

# Digital entrepreneurial marketing bricolage: shaping technology-in-practice

Alford, Philip; Jones, Rosalind

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# Digital entrepreneurial marketing bricolage: shaping technology-in-practice

Philip Alford
*Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, Boldrewood Campus, Southampton, UK, and*
Rosalind Jones
*Bangor Business School, Bangor University, Bangor, UK*

**Abstract**
**Purpose** – The use of digital marketing technologies remains low in Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), with digital transformation being a concern for governments globally. This study reports on the human-technology interaction process, using digital entrepreneurial marketing (DEM) bricolage and a sociomateriality lens to examine more deeply organisational interaction between marketers and digital marketing technologies in these firms.
**Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative case study and purposive sampling approach are deployed, using seven SMEs in the same UK region. A bricolage and sociomateriality framework and template analysis are used to identify digital marketing strategies and challenges, levels of digital marketing bricolage and assess the value for each firm.
**Findings** – Firms practice different levels of DEM bricolage depending on the interactions of the marketers with digital marketing tools. Those marketers in firms who had higher levels of interaction between the human and the technological provided greater long-term strategic value for the SME.
**Originality/value** – This is the first study to apply a sociomateriality lens to bricolage in an SME digital marketing context and allows us to view the way in which employees interact with digital marketing technology and create value. There is scarce empirical data in this area despite numerous calls in the developing field of entrepreneurship and digitalisation in small and growing firms.

**Keywords** Digital marketing, Digital entrepreneurial marketing, Bricolage, Sociomateriality, SMEs, Digital entrepreneurship
**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Post-pandemi "technology expertise" imperative to remain competitive in an increasingly digitised environment. This is complicated by the plethora of technologies available to entrepreneurial marketers to increase consumer engagement online and drive more sophisticated digitalised marketing operations. It makes new demands of entrepreneurs who are required to employ marketers able to deploy marketing technologies rapidly to engage more ably with rapidly shifting consumer markets. This calls for the entrepreneurs' greater understanding of the implementation of digital entrepreneurial marketing (DEM) (Yang *et al.*, 2023) and the need to develop a DEM strategy in the SME that requires both digital marketing competencies and entrepreneurial marketing competencies.

A critical point has been reached with global governments' concern to resolve the issue of digital transformation in SMEs (OECD, 2021) and specifically with SMEs' use of digital tools to enhance streamlined performance and operational readiness (U.S Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, 2023). Even firms reporting no barriers are often still not utilising digital tools.

This study addresses this concern by examining digital marketing activities and how strategies are designed to reflect the SMEs' resourced-constrained operations. To understand how SMEs may improve on their use and adaption of digital marketing technologies, the authors examine the interactions and activities between marketer(s) and digital technologies. Recently, bricolage has proved useful in digital entrepreneurship, technology adoption and opportunity-seeking

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studies (Bowen and Morris, 2023) and in entrepreneurship studies, but much less in technology (Senyard *et al.*, 2014; Welter *et al.*, 2016) and digital business models (Garud and Karnøe, 2003; Ghezzi, 2019). There are few studies using bricolage to study innovation through adapting technology means, and not at all within a DEM context.

To extrapolate "how" DEM bricolage is practised between marketers and their digital tools, the authors apply Orlikowski's (2007) sociomateriality framework. Sociomateriality is recommended for studies in digital entrepreneurship (Nambisan, 2017) and also underpins the "technology-in-practice" approach (Morgan-Thomas, 2016), which suggests that SMEs are required to adapt technology as is necessary for the firm due to their idiosyncratic nature. Both bricolage and sociomateriality can provide a conceptual framework exploring how the entrepreneurial digital marketer (individual or team) dynamics between the "social" human and the "digital" technological interact. This is not a technology adoption study but rather one that seeks a better understanding of how SMEs practice DEM bricolage, viewed through the lens of sociomateriality. Whereas technology adoption models emphasise the features of technologies – primarily perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use at the point of adoption, this study seeks a more "dialectical understanding" (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 398) of the interaction, in practice, between SME marketing processes and marketing technologies. Encompassing two theoretical lenses, bricolage and sociomateriality, it is guided by the following research question: "*How can SMEs enact bricolage and implement technology-in- practice to create value through digital entrepreneurial marketing?*"

This study addresses knowledge gaps in several areas. The authors contribute to the nascent literature on DEM (Hong *et al.*, 2023; Yang *et al.*, 2023) which lacks in-depth studies of "how" DEM is practised within the firm. The literature focuses on specific types of digital marketing, in particular social media, at the expense of studying digital marketing more holistically (Setkute and Dibb, 2022), while the digital entrepreneurship literature generally has a broader focus on large organisations (Nambisan, 2017). Until now there has been little focus on SMEs and achieving closer connection with markets and customers through DEM. Finally, this is the first time that sociomateriality has been used to gain a deeper understanding of bricolage. By turning to these theories, the authors are responding to Nambisan's (2017, p. 103) demand for "novel theorising of how entrepreneurial opportunities are formed and enacted in an increasingly digital world".

Practically, SMEs that fail to embed DEM risk losing market relevance and customer engagement and fail to address the profound lag in SME digital transformation (OECD, 2021; Wei and Pardo, 2022). This study contributes to DEM, aligning academic research with industry practice, driven by technological advances, including "low-code" or "no-code" applications (e.g., Glide www.glideapps.com, Airtable www.airtable.com, Webflow https:// webflow.com), platforms (e.g., Microsoft Power Apps), generative AI, machine learning and large language models, which enable firms to "compose" (Brinker, 2023) a martech stack that facilitates more agile and interactive entrepreneurial marketing (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Jones and Rowley, 2011).

The structure of the paper is as follows: firstly, the authors review the DEM literature and explain the conceptual framework consisting of bricolage and sociomateriality. Then the methodology is presented, followed by a discussion of the findings. The authors conclude by al contributions, implications for policymakers and practitioners, study
mitations and further research avenues.

## Digital entrepreneurial marketing

Established theo entrepreneurship (Kraus *et al.*, 2019; Nambisan, 2017), SME digital marketing studies (Alford and Page, 2015, 2018; Fillis *et al.*, 2003; Giotopoulos *et al.*, 2017; Harrigan *et al.*, 2012; Jones *et al.*, 2014; Raymond *et al.*, 2005; Simmons *et al.*, 2008; Wolcott *et al.*, 2008), SME digitalisation (Eller *et al.*, 2020) and digital transformation in entrepreneurship (Schiuma *et al.*, 2022; Troise *et al.*, 2022a, b). A recent special issue in this journal on new technologies and entrepreneurship (Troise *et al.*, 2022a) includes a marketing- focused paper (Vrontis and Basile, 2022) and several studies related to DEM. Troise *et al.* (2022b) note that social media

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usage in small firms can assist new market entry by finding alternative uses for existing products and sourcing new ideas through online communities. Vrontis and Basile (2022, p. 1233) found that social media provides cost-effective access to international markets with fewer skills needed compared to other forms of international marketing. However, the literature lacks detailed processes for enabling DEM.

Hong *et al.*'s (2023) study of e-commerce companies in China extends the concept of entrepreneurial marketing orientation in the digital context. Citing frameworks from studies by Jones and Rowley (2011), Morrish and Jones (2020), and Alqahtani and Uslay's (2020) definition of entrepreneurial marketing, they propose a framework consisting of innovation orientation, customer orientation, in-depth data collection and resource leveraging. They provide further detail as to how DEM can be enabled, with data-driven DEM a recurring theme. Hong *et al.* (2023) interviewed the founder of the firm and employees with a more direct remit for digital marketing. These team-based perspectives (Jones *et al.*, 2013) are not typically present in studies of SME digital marketing. Given the requirement for entrepreneurs to employ digital marketers within a growth-focused firm, this is a notable methodological shortcoming that needs to be addressed. Corvello *et al.* (2022) studied how technology impacts the work of the entrepreneur, referencing Orlikowski (2010), however, their study is entrepreneur focused. Yang *et al.* (2023, p. 8) define DEM in an international context as: "the process of digital product co-creation and innovative digital opportunity creation that utilises creative low-cost digital marketing and social media customer relationships across foreign markets". Their paper focuses on the reciprocal relationship between internationalisation outcomes and the entrepreneur's social ties, with social media as the enabler. Similar to the study by Hong *et al.* (2023), the emphasis is on factors largely external to the firm, whereas this study focuses on internal behaviours and activities that enable firms to enact DEM.

The following section provides a conceptual framework for this study, allowing for explanatory findings to be presented and extrapolating in greater depth as to "why" some firms are more successful at DEM than others (according to the value created). The authors examine the entrepreneurial digital marketer (individual or team) dynamics between the "social" human interaction and the "digital" marketing technology.

## Conceptual framework

### *Bricolage*

Bricolage refers to "making do with the materials at hand" (L$\hat{e}$vi-Strauss, 1966; Miner *et al.*, 2001, p. 314). In their study of entrepreneurial bricolage, Baker and Nelson (2005) reference Penrose's (1959) assertion that a business's resource environment is not as constraining as it might appear. Penrose argues that a business's resources are not limited to physical objects and people; rather they can be viewed as a bundle of possible services, which can be configured to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges. Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 330) observe that resource-constrained businesses "were able to create something from nothing by exploiting physical, social, or institutional inputs that other firms rejected or ignored". Two questions emerge from their study (2005, p. 33): How can SMEs "wrest valuable resource combinations from what appear to be highly constrained environments"? And why are certain SMEs able to "discover and elicit different services and combinations of services from similar objective resources"? The authors proffer that there is still much to understand about bricolage activities and outcomes. While bricolage enables SMEs to "punch above their weight", it has been referred to as a "functional black box" (Senyard *et al.*, 2014, p. 224) with limited detail on how it generates value.

In technology-related bricolage, "materials at hand" often refer to IT hardware and software, although Ferneley and Bell (2006) also discuss network bricolage and the tech-savvy bricoleur as resources. While the SME bricolage literature emphasises the pivotal role of the owner, employee engagement in technology bricolage is less examined. Ferneley and Bell (2006, p. 234) discuss enabling technologies that allow the bricoleur to make adaptations. Citing Kapor (1996), they echo the essence of bricolage viewed from a sociomateriality perspective: "What is design? It's where you stand with a foot in two worlds - the world of technology and the world of people and purposes - and you try to bring the two together". Their study emphasises the need for an

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organisational culture conducive to bricolage, access to technology, owner-manager support, knowledge acquisition, and trust and space to experiment. This aligns with studies showing SMEs benefit from "testing and learning" in DEM (Alford and Jones, 2020).

*Sociomateriality*

A research agenda for digital entrepreneurship has been set out, acknowledging that sociomateriality allows researchers to recognise the inextricable connectedness of the social and material and how entrepreneurial opportunities can be created through the interactions between them (Nambisan, 2017). Sociomateriality challenges the separation of technology and firm practice (Alford and Clarke, 2009; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Myllymäki, 2021; Orlikowski and Scott, 2016). Morgan-Thomas (2016, p. 1128) observes that technologies "are rarely used in the manner intended by their creators and users shape their enactment in practice, that is, digital technologies 'unfold' in practice", mirroring Orlikowski's assertion that technologies are "not largely exogenous, homogeneous, predictable, and stable, performing as intended and designed across time and place" (2007, p. 1437). Sociomateriality rejects a deterministic discourse that has "largely assumed a world of technologies and organisations that are relatively stable, singular, and separable" (Orlikowski and Scott, 2008, p. 873). Rather than static objects, Orlikowski (2007, p. 1438) encourages us to consider the material in terms of "performed relations" resulting from a "recursive intertwining" of the material and social, resulting in the dynamic creation of opportunities. These arguments are prescient, given the proliferation of new technologies that enable SMEs to "shape" their martech stack in conjunction with innovative DEM processes and practice.

*Bricolage and sociomateriality concepts and definitions*

Table 1 presents this study's conceptual framework, comprising definitions of bricolage and sociomateriality, together with associated processes and concepts.

While there are notable overlaps between the three bricolage constructs, there are also marked differences. For example, "making do" with the resources at hand can encapsulate a mindset that "refuses to enact limitations". However, the extant literature highlights test and learn, experimentation, and trial and error, as hallmarks of a "refusal to enact limitations" which is somewhat separate from "making do" with resources at hand (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Wu *et al.*, 2017). These aspects are particularly relevant for DEM which provides opportunities for the marketer to test and learn in ways that non-digital marketing does not. Similarly, while both "making do" and a "refusal to enact limitations" can underpin elements that facilitate "combining resources to enact an idiosyncratic resource environment", this third bricolage construct involves the creation of a unique resource environment for the firm, either by design or serendipitously. As noted above, when designing the conceptual framework, the authors found that the sociomateriality constructs overlapped with bricolage concepts with their emphasis on adaptability, the malleability if technologies, repurposing of resources, innovation through combining technical and social resources, and the concept of "unfolding" in and through practice (Di Domenico *et al.*, 2010; Garud and Giul nardi, 2011; Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Orlikowski, 2007; Senyard *et al.*, 2014).

**Table 1.** Conceptual framework: bricolage and sociomateriality processes, concepts and definitions

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Bricolage* Making do | "This process involves three main approaches to resource acquisition and construction: (1) creating something from nothing; (2) using discarded resources for new purposes; and (3) using hidden or untapped local resources that other organisations fail to recognise, value or use adequately" | Di Domenico *et al.* (2010, p. 689) |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Refusing to enact limitations | "An environment is penurious from a firm's perspective if it presents new challenges, whether opportunities or problems, without providing new resources" | Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 353) |
| | "Trying out solutions, observing and dealing with the results" | Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 334) |
| | "Actors consciously and consistently tested conventional limitations" | Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 335) |
| | Bias for action, trial and error and timely action, adaptation of knowledge, and refusal to enact limitations | Wu *et al*. (2017) |
| Combining resources to enact an idiosyncratic resource environment | "Bricolage is an engine driving the enactment of resource environments that are idiosyncratic to the firm" | Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 356) |
| | conducive to bricolage, including access to technology, owner-manager support, knowledge acquisition, and trust and space to experiment | Ferneley and Bell (2006) |
| | "Meandering and path-dependent trajectory dominated not by a clear vision and careful *a priori* planning but by serendipitous combinations of existing programmes, pasted-up solutions, and failed components put to unexpected uses." | Baker and Nelson (2005, p. 335) |
| *Sociomateriality* Constitutive entanglement of the social and material | "There is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social" | Orlikowski (2007, p. 1437) |
| | "How opportunities emerge in and through "interactions between actors and artefacts that become entangled with one another" | Garud and Giuliani (2013, p. 159) |
| Shaping the enactment of technologies in practice | Technologies "are rarely used in the manner intended by their creators and users shape their enactment in practice, that is, digital technologies 'unfold' in practice" | Leonardi (2011), cited by Morgan-Thomas (2016, p. 1128) |
| Recursive intertwining | "The recursive intertwining of humans and technology-in-practice", which leads to "performed relations" at the intersection between the material and the social | Orlikowski (2007, p. 1437) |

**Source(s):** Authors' own work

## Methodology

The authors undertook research with seven SMEs in the UK (Table 2) as part of a European Commission Erasmusþ funded research project, investigating digital marketing practice in tourism-related SMEs in the UK, Denmark and Portugal.

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**Table 2.** SMEs in the study

| Firm | No. of staff * | Business type | Interviewees (8 total) | Additional marketing resource referred to during the interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 51–200 | Hospitality firm | Digital marketing manager | • Head of the loyalty programme<br>• Three university interns |
| 2 | 11–50 | Events company | General marketing manager | • One marketing employee (interviewee)<br>• External website designer |
| 3 | 2–10 | Sports and music festival | Two digital marketing managers | • External agency |
| 4 | 50 (plus 200 volunteers) | Visitor attraction | Part-time digital marketing co-ordinator | • None referred to |
| 5 | 201–500 | Independent hotel group (8 hotels) | Digital marketing manager in the central office | • Each hotel has its own marketing staff |
| 6 | 51–200 | Museum | Digital marketing executive | • Digital marketing assistant<br>• Marketing manager<br>• Assistant marketing manager<br>• Content marketing executive<br>• Two graphic designers<br>• A photographer<br>• Filmmaker |
| 7 | 11–50 | Independent hotel | Marketing manager | • Young employees with digital competencies |

**Note(s):** * The broad range and at times high number of employees includes temporary staff employed in peak season
**Source(s):** Authors' own work

There were eight interviewees; Firm 3 proposed that both digital marketers be interviewed as they had collective responsibility for digital marketing in the firm. Interviewees listed additional internal or external marketing resources that might influence their ability to practice bricolage. Each firm had similar digital marketing resources or could create comparable ones through collaboration with partners. For example, while Firm 5 had one digital marketing manager, each hotel within its group had managers with digital marketing skills and assets. The regional destination marketing organisation, a membership-based organisation promoting the region and supporting tourism businesses, and a lead partner in the project, provided a comprehensive database of SMEs from which the cases for this study were selected. UK cases were selected to provide evidence of how DEM bricolage was practised in the firm (within-case analysis) and why certain firms were able to more effectively enact DEM bricolage than others (between case analysis) (Perry, 1998), distinguishing them as outliers (van Burg *et al.*, 2022). Purposive sampling criteria (Shaw, 1999) included (1) offering services that are intangible and rely on digital marketing to engage with customers and sell perishable inventory (e.g. hotel rooms, restaurant bookings, festival tickets, museum visits and events), (2) active use of digital channels and platforms, and (3) employing at least one person dedicated to digital marketing.

A heterogeneous sample was selected based on theoretical replication (Yin, 1994), producing contrasting results related to the ability to practice bricolage and achieve synergy between the social and material, through technology-in-practice. This would promote a better understanding of why some firms are able to leverage their existing resources more effectivel for superior DEM bricolage value. The sample size aligns with Eisenhardt's (1989) recommended range of four and ten cases.

Data sources used to compile case studies, triangulate findings and ensure content validity (Carson *et al.*, 2001) included (1) in-depth, in-person interviews (averaging 90 min) at each firm's premises; (2) detailed "thick descriptions" based on observations made during the interviews (see Supplementary material Appendix 1) (Henry *et al.*, 2015); (3) martech profiling tools Wappalyzer (https://www.wappalyzer.com) and BuiltWith (https://builtwith.com) which facilitated discussions on installed tools, guided interview questions, and revealed unused applications; (4) customer engagement on the firm's social profiles and email marketing; (5) the interviewer and the lead author of this paper (lead investigator on the Erasmusþproject) used the two outlier firms as exemplars in project dissemination, including a seminar attended by DMO-affiliated SMEs.

*Thematic coding and framework application*

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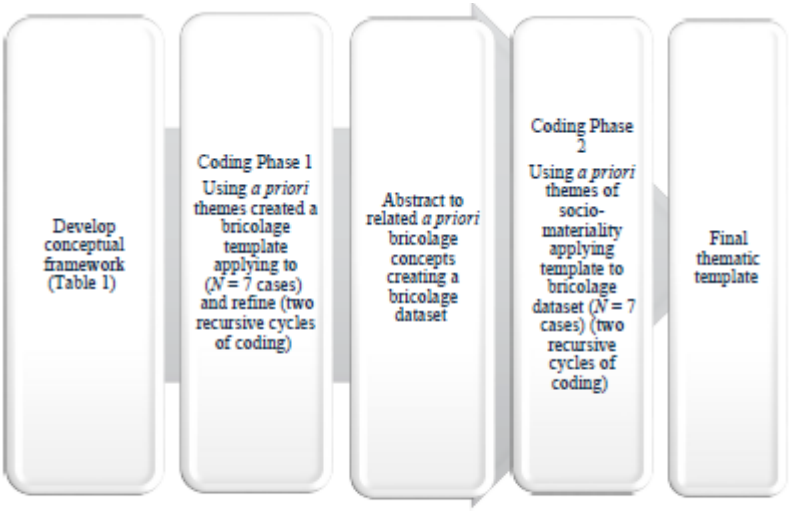
The authors employed template analysis to code and analyse the data (Figure 1). Template analysis, "encourages the analyst to develop themes more extensively where the richest data (in relation to the research question) are found" (Brooks *et al.*, 2015, p. 203). Two coding phases were conducted. In Coding Phase 1 two recursive coding cycles identified instances of bricolage in the firms. The recursive coding was informed by the three main bricolage themes, making do, refusing to enact limitations and combining resources to enact an idiosyncratic resource environment (Table 1). The *a priori* inclusion of themes is justified within template analysis where it helps to find data most related to the research question, recognising that elements of deduction can be used in inductive business research (Brooks *et al.*, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2015). Recursive coding involved cycling between the theoretical constructs and the data, leading to sub-themes integrated into the findings. For example, "using discarded resources for new purposes" (Di Domenico *et al.*, 2010, p. 689) under the "making do" theme (Table 1) helped identify instances of digital assets repurposed for marketing. A "value creation" node was also created to identify how SMEs articulate the value gained from bricolage. Recognising that the notion of value has the potential to be ambiguous, this study uses a self-determined measure based on digital marketer perceptions and authors' assessment of value created.




Source(s): Authors' own work

**Figure 1.** Template analysis

In the second coding phase, the authors developed a coding structure, incorporating sociomateriality concepts (Table 1) and applied it to the bricolage dataset to examine activities and processes taking place at the social-material intersection. The authors were particularly interested to examine firms that practised DEM bricolage more ably and to understand the behaviours that occurred, applying the principles of sociomateriality to enhance this understanding. Coding across both phases was supported by NVivo software, combining clerical coding and recursive cycles between data and theoretical concepts (Table 1). Through systematic thematic open coding and abduction, using the conceptual framework and coded data evidence, the authors identified outlier firms (Van Burg *et al.*, 2022).

## Findings

The authors first present their analysis of DEM bricolage according to the bricolage themes and sub-themes as identified through coding the data, as informed by the study's conceptual framework (Table 1). Detailed findings are included in a table in Supplementary material Appendix 2, comparing the value gained from bricolage to digital marketers' goals and the level of bricolage practised. While all firms practised DEM bricolage, the authors paid particular attention to those firms enacting higher levels to better understand how they were able to configure a unique DEM resource environment as this would

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add value to the study's outcomes. To assist in that understanding, DEM bricolage is analysed through the lens of sociomateriality to better understand the processes that enable bricolage to take place.

*Levels of digital entrepreneurial marketing bricolage Level 1: making do.* All firms in the sample provided evidence of "making do", although the lack of technological awareness of a number of firms is evident at this low level of bricolage, inhibiting the ability to practice higher levels of DEM bricolage.

*Leveraging customers/employees to create digital value.* A common "making do" subtheme is leveraging customers/employees as advocates on digital platforms, extending online reach, and building an engaged community. Firms applied this differently; for example, an employee in Firm 2 created a "day-in-the-life" blog, boosting social media engagement. Firm 4 used its email subscription base to gather feedback. *Repurposing digital assets.* Firm 2's digital marketer "made do" by digitising, editing and uploading high-quality video footage to create valuable content, posting it across a range of channels including the website and social media, thereby utilising a largely discarded resource for new purposes.

We came up with the idea of the video. We have a lot of video footage anyway that previously wasn't really used to its potential. (Firm 2 marketer). *Leveraging external resources.* Several firms utilised local networks to enhance their digital footprint (Troise *et al.*, 2022a). During the interview with Firm 1, the interviewer observed (see Supplementary material Appendix 1 for detailed interviewer observations) digital marketing student interns from the local university. Recognising the importance of developing digital marketing knowledge internally, the digital marketer in Firm 1 gradually brought in-house expertise provided by a digital marketing agency. This not only reduced costs but ensured that knowledge was embedded internally, helping to build the foundations for more advanced DEM bricolage.

*Level 2: refusing to enact limitations.* The progression from "making do" to "refusing to enact limitations" is incremental and enabled by increased knowledge of the digital landscape. It evidences the skills needed to progress further in enacting DEM bricolage. *Extending organic reach.* Firms 3 and 6 strategically leveraged customers/employees for influence and content creation, addressing limitations of digital platform algorithms by expanding organic (non-paid) reach.

Organic reach doesn't really exist. We've got about 56,000 on Facebook, and with an organic post, you probably reach about a couple of thousand if you're lucky, unless you start putting money into it, which a lot of times is just a waste of time (Firm 3 marketer A). Marketer B in Firm 3 referred to the week-to-week unpredictability of the algorithms, whereby a post performing well one week would poorly perform the following week. This captures the sense of powerlessness faced by marketers in using digital platforms. By engaging with microinfluencers as brand ambassadors and extending their organic reach, the firm was able to address this power imbalance. Firm 6 leveraged relationships with influential brand advocates, including video game streamers and historians related to the military theme of the museum.

So, it's . . . building up those relationships,. . . they use some of our stuff [refers to digital content] and we use their influence. So, it's, yeah, it works well. It's a good relationship to have. (Firm 6 marketer)

*Testing solutions through trial and error.* The use of digital technologies enables rapid and conscious bias towards action, trial and error that is a hallmark of refusing to enact limitations (Wu *et al.*, 2017).

Elementor (a WordPress plug in) has been really useful in the fact that you can build new pages without having to have extensive coding knowledge, so we don't need a developer in. So, we've been able to be a bit lighter on our feet when it comes to getting pages up and running or amending pages because it's just like a drag and drop thing with limited coding, so that's been quite useful. (Firm 3 marketer A)

Mirroring Baker and Nelson's (2005, p. 334) assertion that bricoleurs "try out solutions, observing, and dealing with the results", the digital marketers in Firm 3 consistently test and develop the website.

We're very needy. Because we're very – well, how can I say it? (Laughter) We're very demanding because we're constantly changing and evolving. Our website doesn't get launched and then stays the same with a few updates. It's constantly changing and evolving throughout the year, much to my

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chagrin. (Firm 3 marketer B)

Firms 5 and 6, while also adhering to a culture of test and learn, were less strategic, restricting the use of data to measure the effectiveness of online marketing campaigns. *Optimising martech stack.* Firm 1 was unable to afford an enterprise-level martech solution and, to counter the lack of integration between disparate applications, it used Excel to manually transfer data to build a more personalised view of the customer. Firm 3's website was built on the WordPress platform, and they leveraged WordPress plugins, including Monster Insights, an analytics plugin and TubePress for hosting YouTube videos, to enhance the website. In doing so, the digital marketers were testing "conventional limitations" (Baker and Nelson, 2005, p. 335) that hinder SMEs from building an effective martech stack. This iterative development paved the way for enacting a higher level of DEM bricolage.

*Level 3: combining resources to enact an idiosyncratic resource environment.*

Only Firms 1 and 3 enacted a unique DEM resource environment (Baker and Nelson, 2005) as evidenced by their strategic configuration of martech *Strategic martech configuration.* In addition to the evolution of its website, Firm 3 combined martech applications, including Google Analytics, WooCommerce, WordPress, HotJar and Mobile Roadie to enhance the user experience, particularly on mobile devices. Several user engagement problems were identified and solved, resulting in increased website conversions and bookings. Firm 1 configured a unique martech stack to support its loyalty programme delivering personalised customer experiences.

You do the whole work in the background so that you can provide that unexpected experience for the customer that they were not necessarily looking for, expecting, that they get something out of the ordinary that shows that you really know about them, and deliver that personal experience. (Firm 1 marketer)

The "work in the background" included overcoming the problem of a disparate collection of marketing technologies that was preventing a joined-up view of the customer. After "lengthy debate within the team" (Firm 1 marketer), Mailchimp was chosen as the gateway to build the single customer view, primarily because it integrates with other applications, including Shopify (e-commerce), Stripe (online payments), TripAdvisor (customer reviews), and Little Hotelier (reservations). While the other firms leveraged resources to enact DEM bricolage, Firms 1 and 3 were unique in that they realised the longer-term strategic advantage in configuring a unique martech stack.

*Sociomateriality analysis*

To better understand how to enact DEM bricolage, the authors applied a sociomateriality template to the findings to answer the research question. All the firms in the study were considered, to further understanding of DEM bricolage at different levels. However, the study focused on Firms 1 and 3 as they demonstrated an ability to configure a unique DEM resource environment and enact the highest level of DEM bricolage.

Social-material entanglement is most pronounced in Firms 1 and 3 which exhibited the strongest disposition to enact a bespoke DEM environment, resulting in the creation of advanced CRM, and a user-centred website with increased conversion. The interviewer observed this entanglement and immersion in DEM firsthand when interviewing the digital marketer at Firm 1, demonstrating the social (marketing insights) and the material (logging into different applications).

As he shows me different dashboards and accounts on his laptops, he both mentions and it becomes obvious that their digital marketing insights, despite their wishes, are in different places online – [interviewee] furiously changes in between different tabs and files, logs onto different accounts (Google, Facebook) to show me the analytics, and opens three different excel files where the data is complied. (Interviewer observations).

Firm 1, in common with the other SMEs in the study, has limited resources requiring creativity and innovation in configuring resources.

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Clicking back and forth, he repeatedly emphasizes that they would love to have one dashboard, one database with all their customer data, but while such solutions exist, they cannot afford them, i.e., they are too expensive for what they as an SME would get out of it. (Firm 1 marketer).
In Firm 3, the entanglement of marketing processes (in this case knowledge and skills acquisition) and technology is succinctly captured in this extract:
And go on a few crash courses on Google Analytics, 'cos if that's your strategy is pointing people to your website, you need to know what is working, and the same with all of the other platforms that we've mentioned [these include Pollen, Hubspot, and WordPress]. (Firm 3 marketer B) Marketers at Firms 1 and 3 described the fast-paced nature of digital marketing, including descriptions of employee entanglement (social) with rapid changes in digital marketing technologies (material).
My biggest surprise would be how quickly things can change . . .. You've got to constantly be knowing what's happening and what the trends are, know what's working, not just globally and who's doing well, but what's working for you . . . new markets will appear through new avenues, new mediums, yeah, so you've just got to be always ready. I didn't realise it would be so fast paced, but I suppose that comes with digital. (Firm 3 marketer B).
The entanglement of the social and material requires entrepreneurs to employ marketers with an entrepreneurial mindset and who are technically proficient, and there is a particularly clear sense in Firms 1 and 3 that constant knowledge acquisition is imperative.
Shaping the enactment of technologies in practice is most evident in Firms 1 and 3 whose digital marketers are the most adept at configuring idiosyncratic DEM resource environments.

Their practice most clearly illustrates Orlikowski's (2007, p. 1437) contention that technologies are not "exogenous, homogeneous, predictable, and stable, performing as intended and designed across time and place". Rather than technology *unfolding* in practice (Leonardi, 2011), digital marketers in Firms 1 and 3 are proactively *shaping* it in practice (Morgan-Thomas, 2016). This is most evident in Firm 1 where the digital marketer configured Mailchimp to act as a CRM system, integrating it with other applications to capture customer profiles and behaviour. The main reason Mailchimp was chosen was because the digital marketer knew of its integration capabilities.
Having this knowledge is representative of the recursive test and learn processes outlined above, "trying out solutions, observing, and dealing with the results" (Baker and Nelson, 2005, p. 334).
Similarly, Firm 3's digital marketers shaped the martech stack to support website development and CRM. With reference to the sociomateriality construct included in Table 1 (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 421), the shaping of technology-in-practice is enabled by the technical components (e.g. integration capabilities), the organisational context in which the technology is developed (e.g. recursive processes of test and learn, focus on the customer experience journey) and the empowerment to enact an innovative digital marketing environment (interest and support of the owner evident in Firm 3). Rather than waiting for the "right" solution to come along, the digital marketers in Firms 1 and 3 proactively seek new opportunities and new digital tools and test them in line with their marketing goals. These processes involve "the recursive intertwining of humans and technology-in-practice" (Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1437) and, given the constantly evolving technology landscape, are important for all SMEs.
Firms 1 and 3 have a longer-term vision for composing their martech stack to support a strategic focus on the customer's experience journey and touchpoints. This ultimately enables them to create an idiosyncratic DEM resource environment, comprising a bespoke martech stack which underlines their position as DEM bricolage outliers in this study.
In Firms 1 and 3, the process of recursive intertwining is embedded, creating an iterative process of test and learn. In both firms, an initial (social) step involves building a clear vision of the customer's journey before, during and after the purchase/experience. In a second (material) step, the digital marketers access digital analytics provided by martech applications, offering intelligence on customer engagement at certain touch points, providing insight into the customer journey. For example, Firm 3's digital marketers used several applications to identify poor levels of user engagement with the website homepage on a mobile device. While that data told them *what* was happening, they had to develop

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marketing hypotheses, using their marketing expertise, as to *why* that was happening (social step). They tested these hypotheses through marketing actions, for example, decluttering the website homepage. These hypotheses were then tested using the data obtained via using the technology (material step).

This recursive intertwining is accompanied by maintaining "intimate familiarity with the tools" (Baker *et al.*, 2003, p. 271), whereby staff updated their knowledge of digital marketing technologies. Within Firm 1 there is a clear policy of internalising the technical knowledge transferred by digital marketing agencies and extracting technical knowledge from martech vendors. Similarly, Firm 3's digital marketers have a clear policy of developing technical knowledge internally. They reached the decision that learning how to configure the Hubspot CRM platform was preferable to buying a solution off the shelf. So, for [name of CRM vendor redacted], for example, we paid quite a lot of money to have somebody come in and build us a product, and it never did exactly what we wanted it to do. It just seems that we know our product so well, it's hard to convey that to somebody else without losing something in translation. So, teaching yourself to do their job is easier than teaching them what our festival does. (Firm 3 marketer B)

This decision to acquire and share knowledge helps the firm to maintain the proximity of marketing and technology; a marketing technology vendor "*coming in and building a product*" (Firm 3 interview participant B) threatens that proximity. Orlikowski (1992, p. 421) provided an early warning about this, cautioning that "the greater the temporal and spatial distance between the construction of a technology and its application, the greater the likelihood that the technology will be interpreted and used with little flexibility." As the analysis of Firms 1 and 3 demonstrate, their ability to configure technology applications provided them with the flexibility that entrepreneurial marketing is predicated on. In this regard, there is a blurring of the lines between social and material to the extent that they become indistinguishable; for the digital marketers in Firms 1 and 3, materiality is "constitutive of everyday life" (Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1435).

With Firms 1 and 3 as exemplars in this study, it is instructive to use them as a benchmark when analysing the other firms. The authors start with Firms 2, 6 and 7 which practice intermediate-level DEM bricolage from the perspective of the value that they create. This value largely derives from their engagement online with followers on social media and through innovative digital content marketing. This undoubtedly helps them to reduce their reliance on paid advertising on search and social media platforms. Firms 6 and 7 also exhibit socialmaterial entanglement, for example through their enthusiasm for measuring the metrics of digital campaigns (Firm 6), encouraging employees to create online content that will resonate with followers (Firm 7), and repurposing video content for online dissemination (Firm 2).

In Firms 4 and 5 there were comparatively low levels of DEM bricolage. While individually the digital marketers in these two firms had digital marketing skills and were familiar with relevant technologies, for example, email marketing and how to measure marketing effectiveness, the culture and practice of both organisations were characterised by a lack of entanglement of the social and material. While there was an organisational structure (for example, the digital marketer in Firm 5 was centrally responsible for digital marketing across the whole hotel group), there was a lack of a digital team culture where digital marketing knowledge could be reciprocally shared and disseminated.

## Discussion

The SMEs chosen for digital marketing competency showed notable differences in their interactions with digital tools. Value creation occurs when digital marketing bricoleurs utilise the whole digital marketing toolbox, not only social media (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2022; Vrontis and Basile, 2022; Yang *et al.*, 2023). A sociomateriality lens elucidates what occurs in the "black box" (Senyard *et al.*, 2014, p. 224) of bricolage. At the highest level, marketers (Firms 1 and 3) created an idiosyncratic DEM resource environment affording them short-term (e.g. increased website conversions) and long-term strategic value (e.g. enhancing the customer experience at critical touch points). These firms are characterised by digital marketers whoproactively shape technology-in-practice and whose affinity with, and

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knowledge of, technology results in the productive entanglement of the social and material. The capacity for Firms 2, 6 and 7 to create longer-term strategic value and enact higher-level DEM bricolage is restricted by their inability to configure a unique DEM resource environment which melds a bespoke martech stack with a strategic focus. The team culture in these three firms, while evident to an extent, does not extend into the digital realm in the way that it does in Firms 1 and 3. The sense of technology being shaped in practice, as seen in Firms 1 and 3, was less evident in Firms 2, 6 and 7. Although Firms 4 and 5, at the lower level of DEM bricolage, had resources at their disposal (e.g. a volunteer network, email database, knowledge of digital marketing and eight unique hotels), the inability to connect and configure the social and material elements of these resources resulted in less value derived from DEM bricolage.

Viewing the enactment of DEM bricolage through sociomateriality brings into sharp relief the factors that determine the ability to enact DEM bricolage: proactive digital technology adaptation-in-practice, consistent acquisition of technical knowledge, rapid deployment by testing and learning, creating effective digital teams by leveraging internal and external resources, and developing a firm culture characterised by a constitutive entanglement of the social and material. The authors observe that DEM bricolage is not predicated on firm size, for example, Firm 3 is on the cusp of a micro/small firm and while Firm 1 has a large number of employees, they are employed in front-line service roles, often on a seasonal basis, and the core digital team remains small.

This study affirms Feldman and Orlikowski's (2011, p. 1243) view that "strategy as practice is oriented to what actors do, as opposed to something that organisations have". In contrast to extant literature with its emphasis on external factors (Hong *et al.*, 2023; Yang *et al.*, 2023), and technological capability as an output of entrepreneurial marketing (Sun and Lee, 2022), this study, at an intrafirm level, demonstrates that technologies are "malleable" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1246), highly intertwined with marketing processes, and can be configured and shaped to enact DEM environments idiosyncratic to the SME.

## Conclusions

### *Theoretical contributions*

This study's primary contribution is identifying processes, actions, drivers and strategies that enable SME digital marketers to enact DEM bricolage. While the authors acknowledge the pivotal role of the entrepreneur (Corvello *et al.*, 2022; Nambisan, 2017; Troise *et al.*, 2022a), this study focuses on digital marketers, intrinsic to the digital transformation of SMEs. While the bricolage literature is replete with empirical studies of "what" and "where" bricolage is practised, there is significantly less insight as to "how" it is enacted. This understanding of "how" DEM bricolage is practised is informed by sociomateriality, helping to answer the unresolved question, "*How can SMEs enact bricolage and implement technology-in-practice to create value through digital entrepreneurial marketing?*"

The authors have responded to calls for an improved understanding of the "primary factors and entrepreneurial behaviours in the current digital scenario" (Troise *et al.*, 2022a, p. 1130) and for further empirical research in this area (Orlikowski, 1992), noting that SMEs are overlooked in earlier conceptualisations. This study corroborates Morgan-Thomas's (2016) proposition that technologies are shaped in practice, furthering our understanding of "how" they are shaped. It also informs DEM theory (Hong *et al.*, 2023; Yang *et al.*, 2023) and how SMEs can deploy digital tools to enhance DEM bricolage, increasing entrepreneurial marketing opportunities and orientation (Jones and Rowley, 2011). The intertwining of the social and the digital increases the proximity between the entrepreneurial marketer and the technology.

### *Implications for policy and practice*

Based on this study's findings, DEM policies should support entrepreneurs in intertwining the social (the team, knowledge, purpose and passion for experimenting with technology) and material (applications, platforms, channels, data and integration) in a process of "mutual constitution" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1242). Intermediate DEM firms can progress by more deeply intertwining

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technologies with strategic marketing processes. With a solid knowledge base and appreciation of technology's role, these firms can progress by acquiring more advanced technical knowledge (e.g. how to extend, integrate and configure technologies), developing a culture that encourages experimentation, not only in measuring marketing campaigns, but also in configuring their martech stack, and enhancing marketing processes through technology-in-practice. This progression will enable higher levels of bricolage and create additional strategic value. Entry-level DEM bricolage firms, aware of resource extension potential, can create value by further intertwining marketing and technology, supported by ongoing learning. Policymakers can use exemplar firms to cascade knowledge, create peer-topeer forums for knowledge exchange (Alford and Jones, 2020), connect SMEs with thought leaders in digitalisation and assist firms in finding innovative ways to configure their martech stack and marketing processes. Without embedding digital technologies in operations, SMEs may face systemic challenges (Eiriz *et al.*, 2019; Nguyen *et al.*, 2015; Peltier *et al.*, 2012).

*Limitations and future research*

This study focused on SMEs in a specific geographic area. Future research should apply the conceptual framework (Table 1) and template analysis (Figure 1) across different countries and industries. Given bricolage's emphasis on "doing more with less", studies of DEM bricolage among resource-constrained SMEs in developing economies would be valuable. Emerging studies of AI and digital entrepreneurship (Upadhyay *et al.*, 2022) suggest AI's transformative potential. However, a recent Microsoft report sounds a cautionary note for policymakers and SMEs who fail to recognise the inseparability of the human and the technical: "the introduction of AI into any organisation is an inherently sociotechnical process" where "people influence technology just as technology influences people" (Butler *et al.*, 2023, p. 33). Investigating AI-enabled DEM bricolage through a sociomaterial lens would be timely, given the early-stage use of AI by SMEs, and evolving policies in this area.

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**Supplementary material**
**Appendix 1.**

**Table A1.** Interview observations

| Firm | Principal marketing staff | Interviewer observations |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hospitality firm with digital marketing undertaken by DM manager, head of the loyalty programme and 3 university interns. Agencies contracted previously but now all digital marketing is practised in-house | He [interviewee] jumps right in and talks and talks. Having made a little mind map of things he wants to talk about, he checks it every now and then (on his tablet) and eventually gets his laptop to show me some of their Excel files and their online accounts. He is very enthusiastic and talks at rather a high pace and having actually prepared a list of things he wants to talk about, I let him take charge of the conversation but try to sneak in some of the questions from the guide here and then. In the end, I feel that we have covered most areas. As he shows me different dashboards and accounts on his laptops, he both mentions and it becomes obvious that their digital marketing insights, despite their wishes, are in different places online – he furiously changes in between different tabs and files, logs onto different accounts (Google and Facebook) to show me the analytics, and opens three different Excel files where the data is compiled. Clicking back and forth, he repeatedly emphasises that they would love to have one dashboard, one database with all their customer data, but while such solutions exist, they cannot afford them, i.e. they are too expensive for what they as an SME would get out of it. Overall, he appears very enthusiastic about digital marketing and all the possibilities, especially the technologies and insights to be generated from the data, but also very aware of constraints and limitations in the sense that he keeps talking about the long list of challenges that he and his team encounter in their daily work |
| 2 | Events company. The interviewee is the only full-time marketing employee in the firm although the events team posts regularly on social media. The external designer built the website and continues to provide technical support | Everyone in the team appears to be relatively young and dressed in grey/black; more or less continuing the theme from the website. Throughout the interview, I get the impression that she [interviewee] is very much passionate about and interested in the social media and the visual aspect of DM, and less on the technical side |
| 3 | Sports and music festival. Two interviewees, both digital marketers. The external agency is used occasionally for technical coding tasks, otherwise digital marketing is practised in-house | The office has lots of windows all around. It is an open-space office with desk "islands" (i.e. 2–3 desks together) scattered around. People who work together sit together (i.e. [names of interviewees] desks are together at the far end), they repeatedly point to the desks where the 2 salesgirls sit, or the two guys developing new stages/arenas/sites for the festival, etc. Most employees are rather young. They [the two interviewees] are clearly passionate about what they are doing, especially [Interview participant A] is passionately talking about the data, technologies, and tools that they are using |

(*continued*)

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**Table A1.** Continued

| Firm | Principal marketing staff | Interviewer observations |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Visitor attraction. The interviewee occupies an assistant role with responsibility for digital marketing and has a manager. Both are part-time. The website is managed by the local authority that owns the attraction and the marketing team does not have access to the website or the tools to monitor it | I find a large array of printed material, from a very basic Word-doc customer satisfaction survey to an extensive events handbook to maps and other material for the visit itself. We sit in the communal space/kitchen part, which is relatively small and crammed, making it obvious that the [name of attraction] has only limited funds. Throughout the interview, [interviewee] appears interested in all aspects of digital marketing from the personal contact with (potential) visitors to the technical side that she would love to learn more about is but frustrated because her hands are tied by [local authority that runs the attraction] |
| 5 | Independent hotel group comprising 8 hotels. The interviewee has a digital marketing remit for the whole group Each hotel has its own marketing staff | The hotels look a bit, well, not their absolute best, and could maybe do with some fresh paint. Overall, I get the feeling that she [interviewee] is passionate about what she is doing – but that she is not interested in the technology itself and sees it as a means to reach her goals. However, goes activity-by-activity and campaign-by-campaign – every little thing needs to pay off. I get the feeling that she sees digital marketing very much as online advertising |
| 6 | Museum. The interviewee is a digital marketing executive, and she has an assistant. There is a marketing manager, an assistant marketing manager and a content marketing executive. There are also 2 graphic designers, a photographer and a filmmaker | [Interviewee] is very lively and talks with great passion and enthusiasm about her work, more in terms of opportunities than restrictions. She appears to be rather interested in numbers, analytics and creativity-that is what drives her |
| 7 | Independent boutique hotel. Interviewee has overall responsibility for the marketing of the hotel, including DM, although hotel employees are active in uploading content to social media | For the most part of the interview, four people sit in the far corner from us and chat, who turn out to be the Events team having a meeting. They have and wear virtual reality goggles at times which apparently was their idea so that people can see what the room would look like made up for a wedding – they use them at wedding fairs as well. When I pack up my things to get going, I can hear [name of interviewee] talking to the bar staff about a new drink, telling them "And don't forget to take a picture!" |

**Source(s):** Authors' own work

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**Table A2.** Detailed findings

| Firm | Digital marketing goals and challenges | DEM bricolage | | | Value accrued |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Making do | Refusal to enact limitations | Combine resources to enact DEM idiosyncratic resource environment | |
| 1 | • Goals: to build a 360-degree view of the customer to personalise the experience<br>• Challenges: a lack of technology integration, and technology vendor pricing making it prohibitively expensive for SME firms to buy an off-the-shelf solution | • Resolving to use an existing suite of applications rather than buying an off-the-shelf CRM.<br>• Utilising interns from a local university | • Optimising features included in existing technology vendor package<br>• Manual loading of data into martech applications using Excel to build a more personalised view of the customer<br>• Ongoing technical knowledge acquisition | • Reconfiguring Mailchimp to act as a CRM platform<br>• Martech integration through 1) APIs (Application Programming Interface) 2) third-party API connectors, Zapier and IFTTT (If This Then That<br>• Applications are integrated with Mailchimp, including Shopify (e-commerce), Stripe (online payments), TripAdvisor (customer reviews), and Little Hotelier (reservations)<br>• Leveraging relationships with digital agencies to bring digital knowledge in-house | • High strategic value<br>• A martech stack closely integrated with DEM processes<br>• A significantly more joined-up view of customer behaviour, enabling firms to customise the customer's experience throughout their journey<br>• A customer loyalty programme supported by DEM activities |

*(continued)*

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**Table A2.** Continued

| Firm | Digital marketing goals and challenges | DEM bricolage | | | Value accrued |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Making do | Refusal to enact limitations | Combine resources to enact DEM idiosyncratic resource environment | |
| 2 | • Goals: to create digital content that communicates the personality of the firm<br>• Challenges: none specifically referred to by the interviewee | • Digitising untapped resources (video, images, and client case studies)<br>• Utilising employees as digital storytellers – creating a "day-in-the-life" blog<br>• Ability to assess engagement with the blog | • Using employee social media accounts for social media marketing to extend organic reach and mitigate the limitations imposed by social media algorithms | • Using social media platforms and engagement from followers on social media to configure a content-rich digital marketing resource | • Low-to-medium value<br>• Creating low-cost digital assets and rich digital content which extends the firm's organic (i.e. non-paid) reach on search engines in the longer term |
| 3 | • Goals: to raise awareness and drive "traffic" to the website for online sales<br>• To reduce reliance on restrictive social media algorithms by communicating through different channels<br>• Challenges: none specifically referred to by the interviewee | • Customers as ambassadors, including the use of micro-influencers<br>• Making do with current martech. Not investing in expensive bespoke solutions | • Use of a peer-to-peer referral platform<br>• Reducing firm reliance on social media platforms and restrictive algorithms<br>• Configuring CRM software to tailor to bespoke needs<br>• Ongoing technical knowledge acquisition | • Integration of applications with WordPress website: Monster Insights (WordPress analytics plugin), WooCommerce (e-commerce plugin) to manage team entry, Elementor (page builder) and HotJar (user click behaviour), and TubePress (hosting YouTube videos)<br>• Iterative process of test and learn | • High strategic value<br>• Creating a user-centric website<br>• Enhancing the customer experience throughout the customer journey<br>• Autonomy in building web pages<br>• Improving website conversion, leading to increased bookings<br>• Building digital knowledge within the team |

*(continued)*

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**Table A2.** Continued

| Firm | Digital marketing goals and challenges | DEM bricolage | | | Value accrued |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Making do | Refusal to enact limitations | Combine resources to enact DEM idiosyncratic resource environment | |
| 4 | • Goals: to build a more integrated view of the customer<br>• Challenges: goal setting is controlled by the parent organisation with little scope for input from the digital marketer | • Using email newsletters to build an engaged community to gather customer feedback<br>• An effective volunteer network that can be leveraged to create social media content | • This is limited by the lack of intrapreneurship and autonomy afforded to digital marketers | • Missed opportunities to combine resources (e.g. community, email newsletter, volunteers) to enact a unique DEM mix | • Low value<br>• Building an email subscriber base and extending reach on social media at a comparatively low cost |
| 5 | • Goals: to provide digital marketing support to eight hotels in the group<br>• Challenges: a fragmented hotel group with a lack of integration of digital marketing technologies | • Using data analytics to make the use case for digital marketing | • Limitations occur due to lack of integration across the hotel group and lack of intrapreneurship and firm culture that does not support digital marketing development | • There is a missed opportunity to configure a resource environment that leverages the resources of the eight hotels in the group | • Low value – limited by lack of collaboration and intrapreneurship<br>• Slowly building "use case" for digital marketing within the company |
| 6 | • Goals: to build organic (non-paid) reach on social media and search platforms<br>• Challenges: limitations imposed by social media algorithms that limit the reach of social media posts | • Leveraging existing customers and social media followers as ambassadors<br>• Using micro-influencers related to the theme of the attraction | • Countering limitations imposed by social media algorithms through co-creating content with high-profile social media accounts | • Limited digital configuration, but creating a resource environment centred around the unique brand of the firm that includes high-profile social media accounts | • Medium value created<br>• Building a social media following and extending organic reach by engaging with online influencers |

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**Table A2.** Continued

| Firm | Digital marketing goals and challenges | DEM bricolage | | | Value accrued |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Making do | Refusal to enact limitations | Combine resources to enact DEM idiosyncratic resource environment | |
| 7 | • Goals: to build brand awareness online and identify opportunities to create engaging digital content<br>• Challenges: none specifically referred to by the interviewee | • Leveraging employees as a resource to create digital stories online and capture in-hotel events for online dissemination and PR. | • Creating a strong sustainability-themed brand that raises the profile, creates a unique selling proposition, and a stronger digital footprint | • Limited digital configuration but extending resource base beyond its means by creating a strong brand story | • Medium value created<br>• Growing a social media following<br>• Strong brand generating backlinks to the website, boosting search engine ranking |

**Source(s):** Authors' own work

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