

**THE ROLE OF INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGIES IN LEAD
GENERATION TO SMALL ENTERPRISES IN NAIROBI CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for an award of a degree.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I affectionately dedicate this research to my mum for her endless love, support and encouragement. I also dedicate it to my sons Mali and Imani, to my brothers Collins and Jeff. I love you all so much.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 Internet Marketing Strategies	2
1.1.2 Lead Generation	2
1.1.3 Small Enterprises in Nairobi County	4
1.1.4 Small Enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District	4
1.2 Research Problem	5
1.3 Research Objective	7
1.4 Value of the Study	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Theoretical Foundation	9
2.3 Internet Marketing Strategies for Lead Generation	11
2.4 Lead Generation Tactics	15
2.5 Benefits of implementing Internet Marketing for Lead Generation	16
2.6 Challenges to Implementing Internet Marketing Strategies	18
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
3.1 Introduction.....	20
3.2 Research Design	20
3.3 Population of the Study.....	20
3.4 Sampling Design.....	21
3.5 Data Collection	21
3.6 Data Analysis	22
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	23
4.1. Introduction.....	23
4.2. Demographic Factors of the Respondent.....	23
4.3 Avenues for Lead Generation	27
4.4 Benefit of Internet Marketing in Lead Generation	27
4.5 Importance of internet marketing for lead generation	28
4.6 Internet marketing impact on new businesses	30

4.7 Challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation.	30
4.8 Summary and Interpretation of the Findings	32
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	33
5.1 Introduction.....	33
5.2 Summary	33
5.3 Conclusion	34
5.4 Recommendation	34
5.5 Limitations of the Study	35
5.6 Suggestions for Further Study	36
REFERENCES.....	37
APPENDICES	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Respondent role in the business.....	23
Table 2: Specific marketing person assigned.....	25
Table 3: Duration the enterprise has been using internet marketing	26
Table 4: Benefit of Internet Marketing in Lead Generation	28
Table 5: Challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation.	31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Duration the business has been operational	24
Figure 2: Lead Generation using Internet Marketing	29
Figure 3: Internet marketing impact on new businesses	30

Abstract

This study focused on the role of internet marketing in lead generation to small enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District. The study objectives were to establish the extent to which small businesses are using different marketing strategies to generate leads and to identify the key challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation. The research was a descriptive survey with a sample size of 52 small enterprises. Primary data was collected using questionnaires from small enterprises along Moi Avenue, Nairobi Central Business District. The collected data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. The results of the study revealed the extent of internet marketing and its usage for generating sales leads for small enterprises. The study established that whilst businesses understand the value it brings for new customers, they do not put in place internet marketing strategies for sophisticated use other than using it for interacting with customers. Accordingly, the lack of finances to invest in internet marketing integration as well as lack of skilled IT personnel topped the challenges highlighted in the study. The findings of the study may influence a positive business practice to enterprises by contributing to more effective internet marketing strategies towards boosting business growth by attracting customer traffic. This will affect the larger economic system by stimulating growth.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBD - Central Business District

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Internet marketing is defined as the use of the Internet and related digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives and support the modern marketing concept. Internet marketing comprises advertising that is shown on websites and other kinds of online activities like email and social networking and other website engines to acquire new customers and engage existing customers, towards developing the customer relationship (Hanafizadeh, 2012). However, even with the opportunities internet marketing presents, small enterprises still struggle to create marketing strategies that work effectively in generating leads.

The dynamic nature and the abundance of internet marketing options makes it difficult for small businesses to discern where to begin. It is imperative that marketers keep up in with the rapid changing trends of consumer behavior in order to gain a competitive advantage (Whalley, 2010). Further to this, businesses that rely on building networks have a competitive edge. Today's consumers require connection with the business. Some businesses do that by establishing strong social media connections with their customers, while others excel at e-mail marketing. It takes a myriad of tools to harness the potent power of the web. This includes constant planning, organizing, implementing and measuring internet strategies. It is therefore important that businesses arm themselves with marketing tools to enable them reach a wider target market.

Internet marketing therefore, plays a vital role in lead generation. Sale opportunities that were once limited to big companies with huge marketing budgets are now accessible to small businesses. Dalberg (2013) states that small businesses benefit primarily from the communications, awareness and marketing, information management and direct sales opportunities allowed by the Internet.

1.1.1 Internet Marketing Strategies

The internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks. It is a network that consists of millions of private, academic, business and government network. The Internet has laid the foundations of more information channels than people have created until the 20th century (Phillips, 2003). Internet marketing strategy is the process by which a business adopts a web-based approach to marketing and engaging its customers through a proprietary website. Internet marketing strategies include tactical web-based applications for increasing its competitive advantage, improving customer and employee communications and increasing marketing efficiencies. Internet marketing incorporates website, search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, mobile marketing and banner advertising (Eida, 2013).

For most businesses in the 21st century, Internet marketing strategies are an indispensable part of the business plan. While small enterprises such as local shops may require some form of web marketing, any business that wants a broad customer reach should research the potential of a solid Internet marketing strategy. The basis of internet marketing strategies are similar to those of telemarketing: outbound telemarketing where the advertiser dispatches uninvited messages to the audience or pull like inbound telemarketing where the consumer requests information from the advertiser (Rogers, 2001).

Choosing and implementing an internet marketing strategy depends on the degree of internet competencies (informational and relational) that an enterprise contains. These internet-marketing strategies work by fueling the lead funnel. A good strategy is one that achieves specific objectives to ensure that a business has the best chance of being successful.

1.1.2 Lead Generation

A lead as a qualified prospect that is starting to exhibit buying behavior (Miller, 2014). Lead generation is the marketing process of stimulating and capturing interest in a product or service for developing sales pipeline. It is the initiation of consumer interest or inquiry into products or services of a business. A lead usually is the contact

information and in some cases, demographic information of a customer who is interested in a specific product or service.

Lead generation has become an important acquisition strategy (Thanapathy, 2014). The purchasing process has evolved over the years and marketers are tasked with finding new ways to break the complex marketing environment. The emergence of online media is empowering customers, while giving them access to information on different purchases. Instead of giving customers the task of finding products and services, roles have been switched and businesses have to work hard to be found by their customers. Consumers are able to perform their own research on the internet and conclude a purchase decision alone.

For most businesses, the principal means of growth involves constant acquisition of new customers along with nurturing of existing customers (KippBodnar, 2011). Through marketing on the internet, businesses have the ability to create customer acquisition programs while being able to track costs associated with each new customer. Further, it empowers businesses to limit risk on advertising and marketing programs. Eventually, internet marketing amounts to new lead-generation and conversions for almost every company anywhere in the world (Fleischner, 2010).

Many marketers fail to absorb the advantages of lead generation. This is because they do not have proper structures to nurture these leads to convert them to business opportunities. Marketers have to map out their sales process by understanding the customers journey to know which stages in lead generation have to be tracked. Lead generation success can be achieved by creating defining metric success. In the absence of this, it is difficult to know the areas that need to be addressed or to determine the marketing strategy that is working for the business.

1.1.3 Small Enterprises in Nairobi City County

A small enterprise is defined as a business, whose annual turnover ranges between five hundred and five million shillings; and which employs between ten and fifty people (Micro and Small Business Act, 2012). A small enterprise is described as a business that is privately owned and solely operated proprietorship or partnership and it employees a small number of workers. An enterprise is considered any organized effort intended to return a profit or economic outcome through the provision of services or products to an outside group (Carland, 1982).

According to Nairobi County, there are 30,252 registered SMEs in Nairobi County, (Company Registrar, 2013). Out of these, only 11,753 SMEs are found in Nairobi's Central Business District. This study focuses on small businesses in central business district along Moi Avenue comprising 1,174 small registered businesses. The "Jua Kali", which is an informal sector, is an integral part of Nairobi business, compromises of artisans who craft and remodel items. These small enterprises provide a vital source of income and employment to the majority of Kenya's poor and unemployed. Unfortunately, many of them fail to grow into dynamic enterprises. A number of small businesses lack access to digital technologies as well as resources and skills needed to effectively participate in these technologies, resulting in failure to benefit from them. One of the reasons cited is expensive marketing tools and strategies (Carland, 1982).

1.1.4 Small Enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District

Nairobi business contributes enormously to the economy of Kenya and is considered a business hub for East and Central Africa. Most multinational companies that have operations in this region have headquarters located in Nairobi. Businesses that are searching to establish new ventures settle on Nairobi as it is an ideal environment due to infrastructure and access to a wider market. Its modernity, state-of-the-art skyline, improved technology, highly educated and trained manpower, and diverse and vibrant market have elevated Nairobi to become the business hub of the region (Nation Newspaper, 2016)

Small businesses are harnessing the potential the city brings by nurturing powerful interactions to create dynamic communities and greater potential business opportunities. Nairobi Central Business District provides the opportunity for small businesses to connect to their customers. Location works in tandem with other tools to ensure a spike in growth. Internet marketing can help these small businesses boost sales through brand awareness and improve customer relations, which will eventually take them to the next level, which is medium or larger businesses for tomorrow (McHaney, 2011).

The main issue for small business in the city is how to innovate to enable reach a wider market. A significant number of businesses lack the time they need to innovate in their businesses. Technology can offer potential ways to address this challenge. By connecting untapped markets through internet, the web offers the opportunity to have access to larger pools of customers. Dalberg (2013) states that small businesses benefit primarily from the communications, awareness and marketing, information management and direct sales opportunities allowed by the Internet. Priorities for impact the Internet brings top-line growth and bottom-line improvement to small businesses outside space technology

1.2 Research Problem

Every business organization is using internet marketing in one way or the other. Marketing managers who fail to use the internet in formulating their companies marketing strategy will be at a disadvantage of missing customers (Yannopoulos, 2011). This new era of marketing has shifted marketing from its traditional roots of television, print and radio marketing to online focus. In the ever-competitive world of Internet communications, it can be difficult to construct workable promotional opportunities to ensure that customers keep walking into the door.

Small businesses that are interested to cover a broad customer reach should employ a solid internet marketing strategy. Moreover, as the world becomes a global village, business that lack an easy-to-find market place will experience limited sales leads. Having a sound Internet marketing strategy ensures the best chance of success.

Despite widespread internet marketing potential, some of the biggest problems facing businesses are inability to analyze market opportunities, advertising and marketing problems. Applying modern marketing techniques could be the way out to stay abreast of the competition. The internet is one way where they can utilize this. Mentioned by Craig Stull (2011), he provides these factors as marketing problems, namely: problem of standardization, competition from large-scale businesses, poor sales promotion and poor bargaining power. Small enterprises owners need strategies on how to use Internet marketing to promote their products or services. Internet marketing offers numerous benefits when compared to traditional media channels. Internet marketing strategies may improve customer relationships, operational efficiency, marketing effectiveness, and a firm's performance when implemented properly (Dlodlo, 2013).

A study conducted in Demishkevich (2013) Maryland, explored how five small enterprises developed and implemented an online marketing strategy. Although the researcher made an effort to answer how small businesses take advantage of online marketing strategy, the study failed to tackle the instruments that small businesses require in order to generate leads which will in turn improve the bottom line. This study will therefore bridge the gap by focusing on how small businesses can harness lead generation through internet marketing.

Further, in recent years there has been an increase focus on the potential of internet marketing. Consequently, many researchers have identified positive feedback on the economic and social benefits of internet. According to Dalberg, (2013), he sought to measure the role of internet on the socioeconomic development of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, more research that gives a detailed focus on how small business can harness the power of internet to generate more leads will go a long way in assisting businesses realize their full potential.

Previous studies have widely investigated the objectives, challenges and impact of internet marketing in performance of SMEs in Nairobi. However, majority of the studies are inconclusive in determining how internet marketing assists small business in generating leads. More studies need to be done in this area to help businesses capitalize on the potential of internet marketing in generating leads. This study therefore sought to answer the question; what is the influence of internet marketing strategies in lead generation to small enterprises?

1.3 Research Objective

The main objective of this study was to understand the role of internet marketing strategies to small enterprises in generating leads in Nairobi CBD. The specific objectives include:

- i. To establish the extent to which small businesses are using different marketing strategies to generate leads.
- ii. To identify the key challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this study will help policy makers to capitalize on the potential of the Internet for economic and socio development. It will help them understand how their counties are taking advantage of internet marketing, which opportunities can be tapped and where the future lies as well. This data will help to support policy makers on harnessing the potential of internet.

Further, this study will resound to the benefit of industry players considering that Internet marketing plays an important role in lead generation. The greater the demand to cut down on cost, and increase marketing efficiency, which will eventually improve revenue, justifies the need to create an avenue for small business to learn on how to acquire new customers. Businesses will be able to explore the important instruments on online marketing to familiarize themselves on the various opportunities that are available and that can match with their objectives.

For the researcher, the study will help to uncover critical areas in internet marketing related to lead generation that were not explored. Thus, new theories in the role of internet marketing in generating sales leads may be arrived at. The research study could provide information on internet marketing and its important role in lead generation. This research will assist theorists to study more on harnessing the internet potential across other disciplines.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Marketing as a strategy entails the understanding of the micro and macro environment the business is operating in; customers, competitors, laws and regulation. Planning marketing strategy is critical in ensuring that the business is a success (Whalley, 2010). In this regard, internet marketing has become a significant part of marketers' lead generation strategy, and businesses that employ internet-marketing strategies increase their chances of reaching to their target market effectively. This chapter looks at the theoretical foundations, internet marketing and lead generation, benefits of adopting internet marketing strategies for lead generation and key challenges in implementing internet-marketing strategies.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Several theories have been put forward to explain the concept of marketing. These theories express the adoption of innovative technologies like internet marketing, its importance and ease of use for SMEs. This study reviewed three theories that express the adoption to new marketing changes and the importance in generating leads to small businesses.

2.2.1 Network Theory

Coined by (Barnes, 1954), network theory is the study of how people, organizations or groups interact with others inside their network. Network theory studies relationships of all sorts, whether between people, animals or things. Social are useful in this regard, as they allow marketers to accept feedback from the customers, and they allow marketers to leverage the power of internet marketing strategies to double up on the sales marketing efforts. Drucker (2012) describes the economy of the future as a network society, which marketing outcomes are highly decided by competition between networks of firms rather than by competition among firms.

Businesses that have a solid cornerstone in strategic networks will enjoy significant market benefits in the coming future. Because of the extreme information absorption capabilities, networks adapt better to environments that are rich in knowledge. Networks distribute business functions across the business. Marketing communication skills remain salient in defining network theory. (Kotler, 1999).

2.2.2 Dynamic Capability Theory

Dynamic capabilities theory is defined as learned, path-dependent, and stable patterns that govern the change of organization's ordinary capabilities (Nonaka, 1994). Dynamic capability deals with the fundamental questions of strategy in changing environments. Strategic marketing literature has employed dynamic capability as a theoretical answer to the problem of how businesses can attain a competitive advantage in an unstable environment.

In constantly changing environments, the dynamic capabilities approach can give a clearer view of how competitive advantage is gained and sustained. However, businesses ought to understand that competitive advantage is not achieved through applying dynamic capabilities but by executing them. Internet marketing is a high-velocity marketing instrument, which small businesses have to absorb in the hunt of competitive advantage and to ensure constant lead generation (Stuart Wall, 2010).

2.2.3 Technology Acceptance Model

Theory of Acceptance assists decision makers in efforts to adopt new technology based on perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 2003). Theory of acceptance explains how to measure and predict business actions that are using internet marketing for lead generation. The technology acceptance model has been a theory that is most widely used to explain an individual's acceptance of an information system as it takes into account a casual model that begins with attitudes towards new technology, beliefs, usefulness and ease of use; theory of acceptance takes into account the sequence that factors that determine how a new technology will be used.

Theory of acceptance is widely used to understand the acceptance of different types of information systems. As analyzed by (Juan Carlos Roca (2006)), he sought to understand how users come to accept and use a technology, taking into consideration the perceived ease of use and the usefulness of the technology. To internet marketing, technology of acceptance suggests a model that specifies the acceptance pattern and role internet plays in technology adoption. The model assumes that users who perceive technology as easy to use will readily adopt it compared to those who think it is difficult.

2.3 Internet Marketing Strategies for Lead Generation

According to Rana (2009) internet marketing provides businesses a huge opportunity to expand their reach, but most of these businesses still lag behind in implementing internet marketing. There is considerable number of business creating websites but with limited knowledge on how to use it for marketing. Esfidani (2007) argues that SMEs have limited web marketing adoption strategies' and has limited motivation to keep using social media networks. Further, Yannopoulos (2011) states that businesses that adopt internet marketing without strategic goals or objectives are unable to determine how social media can work for them to generate leads. It is therefore imperative, that SMEs have a strategic plan on using internet marketing.

Internet marketing involves numerous instruments and it is prudent to select a strategy that matches the goal of the business. A recent study from Chuard (2014) shows internet marketing helps grow brand awareness and increases sales and partnerships while reducing marketing costs. Measuring the value of internet marketing is important as it assists the business to understand which online marketing instruments offer the best results for the business. A practical approach is to ensure a lead capture strategy to the business (Fleischner, 2010).

As argued by Marc J. Epstein (2007), the wide range of internet marketing options benefits businesses by enabling them to have a steady flow of customers at a cost-effective and easy way. Having a web presence is the first step towards designing an internet marketing strategy. Lead generation occurs when various internet marketing tactics are put in place to ensure customers can find the websites when they are searching

for the products or services offered. A study done by Sfetcu (2007) has noted key factors in identifying which internet marketing tools to use for effective lead generation. According to Roberts, M. and Zahay, D. (2012), Internet marketing is a complex environment in which marketers attempt to involve the three main activities to achieve their goals: customer acquisition, customer conversion and customer retention. Traditional marketing channels have been profoundly affected by the internet (Williams, 2011). For example, contact activity that was done by mail is now done by email. Customer acquisition is the first level of marketing, which is lead generation. Marketers understand that lead generation is essential to continued survival of any business. Marketers place this as a priority in the business as they notice that customers collect information on goods and services from the internet. This means that business owners must develop internet marketing strategies to fill the sales funnel with potential clients, which allows them to pre-qualify leads and eliminate ‘jokers’.

Businesses have one objective, which is to generate more revenue. Generating leads is the first step to making more revenue. Increasing revenue can be arrived at by creating a marketing strategy. Many internet marketers make the mistake of jumping into executing lead generation strategy without the knowledge on how the techniques will work for the businesses to ensure that it attracts more customers (Thanapathy, 2014). Successful lead generation like any other marketing activity requires time to refine to understand which channels work best in acquiring quality leads. The primary motives for users to visit a website are summarized in four categories: social interaction, convenience, information and entertainment (Hanafizadeh, 2012).

2.3.1 Pillars of a Successful Marketing Strategy

Marketers have a task to categorize leads according to where they came from to effectively target them. To ensure that a business picks the right option, the key is to understand the target market and test each of the lead generation tactics to understand which ones brings in more leads with a cost that fits within the budget (Esfidani, 2007).

The target market is one of the six important elements that marketers need to look into to ensure internet marketing points to lead generation success. The drivers of successful marketing strategies should touch on who the business is targeting, what the business is communicating, where they will communicate and when and how the business will communicate.

Specifying the target market should be the core of any marketing strategy. Businesses need to clearly define the target group to ensure that resources are not wasted in attracting the unqualified leads. Having an in-depth understanding of the ideal customer goes a long way in assisting marketers to determine which internet-marketing tactic to employ in order to reach the customers. The biggest benefit with internet marketing is that it allows the businesses to become much targeted towards the desired customers (Hanafizadeh, 2012).

Also, content marketing empowers, engages, educates, and connects readers. Creating compelling arguments to customers on why they should purchase from the business begins with a website. Content enables the customers to perform research and provide more knowledge about the business. This can be applied to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) by making it more search friendly with the aim of increasing being found by search engines like Google and Yahoo. Pay Per Click (PPC) applies content by making sure that advertisements relating to what customers have searched appear on top of the page or as images.

A social media channel is a tool for developing brand awareness, engaging customers. Social media requires a commitment plan to developing valuable and consistent content (Zarei, 2013). Businesses using content marketing are shaping and creating brand voice and identity. Content marketing helps customers make informed purchase decisions, while making recommended purchases too. Businesses that builds its reputation through content marketing are finding it easier to acquire fresh customers and retain existing ones, increase website traffic, build a prospect database and generates leads (Lieb, 2011).

Putting in place a lead scoring system is essential in an internet marketing strategy and is as it provides a deeper level on the quality of the leads. Lead scoring enables marketers to classify the leads generated according to level of interest to ensure that businesses only focus on customers that are ready to make a purchase. Every lead that is received falls in a different stage in the sales funnel. Some may be ready to make a purchase and some require more time to know more about the business before they can make the purchase.

Determining the base of lead scoring is the first stage to understanding which key indicators to attach to each lead. Leads that do not meet the business criteria are transferred to the appropriate area (Roberts and Zahay, 2012). Leads that are not ready to make a purchase are sent back to the marketing funnel for nurturing. Pursuing qualified leads can increase sales performance and guarantee an improved business turnover.

Further, specifying marketing tactics is essential. According to Epstein and Yuthas (2007) every business is different with diverse marketing goals. The right marketing tactic can help the business to attract the desired leads, while ensuring that it does not go overboard the available resources. Planning an internet marketing strategy should include the specific steps that need to be taken and the activities that will lead the business towards generating leads. The internet marketing activities may include a specific technique or a combination of different techniques available.

In addition, establishing a unique selling proposition enables the business internet marketing activities to stand apart from competitors. Also, it allows the business to build a lasting reputation with the customers. Pinpointing what makes the business unique, enables marketers to ingrain into the internet marketing strategies to ensure that lead generation is a success. The entire business has to be aligned to ensure that the value of the products and services stands out from the competition (Lieb, 2011).

Finally, marketers have to define the success metrics by setting clear goals that can be tracked. Measuring and reporting on internet marketing activities is critical for resource allocation and performance evaluation. Continuous monitoring of lead performance is essential in refining internet marketing tactics to assist in attributing success to things that worked to drive business (Epstein and Yuthas, 2007)

2.4 Lead Generation Tactics

Social media borrows from the promise that people are largely communal and have a need to interact using voice, gesture and written language. Social media supports a variety of interaction in digital environments by making it possible for users to supply, aggregate and filter consumer information in various forms (McHaney, 2011). Social media has become a significant part of marketers' lead generation strategy, and companies who engage in social media increase their reach massively.

Engaging in dialogue with customers through social media has become an important part of successful businesses. Further, to be successful and to reach a positive return on interest with social media, businesses have to learn to listen to their audience. Marketers need to understand that social media is not for pushing messages, but meant to be a mutual communication with customers (Martinez-Lopez, F. J., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Aguilar-Illescas, R., & Molinillo, S. 2015).

Email marketing allows business owners to reach a large number of consumers at an almost zero cost. Email marketing is a cost-effective marketing tool especially in regard that small businesses face a challenge in setting aside a marketing budget. Email marketing campaigns work towards increasing sales conversion, generate sales and driving web users to make offline purchases. Small businesses maximize on email marketing by ensuring that they focus on the target audience, while considering the cost of sending email messages compared to the revenue that is generated (Rana, 2009).

Search Engine Optimization involves optimizing website content to target audience better, increase brand visibility and increase website hits. SEO strategy also involves reviewing the industry to decide which keywords and phrases will target the selected audience; using the wrong keywords can lead to failure of the campaign. Successful SEO campaigns comprise optimizing website or blog content to target your audience better, increase brand visibility and increase the business website visits. For the small businesses, the SEO campaign should include a conversion strategy and clearly defined goals.

Online Banner ads are small rectangular objects on webpages that display stationary or moving graphic and includes link to a business's website. Recently, small businesses are employing Banner Ads to help persuade visitor to make purchases or defined actions by the business (Schneider, 2015). Placing Banner Ads on carefully selected websites are likely to attract leads similar to the chosen target market.

Google AdWords program is credited to be the leading performing based advertising today. Pay Per Click (PPC) is an integral marketing instrument for lead generation. PPC is a top strategic marketing initiative moving forward as it gives more control to marketers in managing budgets on a daily, weekly, monthly and annually basis. PPC advertising also provides the businesses with the ability to become targeted to the market, while offering measuring tools too (Fleischner, 2010). Further, utilizes geo-targeting, keyword research and demographic selection allowing the business to target their audience much more precisely.

Landing pages are designed for conversion and is essential for lead generation, while focusing on one call to action that aligns with the business strategic goals. Landing pages play a key role, along with product pages on the website to drive prospects into further engagement and eventually to the sales funnel. Landing pages provide a base where responses can be measured and enabled for further action. Generating leads can be improved by increasing the amount of traffic to landing pages and increasing the conversion rate by enabling more visitors to become leads. Landing pages are action oriented (KippBodnar, 2011).

2.5 Benefits of implementing Internet Marketing for Lead Generation

The deepening access to broadband internet means that more consumers are using internet as the main means of accessing information. This means that more people now have access to the internet both at home and on the go through their mobile phone. A considerable number of businesses are gaining from the benefits of internet marketing strategies to generate leads through traffic to their physical business premises and to their e-commerce websites. The advance in modern technology has seen Internet marketing activities significantly increasing (Williams, 2011).

Internet marketing strategies such as search engine optimization, content marketing, social media marketing, article marketing and others serve as integral tools in driving traffic to the business website and physical location compared to traditional marketing platforms. Internet activities like e-commerce purchases have been increasing over the last few years, and internet marketing can help business owners to make the most of the purchasing trend of ordering products via the Internet.

For businesses to be effective in lead generation, the business has to establish a presence in the internet as well as serve to educate the target audience. Education serves in providing clarity on the specific services or providing expert detail within solutions to your prospects questions and problems. Successful lead generation efforts begin with performing an in-depth research of the ideal customers. Internet marketing can also help a business increase leads through cultivation credibility (Hussain, 2016).

Business credibility is an integration part in generation leads. Product awareness results to brand loyalty, which equals a surge in sales. The result of education is trust and credibility with your prospects. Developing credibility in customers is critical in building trust and driving leads. Lieb (2011) argues that internet marketing is one of the most effective and cost-efficiency methods of advertisement.

Marketing budget allocation for small business is minimal, but thanks to internet marketing, opportunities that were once reserved to big companies are now available to small business. Costs associated with starting a website, and then, using marketing articles or Social Media to establish an online presence is minimal when compared to the costs of traditional forms of advertising. Internet marketing strategies such as social media will not only drive traffic to your business, but it will also help in bridging the communication gap between your business and your customers.

In addition, businesses can use internet-marketing strategies such as social media to interact with their customers and offer superb customer supports experiences. The more people visit your website, the better the likelihood of closing more sales and raising the popularity of your business (Boyce, 2014).

2.6 Challenges to Implementing Internet Marketing Strategies

Small and Medium enterprises today see the need to embrace an Internet-based strategy but this progress can be inhibited by considerable uncertainty about how best to proceed. Uncertainty causes these businesses to be hesitant in embracing new ways of marketing their products. Businesses face uncertainty in four areas: technological expertise, knowledge in internet marketing and advertising budget (Chaston, 2004). Businesses are at a disadvantage if they do not integrate this important aspect in the business. Developing a strong foothold in internet marketing means to keep up to date with the frequent changes that evolve in the internet space. It is important that a business has time, energy and money to produce the best results for their business.

Content is important as it helps business knows what target audience they are aiming their products at. Once a content strategy has been determined, businesses need to decide what content they should have on their website to keep their target audience attracted. It is important that they provide products, which are different from their competitors so they keep ahead of their competition.

Technical skills are equally important. The business website requires updating and needs a lot of attention so it is important that the human resource maintaining the website has good information, technology and communication skills to attract customers. It is important that the website is easy and simple to use for customers. If customers find it easier to navigate around the site, there is more of a chance for the customer to make a repetitive purchase as they are familiar with the website.

While successful firms will normally take care of routine accounting, quite often their staff and management both lack the experience needed to meet the challenges of growth (King, 2007). Technical expertise introduces the challenge of limited human resources. SME's cannot justify full time marketing employees. So often, they continue to utilize the same staff as was necessary when the business was much smaller. These human resources might not have the technological expertise to advise the businesses on better strategies to generate leads through internet marketing.

Technology itself can be a barrier to adopting internet-marketing strategies for lead generation. This uncertain process of technological change is particularly challenging for small business owners, where there is uncertainty in the results. In a preferred scenario, business owners opt for solid proof in how internet-marketing strategies can work to increase sales leads. Business owners are always confronted with the challenge of trying to plan for the results before they start venturing into internet marketing.

2.7 Summary of Literature

The internet is a powerful tool for lead generation if used strategically and effectively as part of the overall marketing plan, it can be a cost saving alternative to traditional marketing approaches. Internet marketing like all other types of any marketing campaigns requires clear goals and objectives. Marketers need to unlock the potential of the Internet to enable businesses to expand customer reach. To ensure business growth, marketing is one of the issues that have to be addressed with urgency.

Industry players need to come up with new ways to enable businesses overcome challenges to harness the potential of internet marketing. As opportunities for internet marketing expand, businesses allocating more resources to understand marketing on the web have to ensure that measuring tools are put in place to monitor the payoffs of Internet marketing.

Internet marketing in itself is more data-driven enabling marketers to meet business goals. Using metrics that match the business objectives enables marketers to rate the success of internet marketing efforts. This chapter covered the theoretical foundation that guides the study as well as outlining literature concerning internet marketing strategies and lead generation tactics. Further, it exposes the importance of having an online presence, which is essential for any business in today's complex marketing and fast-paced environment. It also states the fact that internet marketing is a chaotic environment and every business that expects to reap form the potent benefits has to ensure that they have an all-round understanding of internet marketing.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on research methodology that was used in the study. It gives a detailed description of the research approach adopted. Research design, target population, research instruments, data collection and analysis methods that were used, are presented in the subsequent sections.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a survey research, which best served to answer the questions and the purposes of the study. Survey research is where only a part of the population is studied, and findings from this are expected to be generalized to the entire population; Donald H. McBurney (2009) defines survey as assessing public opinion or individual characteristics by the use of questionnaire and sampling methods.

According to Leon (2003), survey research is the systematic asking of questions of a population or a probability sample from a population and systematic recording of the answers for data analysis. This research used survey because it is useful in describing characteristics of a large population. Survey research makes it possible to accurately estimate the characteristics of the target population without interviewing all members of the population.

3.3 Population of the Study

Population is defined as the total collection of elements about which we wish to make inferences (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). This research focused on Moi Avenue, which is a thriving hub of small businesses in Nairobi, and with a mix of diverse enterprises. The population consisted of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four (1,774) small enterprises.

3.4 Sampling Design

This study used systematic method as it provided the researcher with a degree of control and sense of process. Systematic random sampling is a random sampling method that requires selecting samples based on a system of intervals in a numbered population (Babbie, 2007). Systematic sampling is to be applied only if the given population is logically homogeneous, because systematic sample units are uniformly distributed over the population. One hundred businesses consisted as a study sample to represent the small enterprise population in Nairobi Central Business District. From a population of 1,774 and using a confidence level of 95% and a margin error of 5% gave a sample size of 316 small enterprises. From this population, every 6th enterprise was interviewed, bringing a total number of 52 businesses that represented the population.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Christopher F. Voehl, 2014). The research made use of primary data, which was collected using structured questionnaires distributed to business owners or business managers, sampled from enterprises found along Moi Avenue. The questionnaire consisted of two types of survey questions; closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. A Likert scale was used for closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were preferred in this research because it measured the extent to which small enterprises used different marketing strategies to generate leads as well as to determine the association between putting in place an internet marketing strategy and lead generation success.

3.6 Data Analysis

According to Huber (2012), data analysis is the procedures for analyzing data, techniques for interpreting the results of such procedures, ways of planning the gathering of data to make its analysis easier, more precise or more accurate. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and summarized using frequencies and percentages. Measures of central tendency specifically mean and standard deviation were used to address the extent to which small enterprises were using internet-marketing strategies and to determine the key challenges small enterprises faced while implementing internet-marketing strategies for lead generation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results found from the data analysis. It therefore consists of the data analysis presentation and interpretation of findings. The objectives of this study were to establish the extent to which small businesses are using different marketing strategies to generate leads; and to identify the key challenges small businesses face while implementing internet-marketing strategies for lead generation.

4.2. Response Rate

From the data collected, out of the 52 questionnaires administered, 50 were filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 96.2%. This response rate was considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study.

4.3 Demographic Factors

Several demographic factors were considered which were important in the interpretation of responses given. The factors included the role of the respondent, the number of years the business has been operational and whether the business is participating in internet marketing.

4.3.1 Respondent role in the business

Data was collected on the respondents' role in the business. Analysis was done and the results shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent role in the business

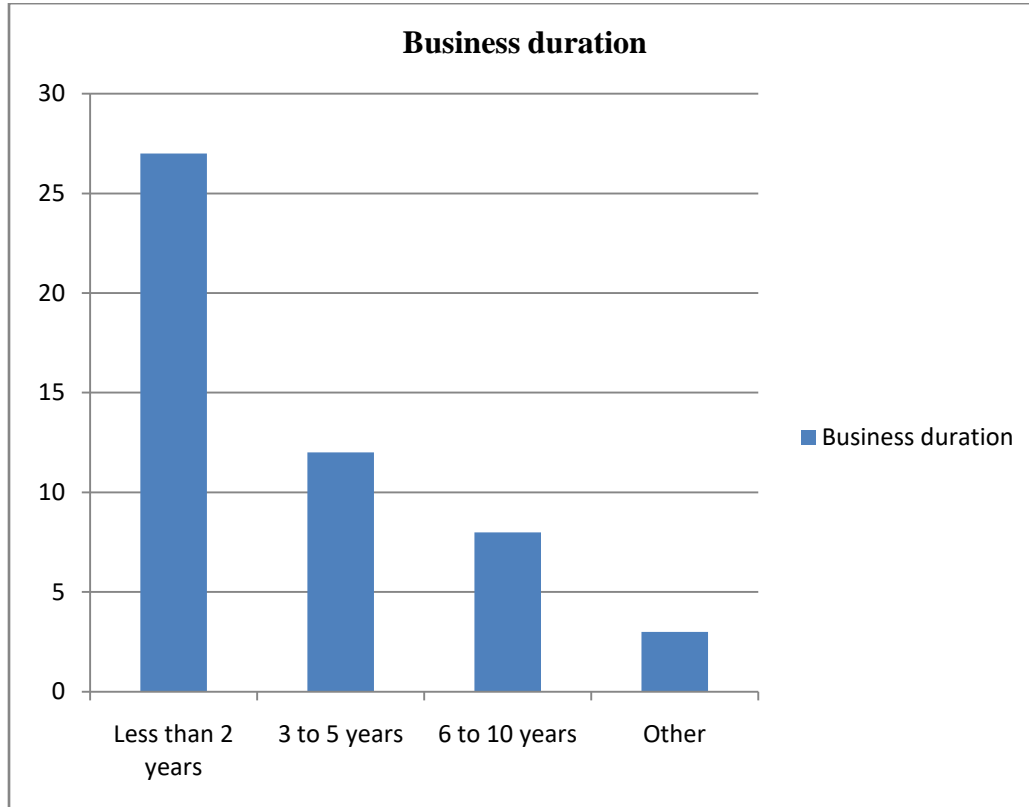
Response	Frequency	Percent
Owner	22	44
Employee	26	52
Other	2	4
	50	100

From the data collected (44%) were owners while (52%) were employees. This means that most business owners opt to employ someone to run the business.

4.3.2 Duration the business has been operational

Respondents were asked on the duration the business has been operational and responses were as shown on the Figure1.

Figure 1: Duration the business has been operational



Majority of the respondents have been in operation for less than 2 years. This figure decreases steadily as the number of years goes up. This means that the survival rate of business decreases as the age of the enterprise goes up.

4.3.3 Participation in Internet Marketing

The research further sought to know if the respondents are participating in internet marketing. From the data collected (44%) answered yes while (52%) answered no. This means that most businesses are aware of the internet and are participating in internet marketing in social media, website or blog channels.

4.3.4 Enterprise with Specific Marketing Person/s

The study focused sought to know if the enterprises assigned specific person/s in marketing, and the responses were categorized as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Specific marketing person assigned

Enterprise with a marketing person		Percentage
Yes	28	56
No	22	44
Total	50	100

Most respondents (52%) admitted to having no assigned marketing person, while (44%) responded with a yes. The results show that as much as the businesses have are aware that internet presence is important, they do not place key focus on investing in knowledgeable marketing individuals who might play a key role in building internet marketing strategies.

4.3.5 Duration the enterprise has been using internet marketing

The study sought to know duration the enterprise has been using internet marketing and the responses were categorized as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Duration the enterprise has been using internet marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 months	13	26
4-8 months	5	10
9-12 months	8	16
1-2 years	10	20
2-3 years	3	6
3-4 years	4	8
4-5 years	4	8
....years+	3	6
Total	50	100

From the findings, majority of business that use internet marketing are 1-3 months old, followed by businesses that are 1-2 years old. The results mean that new businesses are seeing the importance of internet marketing. One of the reasons why newer businesses are using internet marketing could be because they are looking for cost-effective ways of marketing their business. At the same time, internet marketing awareness is increasing. This only peaks for businesses that are 1 to 2 year old because they are in search of acquiring more customers.

4.4 Avenues for Lead Generation

The study sought to know which avenues are used for lead generation. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Avenues for Lead Generation

Avenues	Frequency	Percent
Social Media	33	58.927
Direct Marketing	10	17.857
Email Marketing	4	7.1429
Web site	9	16.071

When asked which avenues the enterprises are using for generating leads, a majority of respondents said they use social media. This question was important as it helps the study to determine the extent of penetration of internet marketing using the available web channels as well as to show which channel is the most preferred.

4.5 Benefit of Internet Marketing in Lead Generation

The researcher sought to find the extent the small enterprises in Nairobi CBD are benefiting from lead generation from using internet marketing. The responses were on a 5 point Likert scale with 5-Strongly Disagree, 4-Disagree, 3-Somewhat agree, 2-Agree and 1-Strongly agree. Results were shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Benefit of Internet Marketing in Lead Generation

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)		
Internet marketing and lead generation	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard deviation
We are accessing new markets	21	17	8	2	0	1.67	0.844
We are getting more enquiries	14	23	6	4	0	1.81	0.859
We have an increase in number of quality customers	19	17	10	2	0	1.56	0.906
We understand our customers better and know about our products and services	16	24	6	2	0	1.73	0.770
Our customers have become more loyal	13	15	14	2	0	1.79	0.875
We have a better edge over our customers (competitive advantage)	12	17	16	3	0	2.04	0.878
We have seen an increase in revenue	18	17	9	2	0	1.67	0.848

The analysis from the study shows that the enterprises agree that they are gaining an edge over their customers with a mean of 2.04. Enterprises with a mean of 1.81 say that they are getting more enquiries on their products and services. The results also reveal that through internet marketing, their customers are more loyal (mean of 1.79). The businesses agree too that the ability to understand their customers better is a benefit from internet marketing (mean of 1.73). Enterprises with a mean of 1.67 says that internet

4.6 Importance of internet marketing for lead generation

The respondents were presented with a ranking scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not a great extent and 10 a very great extent, to help the study to know the importance of internet marketing for lead generation and the responses were categorized as shown in Figure 4.

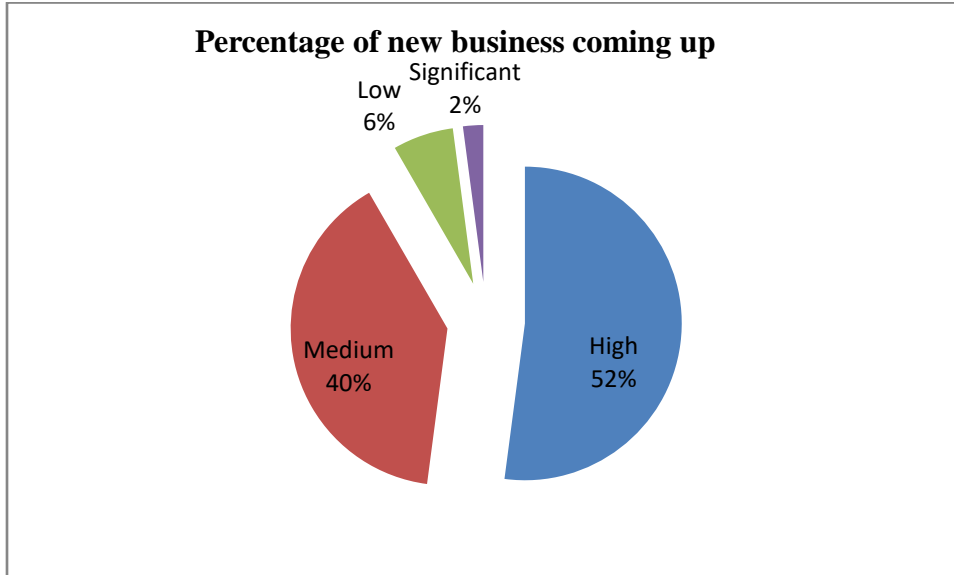
Rating Range	Count
1-2	4
3-4	2
5-6	11
7-8	16
9-10	16

29

4.7 Internet marketing impact on new businesses

The study sought further to understand the extent of new customers coming in because of participating in internet marketing and the results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 3: Internet marketing impact on new businesses



The findings reveal that 52% of the respondents answered with 'High' (52%) followed by 'Medium' (40%). The results suggest that internet marketing is an effective tool for generating leads.

4.8 Challenges small businesses face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation.

To address the second objective, the survey sought to understand the challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet marketing strategies for lead generation.

	No Extent (1)	Little Extent (2)	Moderate (3)	Great Extent (4)	Very Great Extent (5)		
Challenges of Internet Marketing implementation	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Deviation
Limited budget	9	21	9	9	0	1.06	1.598
Lack of technical expertise	10	11	18	7	2	1.79	1.313
Lack of internet access	17	14	14	3	0	2.38	0.967
Lack of information on internet marketing	8	13	19	7	0	1.90	1.824
Measuring internet marketing activities	6	11	15	13	0	2.29	1.052
Identifying the right internet marketing channel	8	6	21	10	3	2.40	1.172
Skills to manage internet marketing channels	9	14	12	8	2	2.65	1.062

The biggest challenge for most enterprises is skills to manage internet marketing activities (mean of 2.65). Another challenge is identifying the right internet marketing channel with a mean of 2.40. Lack of internet access is a challenge to the businesses with a mean of 2.38. Enterprises with a mean of 2.29 say that they are unable to measure internet marketing performance. Lack of information on internet marketing with a mean of 1.9 is one of the challenges as well as lack of technical expertise (mean of 1.79). Limited budget is a challenge for the enterprises with a mean of 1.06.

4.8 Discussion

This research studied the role of internet marketing strategies in lead generation to small enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District, Kenya. The results of the study reveal the extent of internet marketing and its usage for generating sales leads for small enterprises. The study established that whilst businesses understand the value it brings for new customers, they do not put in place internet marketing strategies for sophisticated use other than using it for interacting with customers.

The first finding is that social media tops the list as the channel that is preferred by the businesses. Further, the respondents agree that internet marketing has provided an enabling environment for lead generation. The results further reveal that internet marketing is gaining momentum among the small enterprises. However, the enterprises lag behind in adoption of internet marketing strategies; more than fifty percent of the businesses surveyed said the effectiveness of internet marketing is reflected from the number and quality of customers. The second finding is that businesses still face a number of challenges during their internet marketing efforts. Some of the most challenging obstacles to success include the lack of technical expertise and lack of knowledge to enable them identify the correct marketing channels and how to measure their internet marketing activities.

Previous studies have found an association between the success of a business and having a marketing strategy. Marc J. Epstein (2007), argued that the various internet marketing platforms are benefiting businesses by ensuring that they have a steady flow of customers. Because today's customer is taking an initiative to search for goods and services, internet marketing can ensure success by being an effective lead generation tool. A second study by Yannopoulos (2011), states that businesses that use internet marketing without a strategy in place cannot determine its effectiveness. Thus, businesses are tasked with ensuring that they do not employ a blind approach, while using internet marketing. Monitoring its effectiveness enables the business to understand the internet marketing channels that are working for the business.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of the study is the role of internet marketing strategies to small enterprises in generating leads in Nairobi CBD. This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary

The purpose of the research study was to determine the influence of internet marketing strategies in lead generation to small enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District. The research tested the extent the small enterprises in Nairobi CBD are benefiting from lead generation from using internet marketing. The results reveal that the internet has enabled the businesses to access new markets, increase in the number of quality of customers and that the businesses are able to understand their customers better.

The research also draws attention to the importance of internet marketing for lead generation. The findings reveal that majority of the businesses concur that internet marketing can spur the growth of businesses. Further investigation reveals the extent of new customers coming in because of participating in internet marketing. Majority of the respondents answered with a response of 'High' and 'Medium' with a percentage of 52% and 40% consecutively. The research survey sought to understand the challenges small businesses, face while implementing internet-marketing strategies for lead generation.

The results show limited budget lack of technical expertise, lack of internet access, lack of information on internet marketing and identifying the right internet-marketing channel were the top challenges with a mean of 9.6. Skills to manage internet marketing channels and skills to measure internet marketing activities presented a challenge with a mean of 9. The study tested the different avenues used for generation leads in the internet. Social media was the channel the majority use at 59%. 17.7 % of the respondents used direct marketing and 7.14% used email marketing. 16.1% applied had a web presence.

5.3 Conclusion

The study found that the internet is becoming the marketing tool of choice for most enterprises. Most businesses agree that leveraging on internet marketing has given them the ability to tap into new markets and that it gives the ability to understand the customers' better, thereby increasing retention. However, the study also indicated that lack of technical expertise and lack of information on identifying the right marketing channel as one of the factors that are hindering them from reaching to higher heights. For most enterprises, social media tops as the channel of choice. However, enterprises need to know that before investing in an online presence, they need to understand the fundamental steps involved in the process, which is building a strategy.

The results of the study also show that although many businesses are aware of the opportunities offered by Internet marketing, its full potential is far from exploited. The impact of internet marketing has only begun to be realized. The findings of this study show that newer businesses represent use internet marketing compared to older businesses. Further, this study shows that the most challenging obstacle to success for the businesses includes the lack of technical expertise and lack of knowledge to enable them identify the correct marketing channels and how to measure their internet marketing activities. These challenges are becoming a hindrance in helping small businesses interpret internet marketing results to actionable goals. Investing in knowledge and resources could assist businesses in the long-term towards success.

5.4 Recommendation

The internet has established roots in the business sector and many businesses are recognizing this. However, despite the technology being widespread, businesses fail to come up with strategies to ensure that their marketing efforts are targeted. Most businesses understand the internet to be a valuable tool in communicating their products but the same businesses are yet to use the internet as a tool for fuelling their lead funnel. To enable the success of internet marketing, creation of awareness is recommended to businesses on the use and impact of internet marketing.

At the same time, the Government plays a role in stirring and coordinating with the private sector to ensure that they have the resources to help entrepreneurs build their knowledge and skills in technology to promote sustainable business. The policymakers should take a dynamic role in ensuring an enabling environment that includes adequate infrastructure. Further, it is essential to build solutions to curb the challenges in internet marketing application to enable a thriving environment. Removing these barriers will require a fundamental set of characteristics to be put in place to construct a thriving Internet economy. This includes meaningful engagement among the industry players that drive economic objectives. The study therefore recommends that businesses need to invest in technical expertise so they can be able to build strategies to ensure that their internet marketing efforts bear success.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The research study achieved its objective. However, the researcher faced limitations in the course of the study. First, the researcher was limited on time and funds; however, the researcher managed to collect the research data on the scheduled time. In addition, some respondents were reluctant in divulging information. However, for most of them, this challenge was overcome after explaining the research study and presenting the letter of introduction from the University. Some statements in the questionnaire were unfamiliar to some respondents. The researcher managed to go about this by giving a detailed explanation. Finally, because of the time limit, the study focused on a smaller sample population. This sample size might not represent the majority of the enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District. Future research will be more convincing if it includes a larger sample.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Study

Since a number of respondents from the study agree that internet marketing is beneficial to the businesses, a number of suggestions for possible further work on the role of internet marketing in lead generation to small enterprises are warranted. A similar study with more focus on how enterprises can benefit from internet marketing strategies to acquire and retain customers, would allow a more detailed analysis and would solve the key challenges of identifying the right internet marketing channels and lack of technical expertise. Further, future studies could evaluate training programs that can benefit enterprises to in gaining knowledge on internet marketing. Finally, a larger sample, which includes a wider scope of Nairobi County, could result in findings that give a clearer role of internet marketing strategies in lead generation to small enterprises.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

The Role of Internet Marketing Strategies in Lead Generation to Small Enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District

The questionnaire seeks to determine the role of internet marketing strategies in lead generation to small enterprises in Nairobi central business district. The Questionnaire will sample population from businesses along Moi Avenue in Nairobi Central Business District. The Questionnaire answers shall be treated with confidentiality and shall not be used for other purpose apart from the research that is intended for.

INTRODUCTION

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your role in the business
 - ☐ Owner
 - ☐ Employee
 - ☐ Other

2. How long has your businesses been operational?
 - ☐ Less than 2 years
 - ☐ 3 to 5 years
 - ☐ 6 to 10 years
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Are you currently participating in internet marketing?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

4. Does your enterprise have a specific marketing person/s?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

5. How long has your enterprise been using internet marketing?

- ☐ 1-3 months
- ☐ 4-8 months
- ☐ 9-12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ years +

**SECTION B: EXTENT TO WHICH SMALL BUSINESSES ARE USING
DIFFERENT MARKETIN STRATEGIES TO GENERATE LEADS**

6. What avenues do you currently use for generating leads?

- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Direct Marketing
- ☐ email Marketing
- ☐ Web Site

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on how your business has improved as a result of lead generation using internet marketing.

Internet Marketing and Lead Generation	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
We are accessing new markets					
We are getting more enquiries					
We have an increase in number of quality customers					
We understand our customers better and know about our products and services					
Our customers have become more loyal					
We have a better edge over our customers (competitive advantage)					
We have seen an increase in revenue					

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not a great extent and 10 very great extent, where would you rank the importance of internet marketing for lead generation to any business (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. What is the percentage of new business coming in because of internet marketing?

High		Medium		Low		Insignificant	
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SECTION C: CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGIES

10. . What are the key challenges your business has encountered while implementing internet marketing strategies? Please provide your answer by ticking the appropriate response.

Challenges of Internet Marketing implementation	No Extent (1)	Little Extent (2)	Moderate (3)	Great Extent (4)	Very Great Extent (5)
Limited budget					
Lack of technical expertise					
Lack of internet access					
Lack of information on internet marketing					
Measuring internet marketing activities					
Identifying the right internet marketing channel					
Managing internet marketing activities					

Thank you for your participation. Your comments are valued.