Digital marketing in Māori higher education: A case study of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

The shift to neoliberalism in the 1980s meant that higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand became business-orientated—a situation which prevails today (Narayan, 2020; Olssen, 2002). The digitisation of business means that for businesses to remain relevant, they must embrace digital marketing (Herhausen et al., 2020; Makrides et al., 2020). Indeed, in higher education, too, the need for digital marketing is inescapable (Sawlani & Susilo, 2020). This paper will discuss digital marketing in higher education and will look specifically at some aspects of the digital marketing approach of Te Wananga o Aotearoa. This paper will begin with a very brief history of Māori business during the early colonial period, as well as a short description of contemporary Māori business. This article will discuss the most current understandings of digital marketing in higher education. Importantly, this paper will use the three relationship marketing success factors identified by John (2020)—trust, commitment, and service orientation—and relate these to the four values of Te Wananga o Aotearoa (2020)—Te Aroha, Te Whakapono, Ngā Ture, and Kotahitanga—as a means of

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identifying gaps in Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's current digital marketing approach.

Māori business

Before colonisation, Māori lived and worked together in territorially based social units as whānau, hapū, and iwi (Ballara, 1998; Harmsworth, 2009; Petrie, 2006). Harmsworth (2009) argues that "Trade between tribal groups was advanced" and "Māori technological and economic activity was sophisticated, entrepreneurial and resilient" (p. 97). The arrival of Pākehā in the early 1800s resulted in an extraordinary rise in trade; and it was in this context that Māori successfully developed products for the market (Harmsworth, 2009).

In the early colonial period, Māori were highly successful entrepreneurs and expert negotiators; in particular, Māori were extremely successful concerning coastal shipping and flour-milling (Petrie, 2006). Māori rapidly adapted to facilitate and develop capital-intensive investments; while entrepreneurial chief-leaders employed tribal resources and skills, motivated by goals of competitive commercial advantage (Petrie, 2006).

Māori engaged with and adapted to Western business systems while expressing a business approach based on a Māori worldview (Petrie, 2006). From Captain James Cook's arrival in 1769, Māori responded to novel opportunities and demands: at first, fresh fish was supplied, and new crops, like potatoes, were cultivated and supplied (Petrie, 2006). As ships began to frequent Aotearoa New Zealand shores, Māori responded by speculatively increasing cultivation, and relocating to coastal and other areas where resources, such as flax, were plentiful (Petrie, 2006). According to Petrie (2006), "Māori from all levels of society acquired new skills – in

¹ It should be noted that there were substantial differences between hapū concerning economic activity and engagement with the British. For example, hapū in Northland traded frequently, while those in the South Island traded much less. Māori economic activity, therefore, was not uniform across the country.

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whaling, sealing and seamanship; in agriculture, marketing, financial management and other areas – to add value to their labour" (p. 275).

The Māori business approach during this period was a blend of capitalism and collectivism (Petrie, 2015). Petrie (2015) states that tribal leaders "acted as entrepreneurs, accumulating capital assets and investing in business enterprises for their people's benefit" (p. 285). Though classical capitalism seeks to exploit, "Māori systems", Petrie (2015) argues, "tended to be cooperative rather than exploitive" (p. 285). Essential to the topic of this paper, during this early colonial period, Māori implemented marketing processes: "They improved the marketing techniques, established marketplaces for particular commodities, advertised in newspapers, and initiated means of quality control" (Petrie, 2006, p. 276).

Māori dominance over the economy lasted until around 1856 after the fall of the produce market; sailing ships were replaced by steam, and the Maori way of doing business—a blend of capitalism and collectivism—was inundated by the influx of individualistic settlers (Petrie, 2006, 2015). Furthermore, colonial discourse purported that Māori were lazy and undeserving of their land (Petrie, 1998, 2006 2015). Biblical influences—such as those that called to subdue the land (Genesis 1: 28)—combined with European economic philosophies of individualism, served only to support the colonial agenda to separate Māori from their "idle land" (Petrie, 1998, 2006, 2015). To separate Māori from the land, was to separate Māori from their economic base (Harmsworth, 2009; Petrie, 1998, 2015). The colonising, Christianising "civilising" discourse claimed that Māori land was better off in the hands of "industrious", white settlers, and the machinations of the Crown were, of course, manipulated to this end (Petrie, 2006, 2015). Māori land loss signalled the end of what Petrie (2006) called the "'golden age' of Māori enterprise. Poignantly, Petrie (2006) opines:

the political power of Māori leaders depended on the extent of their resources, which ultimately were their people, their land, and their mana whenua. Thus, as their population declined – both in actual numbers and as a proportion of New Zealand's total – and land was transferred into settler hands, so, too, was commercial and political power (p. 276).

More than a century later, in 1975, the Māori economy started to re-emerge with the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal (Harmsworth, 2009). The purpose of the Tribunal was and is to hear claims of breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975). These breaches may be addressed through Treaty settlements that "provide redress for wrongs, settle claims, and confirm the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation for an improved partnership between the 'settled' Māori and the 'honour-restored' Crown" (Cowie, 2012, p. 48). Numerous iwi organisations are positioned to receive settlements and grow these for the benefit of their people (Harmsworth, 2009). Over the last 30 years² too, Māori businesses outside of the Treaty settlement process have been very successful (Harmsworth, 2009).

Business is central to Māori development, economic prosperity, and self-determination (Harmsworth, 2009). Māori business owners operate businesses across an extensive range of industries including tourism, forestry, fishing, agriculture, geothermal, technology, manufacturing, energy, property development, mining, retail trade, and business services (Ruwhiu et al., 2018). Ruwhiu et al. (2018) opine that what specifically makes Māori business different from other forms is business is the "obligations to extended family groups; responsibility and accountability to a broader range of stakeholders; application of tikanga in the business environment; and

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² Harmsworth (2009) talks about the rise of Māori businesses over a twenty-year period. We have updated this statement to reflect the extra time between the period that he wrote his paper and now.

an ethos that mirrors the broad goals and values of the Māori world" (pp. 4-5).

Māori business values are derived from traditional intergenerational wisdom from a Māori worldview which is based on connectedness between all things—philosophical, cosmological, physical and spiritual (Mrabure et al., 2018; Ruwhiu et al., 2018). Māori business practice, then, is propelled by a "culturally oriented value-system that privileges the sanctity of relationships and connection" (Ruwhiu et al., 2018, p. 5). Indeed, Māori business practice involves espousing "a holistic and symbiotic consideration towards people and environment, as well as profits" (Ruwhiu et al., 2018, p. 5).

Māori business can be distinguished from non-Māori business in several ways and includes Māori ownership, control, and Māori cultural influence concerning management approaches and decision-making (Mika, 2015, 2016). Māori business is defined by Mika et al. (2019) as a business that "self-identifies as a Māori business; has 50 per cent or more Māori ownership; applied Māori values implicitly or explicitly; and contributes to collective Māori well-being" (p. 383).

Digital marketing

Digitisation has transformed marketing (Herhausen et al., 2020). As more people than ever before have access to the internet, there has been a shift of power away from companies and toward consumers in a two-way digital relationship (Behera et al., 2020; Makrides et al., 2020). This digital dynamic means that effective digital marketing must be customer-centred (Behara et al., 2020). Indeed, owing to the prevalence of digital technologies, digital marketing is the most efficient way to reach customers (Makrides et al., 2020).

Technology creates a fast-changing environment where business must employ digital marketing strategies to remain relevant (Makrides, et al., 2020). Digital marketing through social and mobile media is part of the daily lives of millions of people around the world and impacts upon and shapes customer relationships (Kim et al., 2019; Makrides et al., 2020; Woodside & Mir, 2019). Digital marketing tools have been used extensively by diverse industries globally which have allowed companies to acquire instantaneous customer insights and engage in more meaningful customer communication (Low et al., 2020; Makrides et al., 2020; Wang, 2020).

Digital marketing is an unavoidable reality in today's higher education market (Sawlani & Susilo, 2020). Digital marketing is more affordable than traditional forms of marketing and if utilised well can be beneficial to institutions in a very competitive higher education context (Cordero-Gutierrez & Lahuerta-Otero, 2020; Sawlani & Susilo, 2020; Sierra, 2020). Higher education marketing specialists must create and foster more effective and coherent communication approaches to establish and maintain beneficial and very necessary relationships with stakeholders (Bonilla et al., 2020).

To build better brands, higher education institutions must focus on increasing and improving the quality of their presence on social media platforms, and through websites and search engine marketing (Sawlani & Susilo, 2020). Social media can be used by higher learning institutions to disseminate information to the public about their creativity and success which increases public confidence (Gunawan et al., 2020) and trust in the institution (John, 2020).

The use of paid advertising on social media platforms is an efficient and cost-effective way to promote higher education to prospective students (Cordero-Gutierrez & Lahuerta-Otero, 2020). In particular, Facebook advertisements significantly increase visibility; this enhances social and online positioning and promotes student recruitment (Cordero-Gutierrez & Lahuerta-Otero, 2020). The benefits of social media campaigns are that they can be readily targeted to specific audiences, the results are instantaneous and quantifiable, and

campaigns may be rapidly altered as required (Cordero-Gutierrez & Lahuerta-Otero, 2020).

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and digital marketing

As a result of resistance, protest, and the emergence of the Māori renaissance, the 1980s saw an eruption of Māori-driven educational initiatives designed decolonise education and raise Māori achievement (Calman, 2012; Simon, 1990; Smith, 2012). Māorimedium education (early childhood-secondary) first emerged from 1982, and Te Wananga o Aotearoa (tertiary) was established in 1984 (Calman, 2012). Te Wananga o Aotearoa's (2020) vision is "whānau transformation through education" (n.p.). Driven by and dependant on kaiako at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (Vesetolu, 2020) whānau transformation is about a collective and inclusive approach to teaching and learning (Dunn, 2012), addressing educational disparities for Māori and others (Marshall, 2014), social, cultural and economic transformation (King et al., 2015), and ultimately, liberation (Evans & Uruamo, 2012).

Today, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is Aotearoa New Zealand's second-largest tertiary institution and operates from many sites around the country (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2019a). Māori principles guide Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and over the last 30 years, the institution has enhanced the skills and job prospects of more than 300,000 graduates (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2019a). Each year, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa attracts around 27,000 tauira, most of whom are Māori (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2019b). Like other businesses, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa must heed the advice of Herhausen et al. (2020) and Makrides et al. (2020) and use digital marketing to remain viable.

John's (2020) three relationship marketing success factors may be aligned with the Māori values of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Relationship marketing is an integral part of digital marketing in higher education (John, 2020). John (2020) identifies three critical

relationship marketing success factors concerning digital marketing in higher education:

- Trust refers to the confidence of stakeholders in the reliability and integrity of the institution;
- Commitment is about the development and maintenance of positive relationships between students and the institution
- and, service orientation describes the provision of a student-centred experience.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's (2020) values are:

- Te Aroha—"Having regard for one another and those for whom we are responsible and to whom we are accountable" (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2020, n.p.);
- Te Whakapono—"The basis of our belief and the confidence that what we are doing is right" (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2020, n.p.);
- Ngā Ture—"The knowledge that our actions are morally and ethically right and that we are acting in an honourable manner" (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2020, n.p.);
- and, Kotahitanga—"Unity amongst iwi and other ethnicities; standing as one (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2020, n.p.).

In the table that follows, John's (2020) three relationship marketing success factors are aligned with the values of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and are used to identify gaps in Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's digital marketing approach.

TWOA Values	Relationship Marketing Success Factors	Relationship Marketing Strategic Objective	John's (2020) Recommendations	Current TWOA Implementation
NGĀ TURE Morals Ethics Honour	TRUST	Build confidence in reliability & integrity	Teachers & students share experiences on social media	Tauira & kaiako profiles shared via digital channels
		Increase engagement in digital channels	Incentivise: games, contests & promos	Te Reo Māori campaigns & competitions. Use of contactless activations apps linking to digital channels with opt-in for further contact
		Develop confidence in TWOA: competence, performance, professionalism	Promotion via online channels: achievements & accolades	Tauira success stories shared via digital channels
		Develop confidence in TWOA: effectiveness & reliability	Collect student feedback & present widely via digital media	"Learn with aroha" recruitment campaign based on tauira experience
TE AROHA Regard Responsibility Accountability	COMMITMENT	Develop & maintain positive relationship with current & potential students	Actively update social media channels: regular updates & posts	Social media used to attract potential tauira
		Enhance student experience	Use email & mobile marketing tools to provide timely feedback	Te Matakā - tauira services platform provides feedback portal
		Enhance student experience	Offer integrated digital channels for student support services	No ability sign-in using Facebook or Gmail
TE WHAKAPONO Beliefs Confidence Correct process	SERVICE ORIENTATION	Enhance value proposition offered to students	Promotion of courses, study options, scholarships, grants, internships, jobs, may enhance student perception of TWOA	Awareness & acquisition experience captured using online quizzes
		Increase student awareness of services offered	Disseminate images, videos, visuals of TWOA activities	Tauira experiences shared via digital channels
		Enhance student ability to search and collect information	Invest in digital infrastructure to reach potential students more efficiently	Targeted marketing via social media link to website
		Enhance the value co- creation process	Invest in digital marketing resources to capture student views: websites, apps, online communities, social media – help marketers relate & engage	Tauira feedback used to co-create "Learn with aroha" campaign
		KOTAHITANGA –	Unity	

Figure 1: Adapted from John (2020, p. 111)

When measured against John's (2020) relationship marketing success factors, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa's current digital marketing activities show that the institution is performing well in most areas. The table shows that Te Wānanga o Aotearoa has met the majority of John's (2020) recommendations to some degree. The following sections will provide further discussion about how Te Wānanga o Aotearoa performs concerning John's (2020) relationship market success factors.

Trust

Trust refers to the confidence of stakeholders in the reliability and integrity of an exchange partner (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In a higher education context, trust relates to the confidence of current and potential students, alumni, and stakeholders, in the institution's ability to provide a quality education experience (John, 2020). To gain the trust of students, John (2020) recommends sharing the experiences of teachers and students on social media, using games, contests and promotions as incentives, promoting achievements online, collecting student feedback and presenting this widely via digital channels. Te Wananga o Aotearoa does share tauira, and kaiako profiles, and achievements via its digital channels and the institution's Facebook page has more than 61,000 followers. Te Wananga o Aotearoa also runs a targeted month-long Te Reo Māori campaign called Mahuru Māori—designed to inspire people to revitalise the language—which includes competitions. Mahuru Māori also website https://www.mahurumaori.com/.



Figure 2: Mahuru Māori 2020 (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Facebook page, n.d., n.p.)

Another digital marketing campaign is "Learn with aroha". The word aroha means love, feeling, concern for, compassion, and empathy (Moorfield, 2011). Aroha is a critical cultural concept in Māori society while linguistic equivalents, such as 'ofa (Tongan), alofa (Samoan), aloha (Hawaiian), and aro'a (Cook Islands Māori), just to name a few, are central to those respective cultures. In the context of higher education, the idea that an institution can teach with aroha and that students can learn with aroha is unheard of. The neoliberal goal of tertiary education is about gaining a commodified credential with a particular level of earning power. However, Te Wananga o Aotearoa—as part of a greater Māori and Indigenous movement that seeks to disrupt, dismantle, decolonise, and transform education—created a digital marketing campaign, informed by tauira experiences, that connects directly to the hearts and minds of Māori and Pasifika. and calls upon them to positively transform themselves and their communities.



Figure 3: Live your purpose (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Facebook page, n.d., n.p.)

The image above is one small example from the "Learn" with aroha" campaign. The two featured artists are wife and husband duo, Serene Tay (Māori) and Vivesio Siasau (Tongan). Both artists have exhibited in New York City and are graduates of the Master of Applied Indigenous Knowledge programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. This image, and a video, was shared via the institution's digital channels. The video was also featured on Māori Television. The image, video, and other content were part of a range of stories that made up the "Learn with aroha" campaign which also has website https://www.learnwitharoha.ac.nz.

A final example of one of the many ways Te Wānanga o Aotearoa reaches out to potential and current tauira is through the Taringa podcast series. The Māori word taringa means ear and in the context of podcasts probably refers too to the act of listening. The Taringa podcast series is in both te reo Māori and English and is designed to help people to learn te reo Māori. Podcast

episodes are posted weekly and discuss Māori words, tribal histories, and Māori culture, customs and protocols (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2020). The Taringa podcast series can be found here https://www.taringapodcast.com/.



Figure 4. Taringa podcast graphic (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Facebook page, n.d., n.p.)

One of the ways that Te Wānanga o Aotearoa does not fulfil John's (2020) recommendations is that it does not use games as part of its digital marketing strategy. Gaming can be used to promote products and brands (Mago, 2017). The gamification of digital marketing can include: rewarded video ads—full-screen video ads through which a user may earn in-app rewards; location-based ads—specific advertisement content based on GPS location; virtual reality ads—advertising using a virtual reality environment; and augmented reality ads—advertising using an augmented reality environment (Mago, 2017).

Commitment

In the context of digital marketing, commitment refers continuing aspiration to maintain a valued relationship with stakeholders (Verma et al., 2017). As a relationship marketing success factor, commitment requires that higher education institutions invest in digital marketing through "Active participation and presence in the social networks and apps, email marketing, digital ads, viral campaigns, digital brand experiences, mobile marketing" as well as "websites, blogs, and games" (John, 2020, p. 110). The extent to which an institution demonstrates the above. John (2020) opines, is indicative of the level of commitment an institution is willing to expend to create, develop, and maintain an enduring relationship with stakeholders. To experience, John student (2020)recommends that institutions use email and mobile marketing tools to provide timely feedback to students and offer integrated channels for student support services.

As already discussed, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa uses its digital channels to connect with current and potential tauira. One way in which the institution attempts to enhance tauira experience is through their Te Matakā website. Te Matakā is a website where current tauira may access tauira support services. One of the features of this website that fulfils John's (2020) requirements, is the ability for tauira to communicate with tauira support staff via a portal. This portal allows tauira support staff to provide timely feedback to tauira. John (2020) also states that the integration of digital channels is ideal. However, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa does not allow for the integration of digital channels (i.e. Facebook or Google sign-in to Te Wānanga o Aotearoa platforms).

Service Orientation

Service systems refer to the combination of people, technology, organisations, and information, as a means of co-creating value (Maglio & Sopher, 2008). John (2020)

argues that having an efficient service orientation may make an institution stand out from its competitors. In addition to using digital channels as a means of promotion, John (2020)also recommends develop institutions interactive websites. applications, and online communities. Te Wananga o Aotearoa has a website, but this is not extensively interactive. However, the fundamental ability to search for content is present. The institution does not use mobile apps at present. However, Te Wananga o Aotearoa did develop a viral (71,000 requests) kiri tuhi camera effect for Facebook in 2018 (Tipene-Allen, 2018). At present, the institution has not established an online community (other than social media). Private online communities differ from public social media platforms in that they are designed to be purposeful, focussed, creative, and optimise the customer experience (Montgomery, 2019). Montgomery (2019) states that the main benefit to online communities is "the ability to empower your people to self-serve, reducing customer support costs" (n.p.).

One of the ways Te Wānanga o Aotearoa differs concerning its service orientation when compared with its competitors is that tauira can "Learn with aroha". As discussed above, the notion that a tertiary institution would offer a learning environment where love, feeling, concern for, compassion, and empathy, are central to teaching and learning, is unique in the sector. Anecdotal evidence indeed suggests that tauira are attracted to Te Wānanga o Aotearoa because they feel supported holistically.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is a dynamic Māori tertiary institution that has spent over thirty years working toward whānau transformation through education. It is an institution that uses digital marketing to attract tauira in new and innovative ways informed by Māori values. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa proudly provides a learning environment where tauira can "Learn with aroha" and transform themselves, their whānau, hapū, and iwi, their communities, and the world through education.

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