

***The role of digital marketing in strengthening crisis management in hotel establishments***

***Marriot international case study***

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***Abstract:***

*Crises are accumulating in economic institutions and countries of the world due to the current conditions imposed by Covid-19 - or Corona according to its common name - which has left significant effects whether moral or economic on the whole world. In this research paper, we are going to analyze the countermeasures that institutions should have taken at the global level or the special ones, to overcome the crises facing economic institutions with creativity taking hotel institutions as an example. We have found that digital marketing has an effective role in strengthening crisis management by focusing on the interaction with the customer since it has an immediate impact and helps maintaining a sense of trust and loyalty.*

***Keywords:*** *Digital Marketing; Crisis; Crisis Management; Corona Pandemic.*

***Jel Classification Codes:*** *M30, M1, I1*

## **Introduction :**

Online mediums are developing considerably and continuously thanks to websites, commercial activities, and software developers who always find creative and new ways that help us shop, learn and communicate. Thus, digital marketing is an outcome of the interaction of all the new technological advances on one hand, and the economic institutions with their various components on the other. From this point, foundations started aiming towards outstanding and excelling in marketing that is based on all the advances in the world of technology. As digital marketing has already become a fundamental key in deciding the success or the failure of an institution, and an entrance to success, outstanding and creativity in the world of modern institutions that works alongside the new life requirements.

The fast advancement of the institutions at the technical level, and the quick, continuous changes led to different kinds of the most complicated and ambiguous situations called crises, which must be suitably dealt with and limit their impact on people at first and foundations at last.

The huge expansion in the business world these days made institutions in need to found crisis management to prevent the continuous, unexpected vicissitudes in businesses. Besides, the qualification of groups of employees to commit to this and perform with elevated levels of energy and effort to face the new occurring circumstances due to the sudden changes and the unexpected situations and to deal with it fast and conveniently. Therefore, we can adapt to these situations by finding the right solutions that prevent it even if it was in an improvised way because of the quick analysis of the crisis elements.

Technological development is a major cause in creating unprecedented crises in the business world. Digital marketing is regarded as a supporting tool in crisis management, and it can be seen as one of the fundamental concepts in managing tough situations regarding its importance in dictating and predicting the occurring changes in the digital business nature. As well as its ability to target the institutions' customers with the information needed to be marketed through the crisis in a convenient speed and accuracy.

Based on the above, this given research aims to set and define the role of digital marketing in crisis management within commercial institutions. Thus, from this point, we can pose the following problem:

**How can digital marketing contribute to supporting crisis management within hotel establishments?**

## **2. Digital Marketing:**

### **2.1. The Concept of Digital Marketing:**

Digital marketing is a strategy that has been used for ages, and it is considered an important aspect of the success of any business, regardless of its volume or to which field it belongs. For decades, marketing has only included magazines, newspapers, and TV channels. From the most advanced and effective marketing mediums to the birth of the Internet and modern-day technologies, everything has changed. A new concept of marketing came into light, known as digital marketing, and before defining the concept of digital marketing, we should first provide some insight into the concept of marketing itself.

According to the American marketing association: "Marketing is a process of planning, implementing, designing, pricing, promoting, and distributing ideas, products, and services to create exchanges that achieve the goals of both individuals and organizations." (Barrons Business Dictionaries, 2000)

**The first definition:**

All of **Al-Zyoud, Al-Mu'ani, Alsoud, and Alsoud** See that digital marketing is a strategy used to use technology and the Internet within the process of marketing. The main idea behind digital marketing is based upon a series of activities related to marketing conducted through the Internet and software applications. (Al-Zyoud, Al-Mu'ani, Alsoud, & Alsoud, 2021, p1559) Throughout the previous definition, we noticed that it mainly focused on the use of the Internet and online mediums in conducting marketing processes and activities related to digital marketing.

**The second definition:**

**Radif Chafi** has simply defined it as implementing digital media, data, and embedded technology with traditional marketing connections to achieve marketing goals. Within this open definition, so that commercial activities compete efficiently today, using digital marketing has become necessary for supporting businesses and marketing strategies. Every one of us spends now several hours a day using digital media for entertainment, social interaction, or looking for new products. He also defined digital marketing as accomplishing marketing goals through implementing digital media, data, and technology. (DAVE, 2022)

This brief definition helps remind us that the results presented by technology should only decide investment in digital marketing but not fully relying on technology. We also need to remember that despite the popularity of digital devices in choosing products, entertainment, and work, we still spend a decent amount of time in the real world, which makes the integration between traditional and modern media important in all kinds of different sectors.

**The third definition:**

Meanwhile, **Velasco, Ramirez, and Olmos** defined digital marketing as using data technology, the internet, and applications to plan and implement marketing processes that define the needs and the requirements to create exchanges that satisfy both individuals and institutions. (cabral, Ramirez, & Gutierrez, 2021)

From the above, this definition focuses on exploiting technological data and media as well as the internet in knowing the needs and desires of individuals to create and implement marketing techniques.

Throughout the previous definitions, we conclude that digital marketing through data and communication technologies has a huge impact. Moreover, the recent growth of the internet led to enormous changes in the economic institutions' work environment. As the internet has become a creative marketing tool in presenting information about the client or the competitors...The nature based on information about the product means that the internet provides global access and multiple media capacity, it is an increasingly important medium for promoting the institution's services.

We can also say that data techniques, and especially the internet, can be used as an effective business tool in the institutions' industry to promote their different businesses and increase their incomes, and although websites can be regarded as the foundation for marketing activities in economic institutions, there are numerous digital marketing tools that those institutions can rely on.

## 2.2. Digital Marketing Features:

- a. Digital marketing is a connection between the real and the virtual market.
- b. It provides further access to bigger numbers of customers.
- c. Enabling institutions to reach a larger audience from all different parts of the world.
- d. It led to attracting customers from different places of the world regardless of the distance or the time zones.
- e. Digital marketing has become a main marketing tool, especially with developing applications and internet software, which led the way to more cohesive marketing plans.

## 2.3 The Digital Marketing Combination:

Institutions have always used, from the creative aspect, marketing techniques to direct their products and services to their customers, which are considered to be marketing procedures to promote those products and services. Besides, the digital marketing combination expresses how the product adapts, in addition to the price, the distributing, the promoting, and the additional elements such as the website, the privacy policy, the customization, and virtual societies. This is what distinguishes the digital combination from the traditional combination to present the best method to gain customers on one hand and achieve the institution's goals on the other. (Marketing teacher.com)

Thus, the digital marketing combination can be defined as the mix of elements, components, and changes connected according to the marketing plan that the institution follows to reach its customers. Therefore, the marketing combination can be divided according to the accruing changes in its elements:

The digital product: Usually, consumers believe that the product is simply the bought physical item for discovering the nature of the product more efficiently.

### **The first definition:**

**Hijazi** defines it as a product that can be exchanged completely automatically. Thus, it does not need physical distribution sometimes. (حجازي، 2014)

The previous definition focused on the digital product being any product that can be exchanged digitally at any time only in exceptional cases where physical distribution is used. As digital marketing came to support and develop traditional marketing. Not to eliminate its functions including the elements of the traditional marketing combination

### **The second definition:**

**Yusuf Hajjem** defined it as all the touchable and physical or untouchable thing sold online to a large audience of customers and done traditionally or electronically to satisfy the customers' needs and desires. (الطائي و العبادي، 2009)

Based on the previous definition, it is clear that the author focused on his definition of the digital product on the internet, where he considered the digital product as any product traded either electronically or traditionally on the internet. However, this does not apply to the digital marketing concepts where it is not limited to just the internet as an electronic medium of product marketing.

## 2.4. The Digital Product:

### 2.4.1 Digital Product Levels:

Most consumers believe that the product is simply the bought physical item for discovering the nature of the product more efficiently. Here, we get to know three different products: core, actual, and augmented. This concept is known as the three levels of the product.

#### **-The core product:**

It is considered the benefit that makes the product valuable to the consumer, and it does not consider the physical, touching product. For example, the car. The benefit is comfort, meaning the convenience of using it whenever and wherever the customer wants. Another main benefit is the speed so that the customer can travel fast. (Marketing teacher.com)

#### **-The actual product:**

A physical, touchable product can be obtained to benefit from it. With the same previous example: the car that you experience driving, then you buy it, you can touch it. That is what is called for the normal person as the actual product under the name of the public product.

#### **-The augmented product:**

It is the non-physical part of the product, usually containing a lot of additional value, which you may or may not pay for. For example, when buying a car, a part of the augmented product will be the guarantee and the customer service support that the manufacturing company of the car, or any other services provided after buying the product.

### 2.4.2 Product Developing Strategy:

Modern institutions started paying more interest to the process of launching, marketing, and selling products online. In digital marketing literacy, a quadrilateral matrix was proposed that presents a group of options to use the internet in marketing products and expanding in the markets. This matrix includes two main dimensions:

**-The product:** It contains two levels that are the current product and the new product.

**-The market:** There are two levels to the market, which are the current market and the new market.

This matrix sets in front of the marketing management four main options to develop their products as follows: (فارة، 2012)

#### **a. The current product - The current market:**

Most of the institutions that use the internet to market their products usually fall into this option, and the institutions that use this option are satisfied with using the internet as an electronic tool mirroring their current activities. This means that the main use of the Internet in this option is promotional exploitation for the current products to the current markets.

#### **b. The current product-The new market:**

The institutions that use this option activate websites, which allow them to reach the global markets and enables them to overcome geographical barriers, so this option opens global markets for the institutions to launch their current products, so they do not get enough with limited geographical markets to launch their current products.

#### **c. The new product-The current market:**

This option is used by institutions that target the current markets but with a new product or a new form of the same product, and this option is widely used in the field of services more than in the field of physical products.

**d. The new product-The new market:**

This option is achieved through presenting a new product to the new market/s, and when using this option the institutions would prepare all the necessary mediums and facilities that enable them to develop, present, and sell new products to new market/s.

**-The digital price:**

It is considered to be the commercial value (sales, purchasing) of a certain commodity when transferring its property from the seller to the buyer.

**The first definition:**

It is defined as being the relation between two amounts of two products presented for trade, or as the amount that has to be ditched from a certain commodity to get a certain amount from another commodity whether it was a consumable item, a productive commodity, or a certain service. Meanwhile, in monetary economics, where cash is the general equivalent of prices, the price is the amount of cash that has to be paid to get a unit of exchanged commodities or services.

(Milton\_Friedman, n.d.)

**The second definition:**

**Mohammed Hashem** has also defined it as the form that defines the value of a commodity by cash according to what it achieves of benefit, and it is usually a norm of quality, the value of the commodity differs according to the people, time, and the market. Therefore, the price for what it is of importance because it is the main outcome of an institution - its study requires specialists to study the market and the institution and all the factors related to selling and pricing. Thus, the factors that affect the pricing are different, some are related to the institution itself, and some are out of the institution's control. From these factors is what follows:

(هشام, n.d.)

**-Costs:**

A cost is a minimum price, and it includes the costs of production, marketing, transportation, and others. When a commodity is marketed globally, other costs are added, such as customs fees, storage, transportation, and others. Digital marketing should decrease many costs in comparison to traditional marketing like traveling, printing, and reducing the number of employees. As well as deleting some costs completely if the commodity was digital, where it is delivered directly without a need for packaging. The company aims in all situations to set a suitable price, taking into consideration all the paid costs to make profits. The reduction of paid costs should decrease prices in the case of online marketing.

**-Competition:**

Competition is very important in determining prices and should be predicted for long periods by leading institutions that are less affected by competition and this competition and its impact on pricing includes not only the commodities from the same type but alternative commodities too.

The emergence of modern technologies and especially the internet, the liberalization of world trade, and the appearance of new competitors should intensify the competition where dealers can compare the prices of commodities easily which creates stimulation to the institutions to reduce prices.

**-The marketing combination:**

The price is one of the elements of the marketing combination, which are all affected by each other, which forces the price to be suitable with the rest of the elements. In the case of high quality, the price can be increased, and in the case of wide, effective promotion, the price can be increased due to the great demand for the commodity. In the case of direct distribution to the consumers, the price can be reduced because of the reduction of the costs of the other distribution sources. Marketing through the network can reduce the costs of promoting in comparison to the costs of traditional global promoting. A study about the prices of digital commodities on the internet showed that their prices on the internet are 9-16% less than traditional prices.

**-The suppliers:**

The price of the suppliers to the company is important in setting the final price of the commodity, which is why institutions work to get the best conditions from the suppliers and deal with them. The electronic network guarantees this benefit to the companies where it can compare between them and chooses the best of them to deal with.

**-The supply and the demand:**

Assuming the stability of the other factors, the increase of demand with the stability of supply leads to increasing the price, and vice versa, the increase of supply with the stability of demand leads to reducing the price. Moreover, the flexibility of demand has an impact on the price whereas if the demand was flexible, the increase in price leads to a reduction in demand, which should be taken into consideration while setting the final prices of the commodities.

We can take an estimate about the volume of demand in the case of online marketing, and that is by demanding a small amount of cash in return for getting a certain commodity, through the number of demands on the commodity, we can predict the volume of demand.

**-Government interference:**

In many countries, the government interferes in setting the price at which companies sell their products or it influences the price through imposing taxes and fees. Meanwhile, the companies that market digital products through the network have never been imposed to pay taxes and fees for the services they provide to this day. This feature is one of the factors that reduce the prices in the case of marketing through the network.

**2.4.3 Forms of Digital Pricing Strategy:**

There are several strategies for digital pricing, for example: (بن بردي, 2018)

**a- Internet auction:**

This strategy provides the possibility of collecting the biggest amount of types, accessibility to the largest potential buyers, and at the same time, creating a new kind of electronic medium. The types of auctions differ according to several norms from which we find:

**●Auction by setting a minimum price:**

In this type of auction, a minimum price is secretly set, and the auction cannot be awarded unless it reaches the given price.

**●Auctions by item quantity:**

In this type, the auction is either for one unit of one item or a series of identical units of the same

item. The auction is awarded to whoever pays the highest price.

● **Reverse public auctions:**

In this case, there is a certain amount to be sold and a price to it, and the more buyers who want to buy a bigger amount than the minimum amount, the bigger the reductions that the organization sets for them. Some of the most important websites that sell through auctions are:

- Amazon.com
- Auctions.com
- Priceline.com
- Cityauction.com
- Fairmarket.com

**b- Internet Exchanges:**

In this case, we have what is called an electronic mediator, which is an organization that specializes in mediating between buyers and sellers online, and managing the relationship and communication between the two parties, while charging a commission for its services. One of the most famous examples is Fastpart.com Company, which specializes in the electronic spare parts industry. It is also important to mention that many organizations have their own exchanging networks, for example:

- IBM company:** which has an exchange network connecting it to 28000 suppliers.
- GE (General Electric) company:** which has an exchange network connecting it to 36000 suppliers.
- Wal-Mart Supermarkets:** which has an exchange network connecting it to 30000 suppliers.

**c- The fixed pricing strategy:**

Within this strategy, the organization sets a fixed price for its products, and the consumer has to either accept or reject that price. Within this strategy, two main sub-strategies are used:

-**The price leadership strategy:**

According to this strategy, the institution focuses on the reduction of costs to launch low-priced products in markets. Both small and big institutions may benefit from such a strategy, but it is not necessarily that the lower price is the most successful, because institutions may have to sell their products for lower than the cost online, but they compensate for their loss through the electronic shop incomes (ads income).

-**The promotional digital marketing strategy:**

Institutions may use this strategy by proposing a lower price for their products than what is found in markets to attract and encourage customers to get their products available in electronic shops.

There are numerous forms of this strategy, for example:

- Giving a discount to each customer that buys the organization's products during specific periods.
- Providing discounts during special events.
- Providing discounts and offering low-priced products to encourage customers to pick other products of the same organization.

**d- The dynamic pricing strategy:**

This strategy focuses on offering different prices to different segments of customers. There are many forms of dynamic pricing, for example:

**-The electronic pricing based on geographical division strategy:**

In this strategy, the institution's products are sold for different prices in different regions, and in this case, the institution uses the server's records to dictate the personal electronic address of the users.

**-The electronic pricing based on value segment strategy:**

Although the value segment represents only 20% of the total number of customers, it is very important to the institution because they show regular loyalty to the institution's products. Accordingly, the institution may provide special discounts to its products to increase the loyalty of this segment towards the institution's products, but on the other side, the other 80% of customers should not be neglected in any way.

**-The electronic pricing based on barter strategy:**

The term barter means the direct exchange of goods and services, and it has been a part of the world's economics for ages. In the domain of electronic businesses, electronic shops may use the bartering system, especially in the second-hand goods trade.

## **2.5. Digital Distribution:**

Regarding the huge advances in technology today, digital distribution became more popular than ever in the business world because it helped shorten distribution channels. This has led to the reduction of production and distribution costs, which has helped to provide faster response and services to the customers' urgent requests 24 hours a day. (هشام, pricing, n.d.)

**The first definition:**

**Kotler** defines it as the group of interconnected organizations that help provide a certain service or product to consumers or business users. (kotler, 2010)

**The second definition:**

Even after 50 years from when Kotler's definition first appeared, it is still widely used nowadays, because it presents the basic and proper concept of distribution in the marketing mix: it is called the marketing place and it has many names, it is also called as the channel, the distribution, or the mediator. It is the mechanism through which goods and/ or services are transferred from the manufacturing company/service provider to the user or consumer. Therefore, let us take a look at some of the distribution decisions or the main channel, and how can we choose the best distribution channel for our products or services.

Gartner's research shows that marketing managers have changed the spending requirements through their programs and channels, whereas the digital channels we are focusing on in this article dominated those priorities, and they represent 72.2% of the total marketing budget. Budget division through paid, owned, and acquired digital channels is considered a very interesting concept. This highlights the continuously increasing importance of websites, e-mail, paid search, membership, and social media, which all have the same budget in this survey. (DAVE, 2022)

**Types of digital distribution channels:**

Since the internet started evolving and spreading in the past few decades, it has been and continues to be considered a digital distribution channel that enables companies and clients to

distribute their products not only in the local market but also in the broader markets. Those products can be delivered to anywhere in the world providing that the customer has the minimum Infrastructure from a computer device and Access to the Internet. In the following, we are going to present the different types of digital distribution channels:

**Direct distribution channels:**

In traditional marketing, distribution channels played a key role in the process of delivering products and services from the producer to the customer. As is known, the multiplicity and increase in the length of these channels have had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the distribution process. The branches of the direct distribution channels are:

**1- Direct sales:**

In this case, the company can use the internet, the phone, or the mail to distribute their products. However, to support this type of direct distribution, we need a well-developed information system that guarantees to provide all the different aspects of the supply and the demand, which enables storage management processes, and processing the deliveries, orders, shipping and more.

**2-Online mediators:**

Regarding the online marketing address to the final customer "B2C". These institutions provide sufficient information about the clients within the mailing lists they keep, such as the purchase history and demographic data. However, in the case of online marketing that targets the business industry itself "B2B", the direct distribution channels are usually in the form of deals collectors like the "Chipcenter.com" website which is a collaboration between four of the world's biggest electronic components producers.

**Physical distribution channels:**

Physical distribution channels include both shipping and storage, which are both key elements in any distribution process, and without these factors, products cannot be delivered to the customers. Despite the development of digital marketing and online distribution, institutions never stopped using physical distribution as some may believe; but it was reorganized in a way that works alongside the different advancements of online marketing. We can summarize the most important developments below:

1- The increased demand for delivery and courier companies, because many products can be shipped directly to the final customer in a relatively short time like books, flowers, and food.

2- Traditional shipping methods are still used today in the process of distribution, but nowadays, they are required to improve the quality of their service, because the customer now can track all the different stages of online purchasing.

**Online stores:**

An online store is an online website that depends on online mediums, either partly or completely, to provide its services and satisfy the needs and desires of customers. The online store is a fundamental element in online marketing, where it is created by companies that specialize in data technology to provide databases, online mailing lists, auto-reply software, and more.

In conclusion, we can say that online marketing came to facilitate the process of distribution and enhance its efficiency and effectiveness by reducing the interactions between the product and the customer. Unlike what some may think that digital marketing came to cancel the concept of

traditional distribution channels and mediators, but in fact, many companies that used to have traditional distribution networks and continued to use it even after the birth of the Internet to protect the relationship that connects those mediators and customers. Besides, some may think that online direct distribution enabled many companies to interact directly with customers using less cost and higher speed.

## **2.6. Digital Promoting:**

Promoting is a key element in the marketing mix, which are the commodity, the price, the distribution, and the promoting. It is affected by the decisions related to the other elements of this mix, and these decisions can be one of the factors that help promote a service or a product and its acceptance in the market, as they can impede the process of promoting the goods and services.

Therefore, online promoting enabled the company to overcome the problem of the customer's lack of knowledge about the products that it provides, in addition to solving the issue of the customer's hesitation by working on convincing and creating a suitable atmosphere to make the customer accept the product and want to purchase it.

### **The first definition:**

**Ph. KOTLER** defines it as: "The dialogue between the institution and its customers through the process of sale and before it, and through the stage of consumption and after it." (Ph.Koter & Dubois, 2004)

From the above, promoting is the dialogue between the sender and the receiver; it extends from before the sale stage to post-consumption, passing through intermediate stages.

### **The second definition:**

Digital promoting is defined as traditional promoting using all different types of online mediums, especially the internet. (Dominici)

From the previous definitions, it is clear that digital promoting is the process of using different online mediums to communicate with others and introducing the product to them and encourage them to purchase it, to stimulate the demand and increase the profit of the company on one hand, and satisfying the needs and desires of the customers on the other. Therefore, online promoting could create a chance for personal and direct communication through internet advertisements that do not address the group but the individual, where it converses with the customers and put them in a position of positive interaction by enabling them to control choosing and picking the advertising messages and getting the information and details according to their needs.

### **The online promotional mix:**

The promotional mix consists of several forms, each one of which aims to contribute to achieving the general goal of promoting, which is personal selling, public relations, advertising, and stimulating sales. The process of preparing the suitable promotional mix has to be complementary to the other elements of the marketing mix to attain the company's goals (2018, بن بردي). In the following, we will get to know the elements of the promotional mix:

#### **-Digital advertising:**

It is the most important and effective element of the online promotional mix since it is widely used

by companies. It is the representative of their activities, as it is the main method to surround potential customers with goods and services that they provide, achieve their relative well-being, convince them to purchase their commodities, and keep a consistent relationship with them, which achieves the general goal of the institution for the long-term.

**The first definition:**

**Kotler** defines advertising as: "The different aspects of the activity that leads to broadcasting and publishing visual and auditory messages for the audience to encourage them to buy goods and services for their compatibility with hidden acceptance of goods, services, ideas, persons or advertised enterprises. (kotler P. , 2012) .

From the above, it is clear that advertising is the message addressed from the sender to the receiver either visually or audibly to influence the customers and encourage them to purchase the advertised products.

**The second definition:**

Digital advertising is "the use of all different types of digital modern techniques to advertise for the company's products" (Nezamba, 2011) .

As mentioned, digital advertising expresses the use of different digital techniques to advertise the company and its products.

**-Viral marketing:**

The concept of viral marketing is a viral phenomenon that started spreading more and more with the days, which made it within the interest of researchers and workers in the marketing domain, pushing the researchers to study the concept of viral marketing in an attempt to define a specific concept for it. Therefore, a lot of definitions have been presented to try and determine the conceptual framework of viral marketing, from which we find:

**The first definition:**

**Persselnick** defines viral marketing as: "The message that gains a website other new customers". (Jill & Marketing, 2000)

**The second definition:**

**Meskanskas** defines viral marketing as "addressing an advertising message online and building a base of clients with lower costs by providing a benefit to the users and immediacy that encourages them to spread the advertising message by recruiting new customers". (Jim, 2001)

**-Personal digital selling:**

To make purchases online, we need to determine the right medium from which we can access customers on the network and present the advertising content providing the information needed from the visiting customer, from which he/she can be encouraged to purchase. When talking about personal digital selling we can say that it is "the activity done by the sale responsible and ensures him/her to face the client face to face to present the product features and convince him/her to purchase it based on all the different online mediums, especially the internet".

From the above, we find that all the different online mediums enables the personal salesperson can meet the client virtually, provide him with the needed information about the presented products, work on affecting his / her purchasing decision, and complete the selling process. Therefore, the

internet is a huge communication medium, besides it works to provide a website that represents the company and its different products at any time, it enables the company to make sales 24/7. (Spiro. Stanton, 2003)

**-Sales through software:**

Sales are done through a website, and it presents its products and services. The website also provides products and services from several other companies. When the customers visit that site and choose a certain product or service on the website by clicking on the site's logo on the product or service, the customers are immediately directed to the original company's website so they can start the procedures and steps of the purchase and choosing how they prefer to obtain the product. In case the product or the service obtained was presented on a website - not its original website\_ after completing the purchase, the owner of the website gets a commission considering him as a representative of the original company. This type of sale is easy to engage in, and it does not require the website owner to store the goods or products, where the customer here knows the e-mail address of the original seller and will be immediately directed to him.

**-Sales through auction:**

This type of sale is based on the traditional idea of the auction houses where products are presented. The bid is opened among those who want to buy, and there are many websites dedicated to this kind of sale such as:

-www.ebay.com

-www.excite.com

anyone who wants to present his products or commodities and sell them through an auction has to fill in the format available on the first page of the website. It contains details such as the product specs, a detailed description of the product, a picture of the product, the minimum price of the product.

Then, the website starts the auction procedures known amongst those who want to purchase the product.

**-Privacy:**

Privacy is one of the main elements of the marketing mix, which expresses the right of individuals, groups, and companies in deciding a group of cases concerning the data and information that matters to them so that their confidentiality and privacy are respected and protected from any outer interference either physically or morally. Moreover, at the current technological advances, the interest in this policy has increased, and there has been several laws and regulations in many countries, where they focused on the need to ensure the freedom and privacy of individuals and their private data.

Privacy can be defined as: " The individual's right in controlling the information related to them and choosing who can collect and store these data, and who can access this information."

(www.itu.int., 2003)

From the above, privacy has numerous types such as:

**Information privacy:** It includes the regulations that govern collecting and managing private data such as identity card information, financial information, and medical records.

**Bodily privacy:** Which is related to the protection of individuals against all procedures that are related to them physically, like gene and drug testing.

**Telecommunications privacy:** This covers the security and privacy of phone texts, calls, and emails.

**Privacy protection technology:** Some software provides personal data protection for customers like:

**Privacy preferences software P3P:**

This software aims to protect the customer's data and information disclosed to the online store. This software allows the customer to select the personal data that are disclosed to the online store that is used by the store itself or a third party. It also enables the customer to compare the privacy policy adopted by the online store and the personal standards preferred by the customer concerning the privacy issue and revealing personal information and data to the online store.

**No-Profiling software:** This type of software acts as a proxy between the content of the web on one hand, and websites and online stores on the other.

**-Virtual societies:**

Virtual societies are considered the most significant media phenomenon nowadays since they attract huge numbers of social segments, especially the youth, allowing people to express their opinions and ideas. There is no doubt that the modern world lives today in a state of transformation, where virtual societies have become the alternative to past traditional activities, and the state of interaction between societies today and the online environment is what dominates the communication system.

Virtual societies can be defined as "A social gathering created on the global Internet, where several individuals meet for a certain time in a scientific discussion about subjects with a common interest that establishes personal and communal relationships under the virtual space".

### **3. Crisis Management:**

Crises accumulate in hotel establishments and world countries where there is no subject more important than the current imposed circumstances that the Covid-19, or corona according to its common known, which left great affects either morally or economically.

Several definitions dealt with the concept of crisis as a direct result of the fast and unprecedented environmental changes both internally and externally, which in within perform production and service organizations, the thing that led to crises imposed on the organizations to manage them with great effectiveness and efficiency to limit the negative outcomes and profit from the positive aspects.

**The first definition:**

**Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim** defines it as "The art of dealing with the crisis through taking a group of measures and actions at the pre-crisis stage by preparing to confront the crisis by limiting the devastating effects, therefore eliminating the crisis or changing its course for the benefit of the organization in the post-crisis phase. The concept of crisis management also includes taking all the necessary mediums to reduce the disastrous effects of that crisis to restore the conditions as much as possible to how they were before the crisis occurred. ". (Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim, 2002, page 35).

### **The second definition:**

**Said Aliwa** also defines it as "The fundamental base in defeating crisis using different management scientific tools, avoid its disadvantages and profiting from its positives, because the crisis management science is the science of managing the balances and adapting with all the different occurring changes and studying its effects in different domains". (Elsaid Aliwa, 1997, page17) .

### **The third definition:**

It is also defined as the continuous management processes, which is concerned with predicting the potential crisis by sensing and dictating the responsible internal and external environmental changes and mobilizing the available resources and means. This is to prevent or deal with crisis in the highest possible level of efficiency with less damage to the organization, environment, and workers while ensuring to restore the normal circumstances as soon as possible. (Misse Wester and Malin Mobjoek)

### **3.1. Crisis Management System:**

Researchers sat five stages of crisis management, which are: (افاق العلمية و التربوية, 2021)

**a- Dictating warning signs:** This means identifying the signs and symptoms that predict the occurrence of a crisis.

**b- Preparations and prevention:** This means the prior preparations of dealing with the expected crisis to either prevent it from happening or reduce its damages.

**c- Containing the damages:** This means implementing what the company planned for in the stage of preparation and prevention to prevent the crisis from escalating and spreading.

**d- Restoring the activity:** Referring to the procedures implemented by the executive branch to restore the balance and capacity to practice their usual businesses as they were before.

**e- The benefits or learning:** This means formulating and setting the regulations to prevent the recurrence of such crisis and gaining expertise from the past lessons and experiences to ensure a higher level of readiness in the future. As well as benefiting from other countries and organizations' experiences, which have faced similar crises and the mediums used to deal with it. This means that solving or facing any crisis is the art of scientific management based on laws and regulations in force and avoiding all non-legitimate ways to face it. Imposing the law may be required as a base to deal with a certain crisis, but this purpose should not be used as an excuse to use brute force, or violation of human rights or the non-justified economic and politic damages. (افاق العلمية و التربوية, 2021)

### **3.2. Crisis Management Goals:**

The provided crisis management definition by the management encyclopedia defines it as "the preservation of the Organization's assets and property, and its capacity to make profits and protect the individuals and workers from all different kinds of threats, and working on avoiding the possible dangers, reducing their impact on the organization or preventing them completely.". This also applies on the government and its administrations. Besides, many researchers find that crisis

management is the art and science of managing balances and adapting to the changes and studying their impact on all different aspects. We can also say that it is the process of preparation and organized and non-organized assessment of internal and external problems that dangerously threatens the organization's reputation and survival.

### **3.3. Crisis Management Strategies:**

In general, there are many strategies that an organization can adopt and produce to facilitate processing crises. (داسة, 2021 & مداس), from which we can mention:

**a- The eradication strategy:** Organizations deal with unknown crises that have little information or that touch the organizations values and principles with a kind of social control, firmness, and legal deterrence.

**b- The growth halting strategy:** It aims to accept the faith accompli and make efforts to prevent the escalating of the crisis.

**c- The retail strategy:** It attempts to transform the escalated crises into smaller and less pressuring ones so they can be dealt with easily.

**d- The abortion strategy:** It attempts to influence the mind-set behind the crisis and weakens the base it stands upon while providing the right alternative in the framework of the organization's values and policy.

**e- Pushing the crisis forward strategy:** The attempt to push the forces that caused the crisis to advanced stages to show the disagreement between them and thus decreasing the severity of the crisis.

**f- Changing the course strategy:** The attempt to change the crisis course, reduce its severity by controlling the crisis, and direct it away from the organization. (البطريق, 2017)

### **4. The Role of Digital Marketing in Crisis Management:**

The circumstances we live in today are not considered anywhere as near as perfect for the institutions, they have even exceeded the world movement in the business sector. The advantage this global phenomenon provides is the chance it gave the institutions in all different sectors and domains to learn about the importance of digital conversion for them.

The success of an institution in managing crisis depends primarily on the accuracy of the information available about the crisis and its elements where this information contributes to designing crisis-processing strategies. It provides the basics of crisis processing decision taking which requires the higher level of efficiency and effectiveness of data systems to provide this information to the decision takers at the right time. (S. Hana and others, 2018, page125)

Digital marketing is unique through the high efficiency. Because it gives the customers in consistent attention to the products presented on the website and enables the customers to express their desires directly to the institution through interacting on their websites. For example, customers can express their opinions through writing comments or the number of visits on the institution's website, and here, the role of digital marketing in crisis management is clearly shown through the data and information it provides, therefore it gives the institution a kind of prevention of crises occurrence.

Digital marketing aims to satisfy the needs and desires of customers, by providing detailed information and data about customers, therefore accessing potential clients and targeting them according to several standards. The role of digital marketing in crisis management lies in targeting the organization's audience.

Throughout advanced technologies, institutions can collect data and information to keep it and use it in solving crises, and this enables the institution to take the right decision through the continuous development and enhancement due to the chance that digital marketing provides to analyze all kinds of different aspects.

Based on the above, the role of digital marketing in valuing crisis management lies in collecting detailed information and data about the external changes to predict crisis occurrence. Therefore, the institutions that have digital marketing strategies were able to present solutions during the occurrence of crisis, based on their pre-planning to manage crisis. In addition to the speed and flexibility in dealing with the occurrence and decision making, so that institutions can for example focus on finding creative solutions that competitors have never used, or looking for an additional value to attract targeted customers to compete with the biggest companies.

#### **4.1. Marriot International Digital Marketing Strategy and Its Contribution in Facing the Corona Crisis:**

Crisis management is a key element in any successful digital strategy. During times of crisis, hotel establishments need to develop a quick and well-studied prevention plan to communicate with staff and guests, and to implement huge transformations in managing profits and digital strategies to ensure the success.

With the continuous spread of the Corona virus (COVID-19), it is essential that institutions have a work plan to deal with the current events and the potential future impact if the situation continues to deteriorate. In general, every hotel establishment should be equipped with an internal Coronavirus response team that consists of a member from each sector. This team should be responsible to keep surveillance on the evolving scene, and the continuous mind storming to apply changes on their strategies and ensure the internal stakeholders' submission for action.

As we all know, Marriott International was successfully at the forefront of the hospitality industry for years. Despite that, there are some questions concerning how their marketing strategies could gain the biggest share in contributing to the success they achieved throughout the years.

This study focuses on the targeted market of Marriot International and their marketing strategies and advertising campaigns side by side to their digital presence. Therefore, we need to start first by understanding Marriott International as a company.

##### **4.1.1. About Marriot International:**

A diverse American hospitality company operates a wide range of hotels, resorts, concessions, and all the other connected establishments. Founded by **John Willard Marriott**, and currently led by his son, the executive president **Bill Marriott**, and the executive president and director **Arne Sorenson**. The company is headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, The U.S.A (ماريوت (2021) الدولية (20 اكتوبر), n.d.)

**John Willard Marriott** founded Marriott International in 1927, when he first opened with his wife **Alice Sheets** a small root beer stand in Washington, D.C. **John Marriott** believed that what customers mostly desired in the humid hot summers, is a place to get some cold drinks. Later on, the Marriott family expanded their chain of hotels and restaurants. ((ماريوت الدولية (20 أكتوبر 2021), n.d.)

The Marriott opened their first hotel (Twin Bridges Marriott Motor Hotel) in Arlington, Virginia, 1957. The second Hotel was (Key Bridge Marriott) in Roslyn Street in the same city. Marriott International is the longest company that still operates hotels and the company celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009. Their son **John Willard Bill Marriott Jr** led the company to outstanding global success over more than 50 years. In 2012, when **Bill Marriott** was 80 years old, he entrusted the position of the executive director to **Arne Sorenson** while he continued working as the executive president of the company. ((ماريوت الدولية (20 أكتوبر 2021), n.d.)

Marriott International proved its presence in 131 countries with more than 7000 hotels; it provides almost 1.4 million guests' rooms. It is one of the most famous institutions in the hospitality industry and it has 30 various brands providing comfort and convenience. Marriott International is a general company traded on NASDAQ in the U.S.A. (Aditya, 2021)

Marriott's social media marketing strategy is not like most hotels. "What social media is allowing us to do is not draw attention to ourselves, but to see our guests in their own spotlight," wrote **Arne Sorensen**, President of Marriott International, on his blog. Putting this idea into consideration, Marriott created **M Live** service. It is a command center where social media experts monitor the brand's presence on different channels. Therefore, when a guest posts about a certain experience in Marriott's hotels, The **M Live** employee can do something unique to make a difference in that guest's experience.

#### **4.1.2. The Hotel Strategies during the Corona Phenomenon:**

Considering the urgent health conditions, the hotel worked to put in place a set of preventive measures to limit the spread of the Corona virus among customers. In April 2020, additional hygiene standards were established, including requiring the use of electrostatic sprayers with disinfectant and adding disinfectant wipes in all hotel rooms and removing or rearranging furniture in public places to allow greater space for social distancing. During the pandemic, global work fell to 31%. (<https://www.marriott.fr/default.mi>, 2020)

Accordingly, the Marriott Hotel has taken a few measures and procedures within the framework of its business programs to limit the impact of the Corona pandemic, including:

##### **1. Marriott homes & Villas:**

In the spring of 2019, Marriott International started resisting **Airbnb**'s success with **Marriott homes & Villas**. It is a luxurious residential service that provides private residents for the customers as an alternative to the typical hotel rooms where the bookings skyrocketed during the Covid-19. As more travelers started flocking to individual properties, this has made the **Airbnb** competitor a rare bright spot in business results for the hotel giant, which just as its peers has seen a huge drop in traditional room bookings such as business trips and travels to urban centers, and the international vacations during the pandemic from May to August. Marriott's record-breaking

performance in the best booking days with up to twice from their highest historical levels. According to the data that the company presented to CNBC, this summer was the highest in the total of profits since their launch. Where the bookings increased by 700% from last summer, as well as the profits which increased by more than 800% since their launch. The number of properties also grew in the platform 5 times more from almost two thousand two more than ten thousand in 250 markets. The home share program began as a pilot program in 2017 after Marriott learned that nearly 30% of its members had stayed in home rentals last year. The pilot program began with a few houses in Europe. (Eric, 2020)

For Marriott management, the homes and villas are a small glimmer of hope regarding the dramatic decline in business of traditional hotels concentrated in urban areas and overseas travel destinations pre-Covid.

## **2. Marriot Bonvoy TM:**

The loyalty program rewards members with points to gain free hotel stays and access to travel experiences through its website. The loyalty program generates significant repeated businesses that would otherwise go to competing hotels. In both 2019 and 2020, loyalty program members booked approximately 50% of room nights. Both the website and the mobile phone application provide the customers with a unique, smooth and fast booking experience and easy registration in its loyalty program to access members only exclusive prices and other unique features. In addition to the above, the hotel has introduced a variety of channels including its mobile app and digital guest services like contactless check-in and check-out, chat, service requests, mobile key and more. The hotel's digital strategy focuses on increasing bookings through direct channels, which generally offer more profits to hotels in the system compared to bookings made through intermediate channels. The hotel aims to create simple and effective digital shopping and booking experience while elevating its services through digitally enabled guest services to generate superior customer satisfaction. (<https://marriott.gcs-web.com/static>, 2020)

## **Service and program costs reduction to face the covid-19 pandemic strategy:**

The hotel took some procedures to reduce programs and services related costs that the hotels pay, like marketing costs to be more in line with the expected funding reduction regarding the reduction of possible profits across the system. Marriott has also revised their investment plans and currently expects either cancelling or delaying at least a third of their previous expectations, which reached seven hundred million dollars to eight hundred million dollars to spend in the year of 2020. The Chairman of the Executive Board of Directors J.W announced some measures the company took. "Bill Marriott and Sorenson salaries are stuck for the rest of 2020, the first execution team's salaries were cut in half, hiring for essential positions only, temporary furloughs in North America, reduced workweeks around the world, a rollback on non-essential spending, and the company has stopped all stock buybacks and investment spending will be reduced by at least a third". The CFO also said, "We estimate that the cost-cutting measures currently in place will reduce general and administrative costs for the year 2020 by no less than \$140,000,000". This is according to the CEO's statement: "We have taken measures quite frankly that we have never taken before to make sure that we reduce our costs to match these lower expected revenues". (jena, 2020)

## **The strategy of pressure on government institutions to confront the Corona pandemic:**

To reduce the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Marriott and other companies and hotel

institutions have lobbied Washington for help, focusing on emergency employee assistance and maintaining business fluidity, which is particularly important for franchised and tax-exempt hospitality owners to alleviate cash flow challenges. Outside the United States, Marriott works with governments and other agencies to seek relief through the available programs. In Italy, which has been severely affected by the Covid-19, the company is negotiating with the government and trade unions to obtain financial assistance for partners from the National Security Fund.

### **5. Conclusion:**

Crises are accumulating in economic institutions and countries of the world due to the current conditions imposed by Covid-19 - or Corona according to its common name - which has left significant effects whether moral or economic on the whole world. In this research paper, we are going to analyze the countermeasures that institutions should have taken at the global level or the special ones, to overcome the crises facing economic institutions with creativity, taking hotel institutions as an example. We have found that digital marketing has an effective role in strengthening crisis management by focusing on interaction with the customer since it has an immediate impact and helps maintain a sense of trust and loyalty. The conditions we are going through today are not ideal for hotels. It even extends to the global movement of the business sector. The good thing about this global pandemic is that it is an opportunity for existing companies and institutions in various fields and sectors to learn about the extent of their actual digital transformation. Referring by this to all the digital aspects that enable the hotel establishments to manage and implement operations to provide the products and services online and to communicate and interact with customers too. Therefore, the institutions that have digital marketing strategies were able to present solutions during the occurrence of crisis, based on their pre-planning to manage the crisis. In addition to the speed and flexibility in dealing with the occurrence and decision making, so that institutions can, for example, focus on finding creative solutions that competitors have never used before, or looking for a benefit to attract targeted customers to compete with the biggest companies.

### **Study results:**

1. Digital marketing is fundamental in supporting crisis management in hotel establishments.
2. All countries and hotel establishments around the globe operate by supporting their marketing activities with all different types of techniques to face crises resulting from transformations.
3. Every country and hotel establishment has its marketing strategy to solve and deal with crises.
4. The ability and efficiency of marketing chiefs in helping and supporting crisis management make them excel in confronting every crisis.
5. Digital marketing ability to support crisis management by predicting and facing a crisis in a short time.
6. The proper understanding of digital marketing enables hotel establishments to seize marketing opportunities and predict the crisis.
7. Digital marketing is a new and modern curriculum that stimulates hotels to increase their profits and attract larger numbers of customers.
8. The success of international hotels is due to the true understanding of digital marketing concepts.

### **Recommendations:**

- Working on reducing the costs associated with the use of digital marketing in practice would improve the spread and utilization of digital marketing practices in supporting crisis management and hotels and have a positive impact on economics.
- Encouraging digital marketing initiatives within local hotels.
- Hotels have to ensure that digital marketing contributes massively to solving economic crises, which would make them overcome their crisis and seize marketing opportunities.

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## 1. Appendices:

The (1) shape: represents the option of using the internet to improve the market and the product

