

Digital Pathways to Property Buyers: Rethinking Lead Generation in Real Estate

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Abstract: *The real estate industry has undergone significant transformation due to the rapid growth of digital technology and internet accessibility. Traditional methods of property promotion such as newspaper advertisements, brokers, and pamphlets are gradually being replaced by digital platforms including social media, property portals, search engines, and online advertisements. This research paper examines the impact of digital marketing on customer behavior in the real estate sector. The study focuses on understanding how digital platforms influence customer decisions related to property search, enquiry generation, and purchase behavior.*

The research is based on primary data collected through an online survey using Google Forms. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study, representing different age groups and professional backgrounds. The findings reveal that digital marketing has become an important tool for customer engagement and lead generation in real estate. Property portals, social media platforms, and Google advertisements were identified as the most preferred sources for property-related information.

The study further indicates that attractive digital content such as offers, videos, virtual tours, and detailed project descriptions significantly influence customer interest. However, customer trust, transparency, and communication quality remain critical factors affecting final purchase decisions. Problems such as fake property listings, misleading advertisements, and delayed responses continue to reduce customer confidence in online platforms.

The paper concludes that digital marketing has positively influenced customer behavior in the real estate industry, but organizations must combine effective online promotion with transparency, professional communication, and strong customer relationship management to achieve long-term success.

Keywords: Customer behavior, Digital marketing, Online advertisements, Property portals, Real estate.

1. Introduction

The real estate industry has experienced major changes over the past decade due to technological advancement and increasing internet usage. Earlier, customers relied mainly on brokers, newspapers, pamphlets, and personal references to search for residential or commercial properties. The process was often time-consuming and lacked transparency. However, the rapid growth of smartphones, social media platforms, and online property portals has completely transformed the way customers search for and purchase properties.

Today, digital marketing has become one of the most important promotional tools used by real estate companies. Organizations use online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google advertisements, WhatsApp marketing, and property portals to promote projects and connect with customers. Digital marketing allows companies to reach a larger audience quickly while providing detailed information related to property features, pricing, location, and investment opportunities.

Customers have also changed their behavior significantly. Modern customers prefer collecting information online before making any investment decision. They compare multiple properties, watch videos, read reviews, and explore virtual tours before contacting any company representative. Digital platforms provide convenience, accessibility, and faster communication, making the property search process easier and more efficient.

Despite these advantages, digital marketing in real estate also faces certain challenges. Misleading advertisements, fake listings, lack of transparency, and delayed communication often reduce customer trust. Since property purchase involves high financial investment, customers are usually careful while making decisions. Therefore, understanding customer behavior toward digital marketing has become extremely important for real estate companies.

This research paper aims to examine the impact of digital marketing on customer behavior in the real estate sector. The study focuses on customer preferences, online search behavior, trust level, response patterns, and factors influencing purchase decisions.

2. Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To understand the role of digital marketing in the real estate sector.
2. To analyze customer behavior toward online property advertisements.
3. To identify the most preferred digital platforms used for property searches.
4. To examine the effectiveness of digital advertisements in generating customer enquiries.
5. To study the factors influencing customer purchase decisions.
6. To understand customer preferences regarding digital content.
7. To identify challenges faced by customers while interacting with online real estate advertisements.
8. To suggest suitable improvements for enhancing digital marketing effectiveness.

3. Industry Background and Emerging Trends

The Indian real estate industry has witnessed remarkable transformation over the last decade. Earlier, the sector relied heavily on traditional marketing methods such as newspaper advertisements, brokers, exhibitions, banners, and cold calling. These methods were expensive, difficult to measure, and often limited in reach. However, the rapid expansion of internet connectivity and smartphone usage has changed the marketing landscape completely.

Today, customers prefer searching for property information online before making enquiries. Real estate companies now invest significantly in digital campaigns because online platforms allow them to target customers more effectively. Social media marketing, search engine optimization, influencer promotions, virtual property tours, and WhatsApp communication have become common practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated digital adoption in the real estate sector. During lockdown periods, customers were unable to visit sites physically, forcing companies to depend on digital tools such as virtual meetings, 3D walkthroughs, and online booking systems. As a result, digital marketing evolved from being an optional strategy to a necessary business requirement.

The rise of property technology, commonly known as PropTech, has also contributed to this transformation. Artificial intelligence, chatbots, customer analytics, and automation tools now help organizations understand customer behavior more effectively. Companies use data analytics to study customer preferences, browsing history, and engagement patterns, allowing them to create more personalized marketing campaigns.

At the same time, customer expectations have changed significantly. Modern buyers expect instant responses, transparent communication, and detailed project information. They are no longer satisfied with basic advertisements. Instead, they prefer interactive and informative experiences.

This shift has forced organizations to rethink lead generation strategies. The focus is no longer only on generating a large number of leads but on attracting high-quality and genuinely interested buyers.

4. Literature Review

Digital marketing has become an important part of modern business strategies across industries, including real estate. Researchers and industry experts have studied the growing influence of online platforms on customer behavior and marketing effectiveness.

Several studies indicate that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube have significantly changed customer engagement patterns. Real estate companies use these platforms to share property images, promotional videos, virtual tours, and project updates. Attractive visual content increases customer attention and creates awareness regarding ongoing and upcoming projects.

Property portals such as 99acres, MagicBricks, Housing.com, and NoBroker have also transformed the property search process. Customers now prefer online platforms because they provide quick access to project information, pricing details, location maps, customer reviews, and comparison options. According to previous studies, online research has reduced dependency on traditional brokers and newspaper advertisements.

Researchers have further highlighted the importance of digital advertising in lead generation. Search engine marketing, social media campaigns, and email promotions allow organizations to target customers according to their age, location, and preferences. Compared to traditional advertising, digital marketing is considered more cost-effective and measurable.

However, existing studies also reveal that digital marketing alone does not guarantee successful sales conversion. Factors such as transparency, trust, company reputation, and communication quality strongly influence customer decision-making. Customers often hesitate when they encounter fake property listings, exaggerated claims, or hidden charges.

Another major area discussed in the literature is customer relationship management. Researchers suggest that quick response time, professional communication, and personalized customer interaction improve customer satisfaction and trust. Effective CRM practices help organizations build long-term relationships and improve lead conversion.

Overall, the literature clearly indicates that digital marketing has positively transformed the real estate sector. However, companies must focus not only on attracting customers but also on building trust and maintaining transparency.

Several researchers have emphasized that digital marketing has become an essential tool for improving customer engagement and lead conversion in the real estate industry. Previous studies suggest that customers increasingly rely on digital channels because they provide accessibility, convenience, and comparative information.

Kotler and Keller (2016) explained that modern marketing strategies are shifting from product-centered approaches toward customer-centered experiences. In the real estate sector, this means companies must focus on customer interaction, trust building, and personalized communication.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) highlighted that digital marketing enables businesses to track customer behavior more accurately than traditional marketing methods. Real estate organizations can measure advertisement clicks, website traffic, enquiry rates, and customer engagement levels in real time.

Research studies related to social media marketing indicate that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube have become highly influential in customer decision-making. Visual content such as videos, project walkthroughs, and live sessions improves customer engagement significantly.

Property portals such as MagicBricks, 99acres, Housing.com, and NoBroker have emerged as important digital intermediaries between buyers and sellers. These platforms provide multiple property options along with filters related to location, pricing, amenities, and investment potential.

Studies on online customer behavior suggest that customers usually go through several stages before making a purchase decision. These stages include awareness, information search, evaluation of alternatives, enquiry generation, and final purchase.

Another important area discussed in previous studies is customer trust. Since real estate involves high financial investment, customers carefully evaluate the credibility of companies before making decisions. Fake advertisements, hidden charges, and misleading information negatively affect customer confidence.

Researchers have also found that digital marketing is more cost-effective than traditional advertising. Small and medium-sized real estate firms can reach targeted audiences without spending heavily on television or newspaper promotions.

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used for collecting and analyzing data. The present study follows a descriptive research design because it focuses on understanding customer opinions and behavior toward digital marketing in real estate.

4.1 Data Collection

Primary data was collected through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire included multiple-choice and opinion-based questions related to:

- Property search behavior
- Preferred digital platforms
- Response toward online advertisements
- Trust level in digital marketing
- Purchase decisions after viewing advertisements
- Problems faced while using online platforms

Secondary data was collected from websites, articles, research papers, and online resources related to digital marketing and real estate.

4.2 Sample Size

A total of 100 respondents participated in the survey. The respondents belonged to different age groups, educational backgrounds, and professions.

4.3 Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used because respondents were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate in the online survey.

4.4 Tools Used for Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using tables, charts, and graphical representations. These tools helped in identifying customer preferences and market trends.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

5.1 Preferred Platforms for Property Search

The survey revealed that property portals are the most preferred digital platforms for searching properties.

Table 5.1: Platform-wise Preference of Property Search

Platform	Number of Respondents
Property Portals	31
Google Ads	23
Social Media	21
Mixed Platforms	7
YouTube	4

The findings indicate that customers rely heavily on digital platforms because they provide convenience, detailed information, and multiple property options.

5.2 Customer Response Toward Online Advertisements

The study found that online advertisements are effective in generating customer enquiries.

Table 5.2: Customer Response Behavior to Online Ads

Response Method	Number of Respondents
Visit Website	45
Click on Advertisement	25

Contact via Call/WhatsApp	6
Fill Enquiry Form	5
Ignore Advertisement	10

This shows that digital marketing campaigns successfully attract customer attention and encourage interaction.

Graphical Analysis

Q1. Which platforms do you use to search for real estate properties?

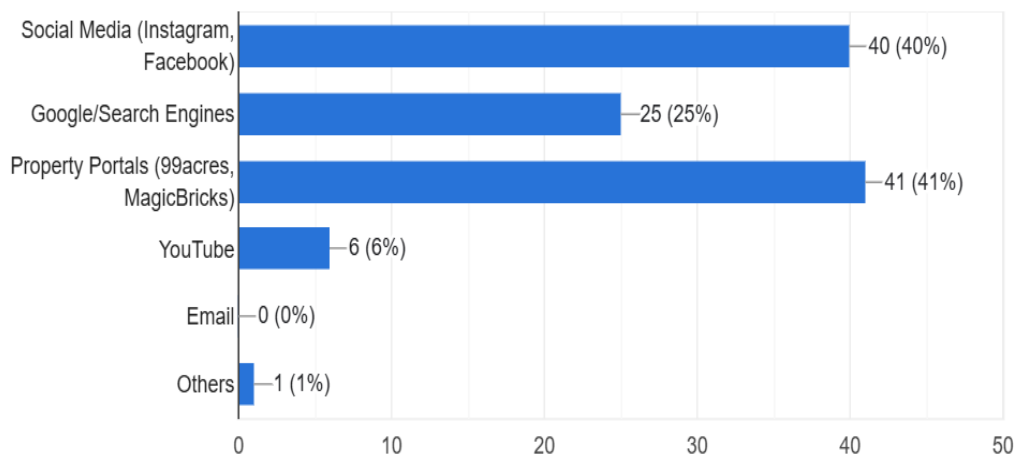


Figure 5.3: Platforms Used for Property Search

Analysis:

The majority of respondents prefer using digital platforms such as property portals, Google advertisements, and social media for searching properties. This reflects the increasing dependence on online platforms due to convenience, accessibility, and availability of detailed information. Customers now prefer exploring multiple options online before contacting any real estate company.

Q2. Have you ever enquired about a property after seeing an online advertisement?

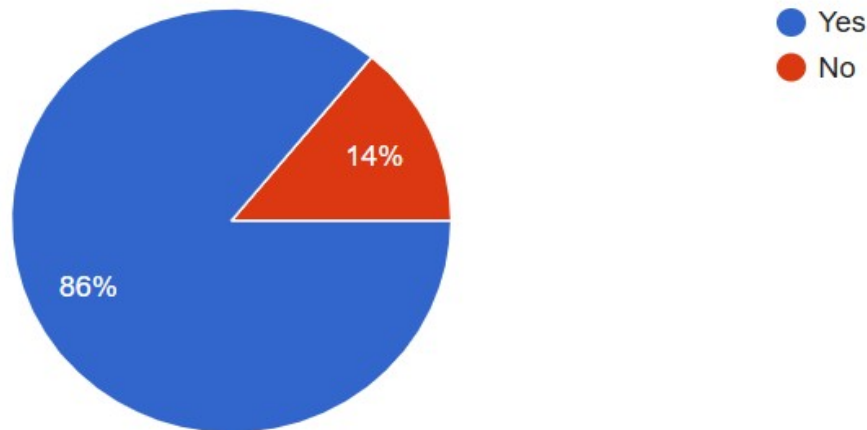


Figure 5.4: Enquiry After Seeing Online Ads

Analysis:

Most respondents answered positively, indicating that online advertisements are effective in generating customer enquiries. Attractive digital campaigns, promotional offers, and project details encourage customers to seek further information regarding properties. This shows the growing importance of digital marketing in lead generation.

Q3. If yes, which platform influenced you the most?

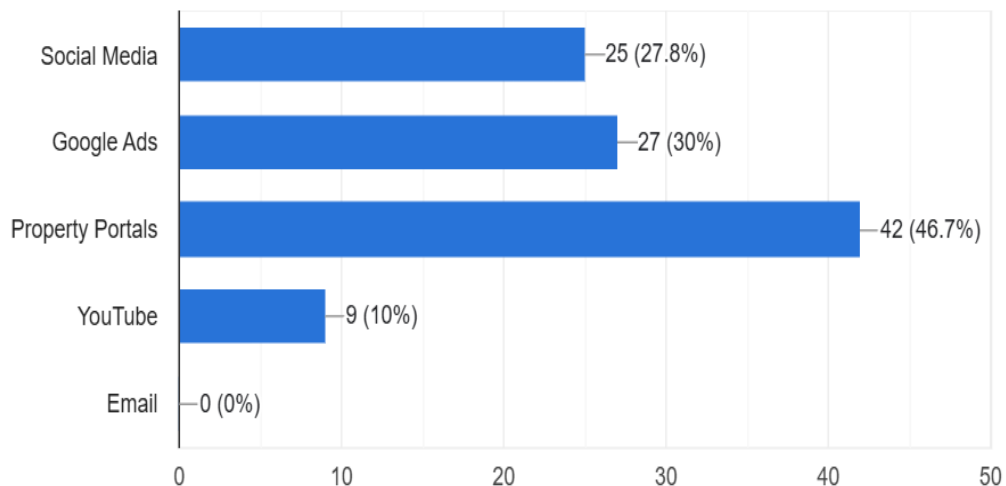


Figure 5.5: Platform Influencing Customers

Analysis:

Property portals and social media platforms were found to be the most influential platforms among

respondents. Customers trust these platforms because they provide detailed project information, reviews, and visual content that help in decision-making.

Q4. How do you usually respond to online real estate ads?

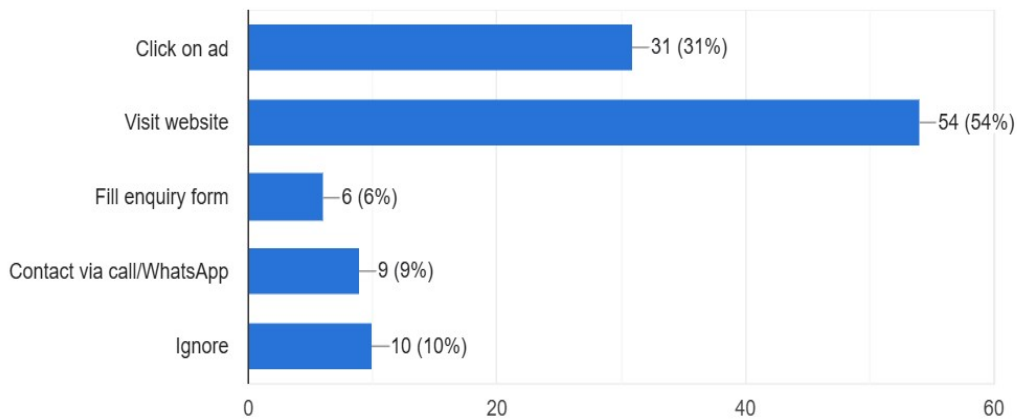


Figure 5.6: Preferred Response Method

Analysis:

The responses indicate that customers prefer direct and quick methods of communication. Most customers visit websites or contact companies through calls and WhatsApp. This highlights the importance of maintaining responsive communication channels and user-friendly websites.

Q5. What type of content attracts you the most in real estate ads?

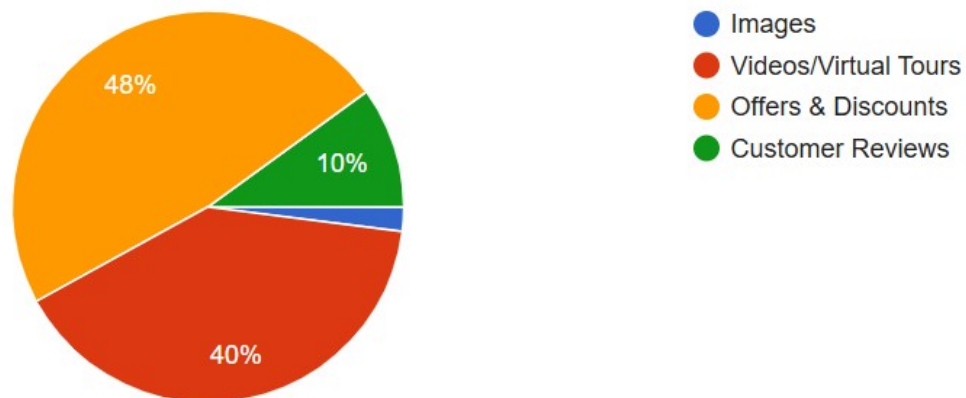


Figure 5.7: Content Preference

Analysis:

The analysis shows that offers, discounts, and video content attract maximum customer attention. Customers are influenced by financial benefits as well as visually appealing content such as videos and virtual property tours. This suggests that effective visual presentation is important in digital marketing campaigns.

Q6. Have you ever purchased or booked a property after seeing an online ad?

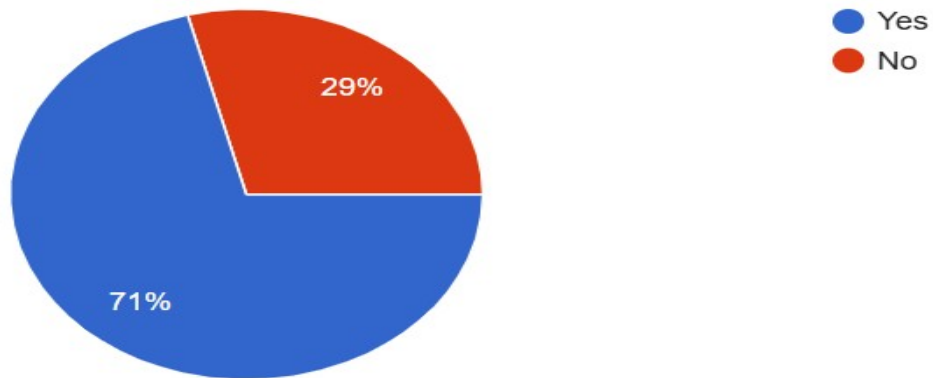


Figure 5.7: Purchase After Ads

Analysis:

A large number of respondents reported purchasing or booking a property after viewing online advertisements. However, some respondents still prefer offline verification before making final decisions. This indicates that digital marketing is useful in influencing customers, but personal trust and interaction also remain important.

Q7. If no, what was the main reason?

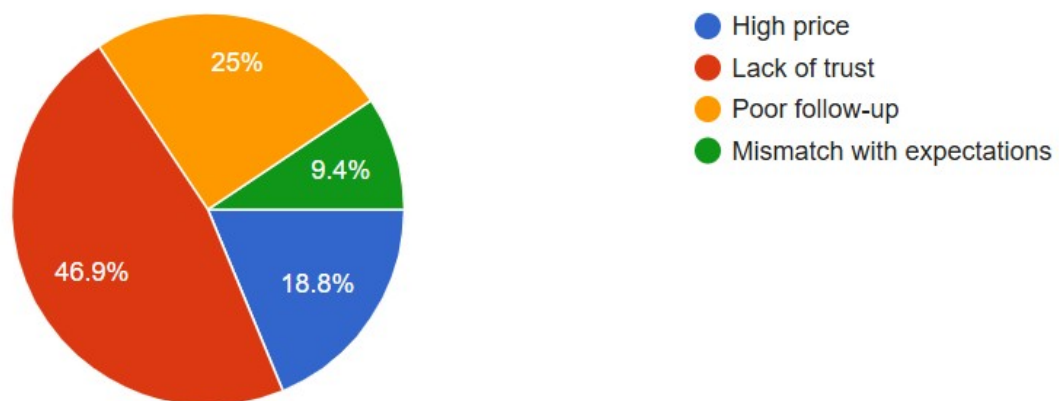


Figure 5.8: Reasons for Not Purchasing

Analysis:

The major reasons for not purchasing properties after viewing advertisements include lack of trust, incomplete information, and high investment concerns. Customers hesitate when advertisements appear unrealistic or when proper transparency is missing.

Q8. How was the response after your enquiry?

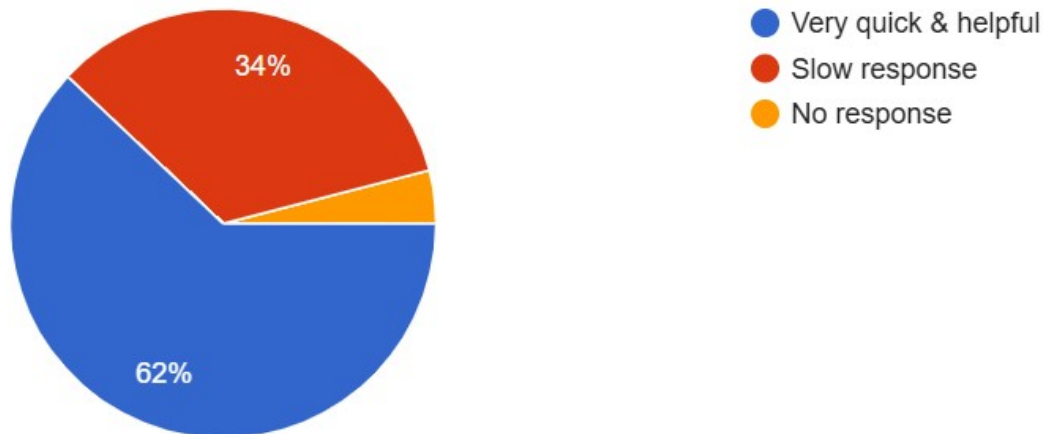


Figure 5.9: Response After Enquiry

Analysis:

The survey results show mixed experiences among customers. Some respondents received quick and professional responses, while others faced delays and insufficient communication. This highlights the need for better customer handling and faster response systems.

Q9. How quickly do you expect a response after enquiry?

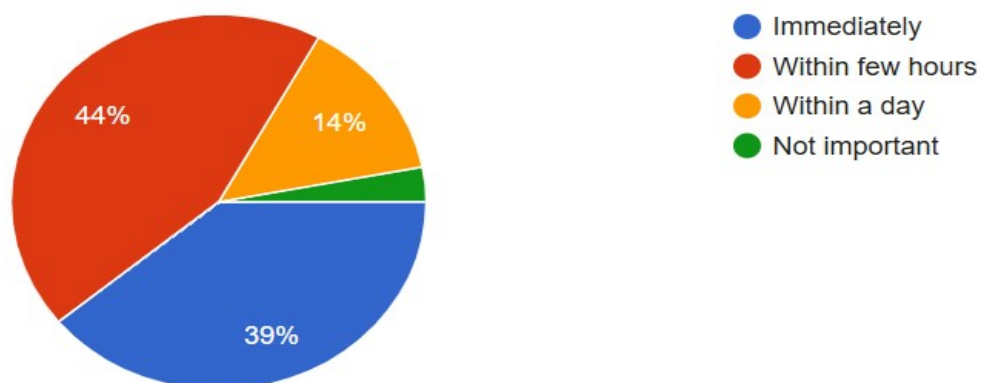


Figure 5.10: Expected Response Time

Analysis:

Most respondents expect immediate or very quick responses after making enquiries. Customers prefer companies that respond professionally and provide timely information. Delayed responses can reduce customer interest and negatively affect lead conversion.

Q10. How would you rate the effectiveness of online real estate ads in influencing your decision?

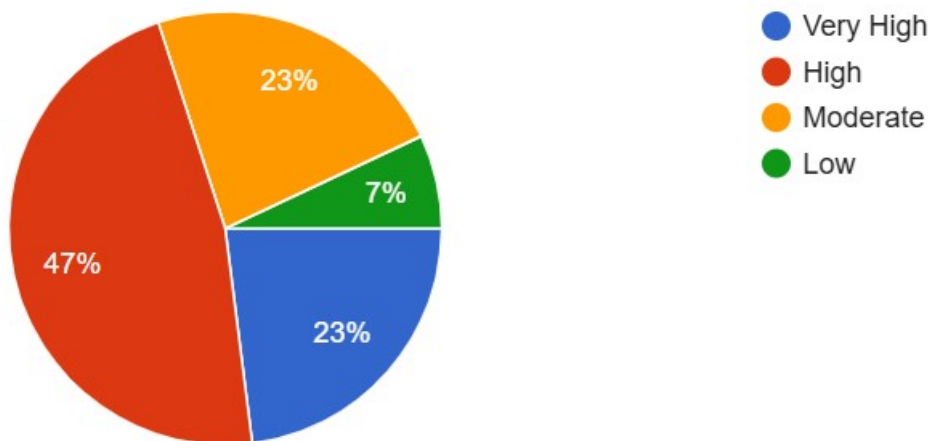


Figure 5.11: Effectiveness of Online Ads

Analysis:

The majority of respondents considered online advertisements moderately effective. Digital ads are useful for creating awareness and generating interest, but final decisions are also influenced by trust, project verification, and personal interaction.

Q11. Do you trust online real estate advertisements?

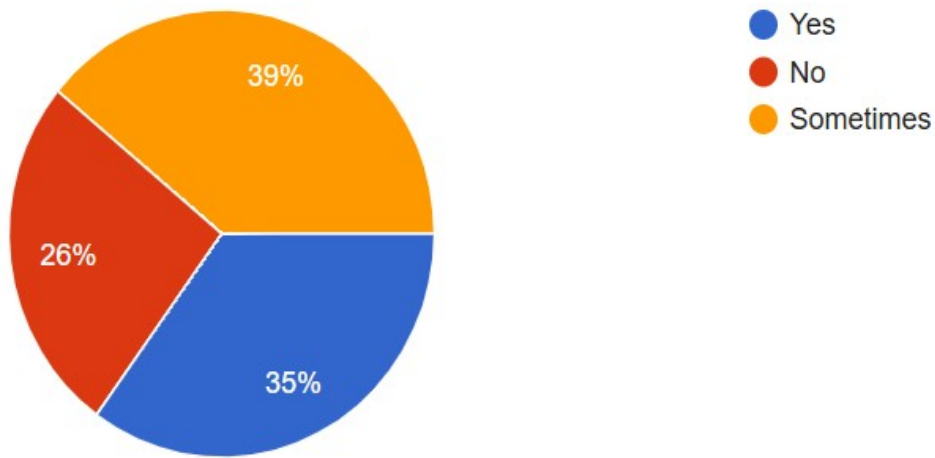


Figure 5.12: Trust in Online Ads

Analysis:

The trust level among customers was found to be moderate. Many customers still have concerns regarding fake listings, misleading advertisements, and incomplete information. This indicates the importance of transparency and authenticity in digital marketing.

Q12. What problems do you face with online real estate ads?

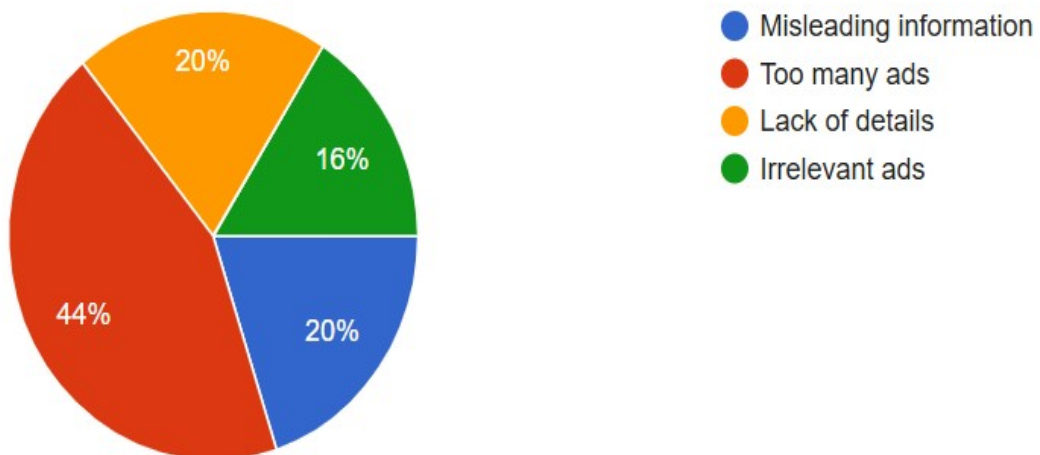


Figure 5.13: Problems Faced by Customers

Analysis:

Common problems identified by respondents include fake property listings, excessive follow-up calls,

irrelevant advertisements, and lack of proper project details. These issues negatively affect customer experience and reduce trust in online platforms.

Q13. What would make digital real estate ads more effective?

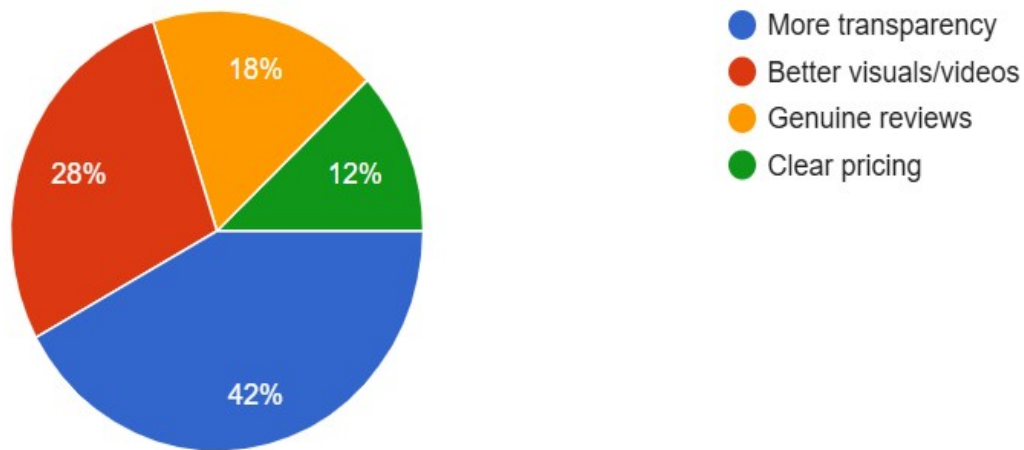


Figure 5.14: Improving Digital Ads

Analysis:

Customers suggested that verified listings, transparent pricing, accurate information, and improved communication would make digital advertisements more effective. Customers prefer genuine and informative advertisements rather than exaggerated promotional content.

6. Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis, the following major findings were identified:

1. Digital platforms have become the primary source for property search.
2. Online advertisements are highly effective in generating customer enquiries.
3. Property portals and social media platforms are the most influential channels.
4. Customers prefer fast and direct communication methods.
5. Offers, discounts, and video content attract maximum customer attention.
6. Trust and transparency significantly influence customer decisions.
7. Fake listings and misleading advertisements reduce customer confidence.
8. Quick response time improves customer satisfaction and lead conversion.
9. Personal interaction remains important despite digital influence.

7. Discussion

The findings of the study clearly show that digital marketing has changed customer behavior in the real estate sector. Customers now rely heavily on online platforms for searching properties, comparing prices, and gathering information. Digital marketing provides convenience and accessibility, which makes the property search process easier.

The study also highlights the growing importance of visual content. Videos, virtual tours, and detailed project descriptions help customers understand properties more effectively. Modern customers expect companies to provide accurate information and professional communication.

However, customer trust remains one of the biggest challenges. Many respondents expressed concerns regarding fake property listings and misleading advertisements. This indicates that organizations need to focus more on transparency and verified information.

Another important observation is that digital marketing alone cannot guarantee sales conversion. Property purchase involves emotional and financial considerations. Customers still prefer site visits, face-to-face meetings, and personal verification before making final decisions.

Therefore, companies should combine digital marketing strategies with strong customer relationship management practices.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that digital marketing has significantly influenced customer behavior in the real estate sector. Customers actively use online platforms such as property portals, search engines, and social media for property searches and information gathering.

Digital advertisements are highly effective in creating awareness and generating customer enquiries. Attractive offers, videos, virtual tours, and detailed descriptions help companies attract potential buyers. However, customer trust, transparency, and communication quality remain critical factors affecting final purchase decisions.

The research further highlights that customers expect quick responses, accurate information, and professional guidance from real estate companies. Organizations that maintain transparency and provide strong customer support are more likely to achieve long-term success.

Overall, digital marketing has become an essential part of the real estate industry. It has improved accessibility, increased customer engagement, and transformed traditional property marketing practices. However, organizations must focus not only on promotion but also on customer trust and relationship building.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Real estate companies should provide transparent and accurate information.
2. Verified property listings should be maintained regularly.
3. Organizations should improve response time and customer communication.
4. High-quality digital content such as videos and virtual tours should be used.
5. Excessive follow-up calls and promotional pressure should be avoided.
6. Personalized marketing strategies should be adopted.

7. Strong customer relationship management practices should be implemented.
8. Digital marketing should be combined with personal interaction and site visits.
9. Companies should provide proper customer support and investment guidance.
10. Customer feedback should be regularly monitored for continuous improvement.

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