



# The Digital Media Landscape

By Mandar Marathe

[mandarmarathe.net](http://mandarmarathe.net) | [@mandar13](https://twitter.com/mandar13)

[Share this eBook on Twitter](#)

# THE DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

It's a jungle out there. The digital media industry at first sight is overwhelmingly huge and might take you a while learning every aspect of it. I will help you navigate thru these murky waters, one step at a time.

## ADVERTISERS, PUBLISHERS & AGENCIES

*Advertisers* are companies who have money to spend on promoting their products or services. Most companies are looking at creating a brand image and selling as much as they can. Some of the big home grown brands of India are Hindustan Lever (FMCG), Mahindra (Automobiles), Godrej (Consumer goods), Tata's, Reliance and Birla's. It is these guys who have a huge market share in their respective sectors.

*Publishers* are content creators. The archaic world of advertising has newspaper and magazine publishers. In the digital world, publishers are classified as Horizontals, Niche Verticals, eCommerce portals and Aggregators. A portal that creates content on a range of topics is a

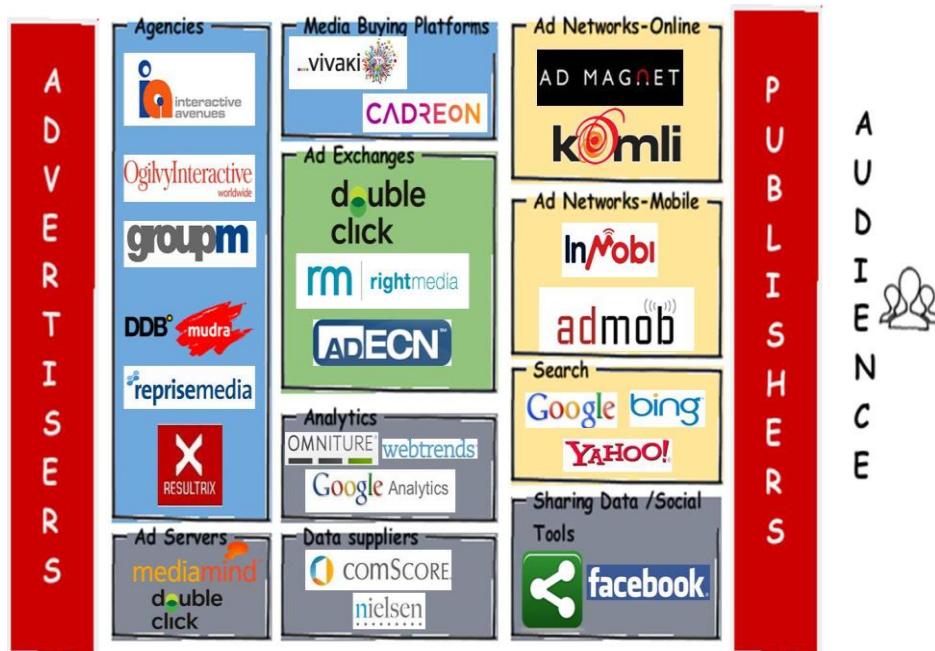
horizontal (E.g. Msn, Yahoo or Rediff). On the other hand, a website that provides information on a specific topic is a niche vertical. Cricinfo.com provides information on Cricket and bollywoodhungama.com provides information on Bollywood movies and music. In today's world every single individual who creates content in some form or the other (textual, audio or video) is a publisher. Blogging has created a medium for millions to express their viewpoints and earn money at the same time.

*eCommerce* is a very interesting ball game. With the advent and growth of Flipkart, Makemytrip, SnapDeal, eBay etc., India online Inc. is catching up with the likes of global trendsetters like Amazon, Priceline and Groupon. Anyone with a PC and an internet connection has access to a virtual marketplace at his fingertips. The world is moving from brick to click at a rapid pace.

*Aggregators* collect information from different sources and place them on their website. For e.g. on naaptol.com, one can compare product prices of various brands and make a well informed decision. Similarly, you can compare quotes from several Insurance companies on policybazaar.com, before deciding on buying your home or medical insurance policy.

One thing common between all publishers – they sell space on their websites for advertising. Very much similar to a newspaper that carries advertising. This space is bought by an Advertiser to reach out to his audience.

You must be thinking...WTF does an Agency do?  
Take a look at the digital advertising landscape below.



An agency is the crux of all advertiser communication and an interface to publishers, ad exchanges and ad networks.

It is also the centre of technology and innovation for a brand.

Some of the functions of a full service digital marketing agency are:

#### Client Servicing & Business Development

The client servicing team is responsible for managing client expectations and bringing in new business to the agency. Account managers bring skills such as strategic thinking, project management and *jugaad* (getting things done).

#### Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing professionals create campaigns that are social and viral in nature. On a day to day basis, they manage facebook and twitter accounts for clients. Nowadays, Online reputation management (responding to customer queries and negative comments on a brand) also is a social media mandate.

#### Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Paid per click advertising (or SEM) is the art of managing paid ads on search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo. This involves a very technical process of researching keywords specific to a brand and showing relevant ads for

keyword searches done by consumers. I will explain SEM a bit more in the chapters to follow.

### Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is a fairly technical skill that involves making content and keyword related changes to a client's web property (a brand specific / corporate website or a YouTube channel or a Flickr account) to optimize it rank's on the search engine results.

{*Note:* Both SEO and SEM are technical skills that require good knowledge of how search engines operate and how websites are developed. Also, if the term keyword baffles you, just go down to the Searching Nirvana section. If SEO/SEM does not excite you, no need to worry. You can always skim over the chapters or skip them completely}

### Mobile Marketing

With the introduction of smart phones (iPhone, Blackberry, Nokia, Samsung Galaxy, Micromax, Lava etc.) a new generation of mobile technologies have evolved that allow marketers to have a 1 to 1 targeted communication with the consumer. Most brands and agencies have taken notice of this revolution and have setup in house operations to develop mobile sites (WAP sites), apps, and create mobile games.

### Media Planning & Buying

I'd call this the 'Jugaad' or the 'Setting' wala division of a digital ad agency. Media planning professionals have deep insights into consumer behaviour on the web i.e. which are the most visited sites in the country, what does a 18-24 year old male (youth) does online etc. These insights answer the basic question – "Where should a brand advertise its product/service to reach its target audience?" and result in a media plan.

On the other hand, Media buyers are responsible for establishing long lasting relationships with publishers (E.g. a Yahoo or a MSN or a Rediff.com) and buy advertising inventory (space) on their websites. This space is then sold to a client at a margin (That's how an agency earns commission on buying the right media).

### Creative & Technology

When you think of the word 'Ad' you quickly associate it with the word 'creative'. The creative department is what makes or breaks an agency. Here, you have a mix of talent and streams – copywriting (The thinker), art (The visualizer/designer) and development (Flash or HTML programmers). The technology team includes Project Managers and web programmers – usually held

responsible for constructing the brand website and taking care of all technical details (More about these geeks in the Website: Your online destination section)

### Advertising Operations

The Advertising operations (or Ad Ops) team works in close conjunction with the Creative, Client Servicing and the Media planning team. Ad Ops guys are responsible for tracking creative once they go live. Sounds gibberish? Ok. Let me explain.

The power of the digital medium is the ability to track every communication sent out to the target audience i.e. we can track likes and comments on a Facebook page or track how many users clicked on your ad banner that ran on a publisher site. We can also track the number of people who signed up for a seminar that a brand is offering. All this 'tracking' and monitoring of a brand's digital activity is done by an Ad Ops guy. Again, a highly technical skill that needs understanding of ad networks

### Web Analytics

Similar to SEO and SEM, Web Analytics is a fairly technical skill that involves analysing website behavioural data to determine trends and take data driven decisions.

Using tools such as [Google Analytics](#), [Omniture](#) or [Webtrends](#), we can record browsing patterns of visitors coming to a brand's website and take informed marketing decisions. For e.g. if a website is receiving a lot of traffic from social media sites as opposed to traffic from publisher sites, we can tailor future campaigns by reducing spends on media and increasing spends on social media activities.

This is one of my favourite topics and I can't wait to pass on the knowledge that will make you fall in love with Web Analytics. Wait till we get there.

Woof! We've covered a lot. Take a deep breath. Go take a walk or close your eyes or watch your favourite sitcom on TV. Start with the next topic once you are a bit fresh! I will need you wide awake ;)

## THE AGE OF INBOUND MARKETING

Not every brand/agency in India is doing it the right way. When asked how marketers in India generate leads (contact info of a potential customer) and fulfil their sales targets, most of them say trade shows, seminar series, outsourced telemarketing (that irritating guy on the other side of your phone, who calls you incessantly and

says, "Sir, apko kausa insurance chahiye?") and many other such boring forms of advertising.

Most people have a limited attention span and do not want to be disturbed by advertising. But the sad truth is that most advertisers just end up doing that. Browbeat their consumers with irrelevant ads that defeat the actual purpose of advertising. *In today's world, people are no longer receptive to intrusions.*

#### What is Inbound Marketing?

The goal of using inbound marketing is to get found by one's best customers by creating an online presence that attracts qualified web visitors and leads. In outbound marketing, companies focus on finding customers. They use techniques that are often poorly targeted and interrupt people, which are increasingly ineffective. In inbound marketing, instead of interrupting people with information about themselves, businesses create useful content that potential customers want to receive. Instead of driving their message into a crowd like a sledgehammer, the purpose of inbound marketing is to attract interested prospects—many of which turn out to be highly qualified customers—just like a magnet.

<b>Outbound Marketing</b>	<b>Inbound Marketing</b>
<b>Print Ads</b>	Blogs, ebooks, White Papers
<b>Television Ads</b>	Viral YouTube Videos
<b>Cold Calling</b>	Search Engine Optimization
<b>Trade Shows</b>	Webinars
<b>Email Blasts</b>	Feeds, RSS

#### Components of Inbound Marketing

Successful Inbound Marketing campaigns have three essential components:

- 1. Content** - Content is the fundamental element of inbound marketing. Businesses are able to draw potential customers only by creating content that prospects find valuable and subsequently draw them to a company website to learn more. Content may be in the format of blogs, videos, white papers or ebooks.
- 2. Search Engine Optimization** - SEO refers to building both a website and inbound links to the site to optimize search rankings. It makes it easier for potential customers to find a business's content. It's the step after content creation that increases the visibility of content on search engines and thus its likelihood to be found.

3. **Social Media** - Social media amplifies the impact of a business's content. A business can both distribute content across networks of personal relationships and consolidate its brand by creating its business page. Sharing content across personal networks makes it appear authentic, while creating business pages offers a business more opportunities to make its content known. Many social channels exist – Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Forum's & Blogs being the notable ones.

#### Relative Strengths of Inbound Marketing

Inbound marketing has three relative advantages over outbound marketing.

1. **It Costs Less** – The three components of Inbound Marketing—content creation, SEO, and social media—incur low to no cost in addition to human resources. Undoubtedly, employees of a business need to spend time on writing blog articles, optimizing the company website for search, and promoting content on social media, but they likely spend no more time than those planning large-scale marketing campaigns.

2. **It Targets Interested Prospects** – Techniques like mass email campaigns and TV advertisements are designed to reach a large number of audiences. While they maximize the reach to prospects, they often neglect to address

individual attributes, which are key to triggering the interests of a diverse group of people. Outbound marketing might therefore not be able to maximize the pool of interested prospects. Inbound marketing, on the other hand, draws only those who show interest in the content of a business. Self-qualification is embedded in the process of finding a business through search engines or social media. Leads that inbound marketing attracts are therefore of higher quality, which may shorten the sales cycle or increase the closing rate.

3. **ROI Increases Over Time** – At the beginning of implementing inbound marketing, it might take some time for employees to become familiarized with different tools and techniques to create, promote, and optimize content. While employees develop expertise and invest less time on implementation, the impact of a business brand grows, contributing to an increase in the return of investment in inbound marketing. Unlike outbound marketing, which may become an on-going expense, a business can create the image of a resource hub through inbound marketing and grow the quantity of prospects under increasingly lower cost.

Have questions regarding Digital Marketing?  
Send an email to [mandar@briefkase.in](mailto:mandar@briefkase.in).

[Share this eBook on Twitter](#)