

HW.4 – Digital Marketing Audit

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Who Targets Me With Digital Advertising?

Over a 24-hour period, I observed digital advertisements across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Google Search, and Spotify.

Most Frequent Advertisers:

- Finance & Investing Apps (Robinhood, SoFi, Fidelity)
- Fitness & Wellness Brands (Gymshark, WHOOP, supplements)
- Tech Products (Apple accessories, gaming gear)
- Travel Deals (airlines, Expedia)
- Graduate programs / certifications

Platforms:

- Instagram (Stories + feed sponsored posts)
- YouTube pre-roll video ads
- Google search ads
- Spotify audio ads

Frequency:

- Instagram: ~1 ad every 4–5 posts
- YouTube: 2 ads per video
- Google: Sponsored results at top
- Spotify: 1 ad every ~15–20 minutes



Advertising Objectives Observed:

- Persuasive advertising (brand preference, differentiation)
- Sales promotions (limited-time discounts, promo codes)
- Direct/digital marketing (retargeted ads)

Most ads appear to pursue:

- Persuasive objectives (brand switching)
- Immediate response objectives (click, sign up, purchase)
- Data-driven retargeting
- This suggests heavy reliance on pull strategy + direct digital marketing.

Why Am I Being Targeted?

Based on observed trends, I appear to be segmented as:

Demographic Segmentation:

- College student / young professional
- 18–25 age range

Psychographic Segmentation:

- Career-oriented
- Fitness-conscious
- Tech enthusiast
- Finance/interested in investing

Behavioral Segmentation:

- Frequent online shopper
- Watches fitness + finance content
- Engages with product reviews

These advertisers likely perceive me as:

- ✓ High lifetime value customer
- ✓ Early-stage brand switcher
- ✓ Digitally engaged consumer

The value propositions emphasize:

- Performance (fitness)
- Productivity
- Financial growth
- Lifestyle enhancement

The ads reflect targeted value propositions aligned with my predicted lifestyle and aspirational identity.

Segmentation



Targeting



Positioning

What Platforms Think About Me

I reviewed ad preference settings on:

- Google Ad Settings
- Instagram Ad Preferences
- TikTok Ad Interests

Common Inferred Interests:

- Investing
- Fitness
- Business & Entrepreneurship
- Technology
- Travel
- Education

Demographic Assumptions:

Age: 18–24
Location: Boston /
Northeast
Male

Observations:

- Many interests were accurate.
- Some categories were overly broad.
- Platforms use browsing behavior + engagement data to infer lifestyle.

This confirms that digital marketing relies heavily on:

- Behavioral targeting
- Data collection
- Algorithmic personalization

Digital marketing enables granular micromarketing.



Google Ads



Ads



Strengths & Weaknesses of Data-Driven Digital Marketing

Biggest Strengths:

1. Personalization

Highly relevant ads increase click-through rates.

2. Measurable ROI

Advertisers track impressions, CTR, conversions.

3. Cost Efficiency

Lower cost per impression vs traditional media.

4. Retargeting Power

Ads follow users across platforms.

When using an ad blocker:

- Fewer display ads
- Less retargeting
- More reliance on sponsored content
- Reduced tracking data



Biggest Weaknesses:

1. Privacy Concerns

Data collection creates distrust.

2. Over-Saturation

Ad fatigue reduces effectiveness.

3. Algorithm Errors

Targeting assumptions can be inaccurate.

4. Ad Blockers

Reduce exposure and data collection.

Digital marketing is highly efficient and data-driven, but its effectiveness depends on balancing personalization with consumer trust.

What This Reveals About Modern Marketing

This exercise illustrates that:

- Digital marketing is deeply integrated into daily life.
- Companies rely on behavioral data to refine segmentation.
- Most ads pursue persuasive or immediate-response objectives.
- The promotion mix is increasingly digital-first.

Overall, digital marketing appears more:

- ✓ Precise than traditional advertising
- ✓ Immediate in response objectives
- ✓ Pull-strategy oriented

However, long-term brand trust remains a key vulnerability.

