



Digital marketing strategies for tennis coaches

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to highlight the opportunity that tennis offers coaches from an economic point of view through the application of a working methodology based on digital marketing strategies. To do so, it begins by defining those strategies regularly used by companies to maximise the profit and image of the coach as a professional. This is followed by a review of the main research on the subject carried out in tennis. A case study is presented in which different strategies are proposed that can be implemented by the coach as suggested in the article or modified and developed according to the coach's needs and the characteristics of the situation. Finally, some reflections and conclusions are put forward in relation to the practical application of these strategies.

Key words: marketing, digital marketing, business, profession

Received: 22 June 2021

Accepted: 30 July 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing in tennis, as in any other area of the business world, has been so influenced by communication technologies and the internet that some authors speak of the emergence of a new era in business (Yüce et al., 2017). This is because the strategies and actions carried out by companies and individuals have undergone a radical evolution that has led them to progress from traditional marketing to digital marketing.

This evolution makes it essential to understand the mechanisms by which marketing is approached from the perspective provided by today's digital world and the possible applications that this world offers for the growth of any type of business, regardless of its field of action. This idea has been defined as postmodern marketing (Brown, 2008).

Digital marketing has been defined as the use of technologies to help implement marketing activities that enhance buyer awareness by meeting buyer needs (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Internet marketing, e-commerce, the use of social media and other analogous tools are means used to implement this strategy. Digital marketing has obvious advantages as it allows access to a larger number of potential buyers, immediately and considerably cheaper. In addition, it also offers the possibility for the buyer to interact with the seller and for the seller to learn more about the buyer's behaviours, wants and needs.

The ways in which businesses communicate and maintain relationships with their customers have been transformed over the last few decades by new information and communication technologies. Aspects such as email marketing, websites, the use of social media, user-generated content and even AI-based marketing need to be understood to make the most of new trends (Ratten & Thompson, 2021).

In the case of tennis and in the context created by Covid-19, digital marketing has been a fundamental instrument to face



the challenges posed by the pandemic. Different innovative actions that have used digital media, such as online training from home or distance learning, are allowing tennis activity to continue despite the great challenge we face (Crespo et al., 2021).

The application of different digital marketing strategies in the field of tennis helps professionals to grow tennis in the context in which they operate, as well as improves their ability to generate business. Therefore, we believe it is crucial for the coach to be able to understand the key trends in the business world in general and in the digital marketing sector that are shaping the socio-economic landscape of tennis.

In this context, it can be stated that digital marketing offers a great opportunity for tennis coaches to enhance their professional activity.

STUDIES ON DIGITAL MARKETING AND TENNIS

Studies on digital marketing and tennis have been varied as they have dealt with areas related to federations, tournaments, and coaches. The following is a summary of some of the most relevant and current studies related to the subject of this article.

Gázquez (2014) analysed the role of the media in the success or failure of an event in a tennis player's career and presented some considerations and suggestions in the framework of a corporate communication strategy that would be useful for coaches, club managers, schools/academies, and federations.

The development and maintenance of a social media strategy at the New Zealand Tennis Federation was investigated by Thompson et al. (2014). The aim was to study how a small organisation could have an online social media presence. The authors concluded that it is important to employ and evaluate creative online strategies using technologies such as Facebook to ensure that they continue to meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders. These strategies include the use of promotions and constant engagement and communication with fans and supporters.

Van Dijk (2015) identified the need for personal branding in the tennis coach's professional career as a phenomenon that has gained importance in recent years. She considered that, by establishing a personal brand, coaches could differentiate themselves. To this end, she identified four key steps in establishing a personal brand: self-assessment, personal branding, personal brand marketing, and evaluation and adjustment, while analysing the role that digital media could play in the process.

The marketing of women's professional tennis was studied by Thompson (2019) who concluded that marketing efforts and the use of social media to promote women's professional tennis are of interest due to the globalised nature of professional tennis. The author also recognised the importance of using social media as a strategic marketing communication tool to promote women's professional tennis.

Lebel and Danylchuk (2019) investigated the relationship between tennis and social media. These authors concluded that the huge impact of social media has redefined communications. In the case of professional tennis, being immersed in an era of rapid change, social media has had a tremendous impact on the way information is shared between players, tournaments, users, and industries around the world.

Crespo (2020) presented some strategies that coaches can use to create added value to the services and products they offer and emphasised the consideration of tennis and tennis coaching as a business and shared some strategies. He presented suggestions in four main areas where coaches can create a great added value to be perceived by their clients: quality of service, variety of tools used, interaction with clients and adequacy of services to the clients.

The promotion of services or the strengthening of brands through a combination of marketing and communication strategies, with special emphasis on digital tools that can be used to support the different tennis stakeholders, was studied by Monegro (2021). The author concluded that the efficient use of these instruments will allow them to achieve their objectives more efficiently and at a lower cost.

However, according to the literature search conducted, research and studies on digital marketing strategies used by tennis coaches are scarce. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to delve into this aspect, proposing examples of good practices that coaches can use to make digital marketing a tool for business generation and development of our sport.

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR TENNIS COACHES: A PRACTICAL APPROACH

A real case study will be used to provide the most practical and applicable approach possible to formulate a proposal for the application of digital marketing strategies by the tennis coach.

Let's suppose that Maria, a tennis coach working part-time for the provincial federation operating in her town, wants to extend her working hours by looking for beginners and intermediate students interested in developing their playing skills.

Maria has extensive knowledge in the use of social media and has taken some MOOC (massive open online courses) in web design and development based on WordPress. With this knowledge, Maria believes she can create a digital business platform to achieve her goal of growing her tennis-based business and asked us what she should do

The specific strategies and concrete actions based on digital marketing that we recommend to Maria are defined below.

Strategies

- Establishing a digital media presence
- Optimising the components that make up the business model
- Process automation for business development

Based on the strategies defined, specific actions for each of them are detailed below.

Strategy 1 actions: establishing a digital media presence

- Development of a website rich in educational and practical content for players, coaches, and family members (training resources) with a subscription newsletter. It is crucial that it is optimised for mobiles and tablets, as the potential target audience uses these media frequently.
- Creation of profiles on each of the social networks whose user profile matches the target audience of the coach in question and development of a content strategy that stands out for its contribution of value based on useful and practical resources.
- Inclusion of an online booking platform for private and/or group lessons on the website as well as access to it from social media profiles.

Strategy 2 actions: optimising the components that make up the business model

- Boosting the target audience's awareness of the components present in the above-mentioned actions of strategy 1 through search engine optimisation, i.e., SEO.
- Boosting the conversion of the components present in the actions of strategy 1 above by means of paid advertising in the relevant media, i.e., SEM (Search Engine Marketing), ads...

Strategy 3 actions: process automation for business development

- Supporting the content strategy through advanced email marketing actions targeted at users subscribed to the website's newsletter.
- Automation of processes, a key element of inbound marketing, through activities such as automatically answering user questions via chatbots or sending confirmation and information messages after confirming, modifying, or cancelling reservations, among others.

TIPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN TENNIS

The different tools that make up the digital marketing strategy applied to tennis can be implemented in several ways. They can be carried out by coaches if they have knowledge of marketing, IT, social media, etc. On the other hand, there are specialised companies that can offer tennis coaches a wide variety of dynamic and customised proposals that help them to offer their services in a professional manner in a digital environment.

Many of these companies are used to provide non-binding quotes including the different actions related to the required services. In addition, some national federations (LTA, 2021), regional federations (Tennis Europe, 2016) and the ITF (ITF, 2021) offer professionally designed marketing related materials that are available free of charge or if the coach is a member of these organisations. In this way, the coach can have different alternatives to choose from.

These are innovative new tools to help tournament organisers promote events or venues. They are easy-to-use, customisable resources that can increase brand awareness and strengthen connections between events, sponsors, and stakeholders. Coaches, managers, and tournament organisers can choose images, designs, partner logos, sponsors and service, product or event details using resources such as poster templates, magazine articles and brochures, social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), flyers and email footers.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, and as a suggestion for the future development of digital marketing strategies applied to tennis, it would be useful for coaches to understand and apply techniques related to the exploitation of data, the optimisation of their services through data analysis and the development of reports on trends and behaviours of the tennis consumers closest to them. In this way, they will be able to be at the forefront of using digital marketing and new technologies as a tool for generating benefits both for themselves and for the world of tennis.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the preparation of this article.

FINANCING

The author declares that he has not received any funding for this article.

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