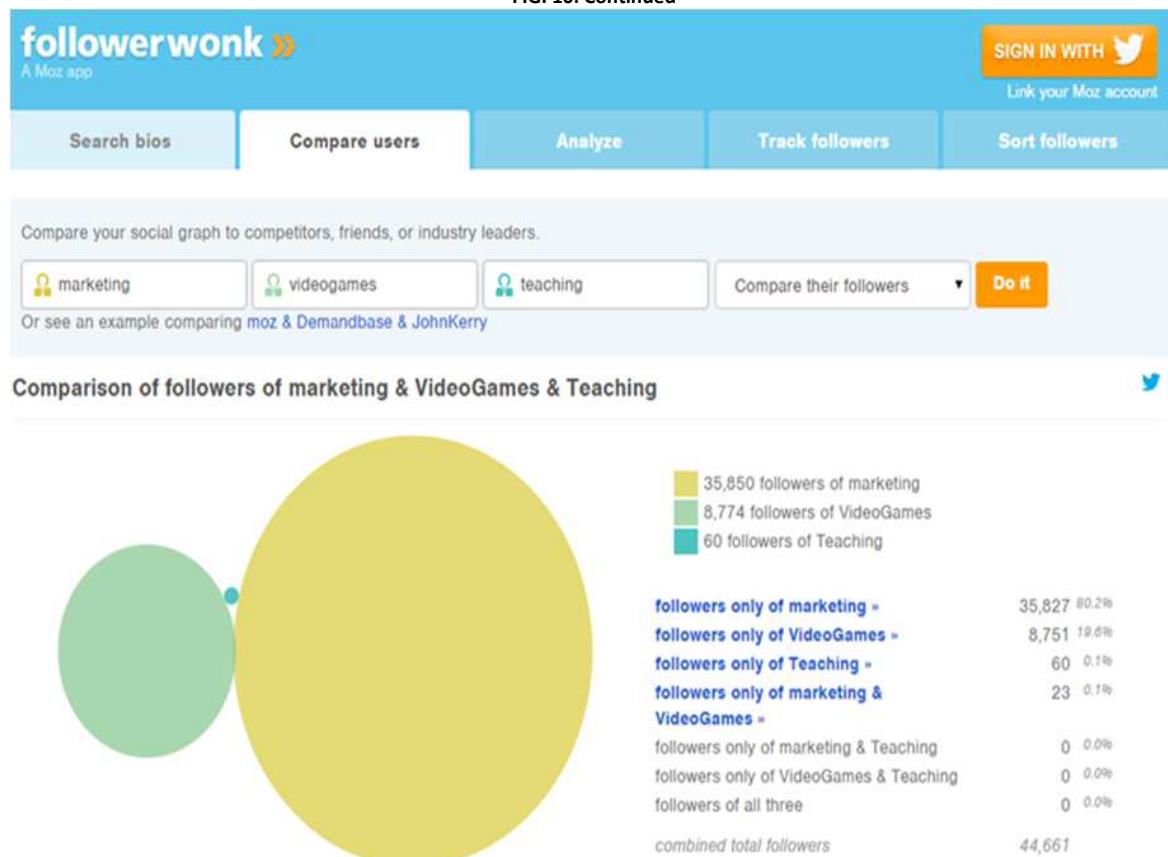
Showing 1 - 50 of 285 results (order by relevance)

No filters tweets following followers days old Social Authority

Follow	Profile	Tweets	Following	Followers	Days Old	Social Authority
Follow	<b>Tinu Cherian Abraham</b> @snucherman Bengaluru / Bangalore, India Dreamer, Digital Ninja, Public Relations, Corp Marketing, News Junkie, Ex Software Coolie, Compulsive Retweeter, Outspoken&Opinionated Aam Aadmi on social media	118,156	153,177	189,745	2,246	79
Follow	<b>Swapan Kumar Manna</b> @swapanmanna24 Kolkata A Digital Native   Tech Geek   Marketing PR&Communication Consultant   Avid follower of Digital Transformation   Social Media Expert, Blogger & Brand Strategist	6,375	18,259	18,323	726	33
Follow	<b>Akash Vedi</b> @akashvedi Jaipur/Udaipur/Bengaluru An Entrepreneur   Digital Marketer   Foodie   Traveler   Blogger   Photographer   Realist   Tryinabe Funny	1,967	252	18,072	2,292	59
Follow	<b>DwalpayanChakraborty</b> @DwalpayanCY kolkata Branding, Digital Marketing and Promotion	300	145	8,338	1,314	16



FIG. 10: Continued



Source: The creation is from <https://moz.com/followerwonk/>

With this kind of clear separation of the target audiences, all it requires is to follow them and respond at the appropriate time to generate interactivity and also prove usefulness.

Through a series of interaction, the first task of marketing – establishing trust has been completed. Now it depends on the marketer on how he uses it to convert the customer to meet the firm's objective like sales or downloads on subscription.

Given that the interactions begin to increase, it will naturally have an impact on SEO too and the website of the marketer will show better presence in the SERP. Once the target audience moves down the funnel and starts to become a stake holder, the task then is to ensure a relationship and the marketer can move into a full-fledged CRM – if required.

Very clearly, as the saying goes “there is more than one way to skin a cat” is most appropriate when we approach the task of SEO.

## CONCLUSION

The basic objective of the paper was to show that SEO can be achieved in a manner that does not do away the fundamental axioms in marketing like awareness, interaction and engagement and SEO at best meets the basic requirement of “reach & awareness” provided the keyword/phrases searched for, have been included in the content of the page appropriately and judiciously.

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