

National Seminar on Emerging Trends and Challenges in Commerce and Management

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ABSTRACT

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. Social media has changed the way people communicate and the way we do business. Word of mouth marketing is being replaced by tweeting recommendations to friends, and more and more customers are researching products online before purchasing. In today's rapidly-evolving media landscape, social media is not only a fundamental tool for communication but also a must-have skill in a multitude of industries. With the right amount of practice and social media education, students and professionals are empowered with a competitive edge in their studies, careers, and communications. This article focuses on advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing. There are various social Medias launched and also used by the people. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, and Instagram are the most popular social Medias. Most of these are used among friend's circles to chat, share memories and have fun. Only very few sites are used for marketing. Social media websites allows marketers to employ a broad range of tactics and strategies to promote content. Many social networks allow users to provide detailed geographical, demographic, and personal information, which allows marketers to post their messages to their users.

Keywords:- Social Media, Marketing, Advantages, Disadvantages, Tools, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media is the democratization of content and the understanding of the role people play in the process of not only reading and disseminating information but also how they share and create content for others to participate. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and people. Social media marketing (SMM) is a form of Internet marketing that utilizes social networking websites as a marketing tool. The goal of SMM is to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach. The definition of Social Media Marketing is hard to truly describe, but a popular definition says that it is the methodical use of marketing with other technological concepts and techniques to achieve specific goals for a company. In simple terms, social marketing means building a business through many different media, like viral videos and blogs, because these give your company exposure.

India has the second largest number of internet users in the world after China. 35% of Indian population are using internet. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, and Instagram are the top platforms used by the marketers. Out of these, Facebook is the most used platform. Budgets of social media have been doubled worldwide in the past two years increasing from \$16

billion in the year 2014 to \$31 billion in the year 2016. It is predicted that there will be 26.3% global increase on spending for social media advertisements.

2. ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing is the “next big thing,” to some business emperors, a temporary yet powerful fad that must be taken advantage of while it’s still in the spotlight. For others, it’s of no practical advantages and is a steep, complicated learning curve. On projecting a torch towards the advantages of social media marketing we can come across the following benefit.

1. COST EFFECTIVE

Social networks are cost-effective way to get the brands in front of fans and potential customers. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest allows to promote and share content for free of cost outside of the own time spent. These platforms also offer advanced and affordable advertising platforms.

2. INCREASES THE INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE INDUSTRY

As one earns more followers, their influence grows. As more people are talk about a particular business on social networks, the more valuable and authoritative the brand will appear to new users. Interacting with major influencers on Twitter or other networks will also greatly increase the authority and reach. More the valuable information is posted, more is the reader’s return and share their content.

3. IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Social media allows to easily respond the customer’s comments, questions and concerns instantaneously. Although one have a dedicated customer service department reachable through email and phone, it’s important to handle issues through the method of communication that consumers prefer. Customers using one of the common social networks such as Facebook and Twitter can communicate with the business persons directly. This method also allows one to answer them in a public that lets others see the quality of the customer service. This establish a level of transparency to your business.

4. INCREASE IN TRAFFIC

When one is sharing content on social media, they are giving users a reason to click-through to their website. Without social media, one is limiting their content to users who are already familiar with their brand or are searching for keywords they rank for. By adding social media to their marketing plan, they are adding more paths leading users back to their site. The more quality content they share on their social accounts, the more inbound traffic they’ll generate while creating conversion opportunities.

5. ENHANCED MARKET RESEARCHES AND RANKINGS

Social media presence is becoming a significant factor in calculating rankings. Businesses sharing their content on social media are sending out a “brand-signal” to search engines that speak of their brands legitimacy, credibility, and trustworthiness. If they want to rank for specific keywords, it’s necessary to be actively posting on these topics.

DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

While social media marketing can provide benefits, it also can create obstacles that companies may have otherwise not have had to deal with. For example, a viral video claiming that a company’s product causes consumers to become ill has to be addressed by the company, regardless of whether the claim is true or false. Even if a company is able to set the message straight, consumers may be less likely to purchase from the company in the future. Every post on Twitter is public and one has no control over what people say. Bad news can go viral as easily as good news and can do the business irreparable harm.

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Social media users have free reign to post whatever they want. This means that satisfied customers can leave glowing reviews on their pages, but it also means that unhappy ones can leave angry rants about your business. Some of this negative feedback could come from within their own organization. Disgruntled employees have been known to vent on social media about work and their boss, which makes the entire company look bad.

POTENTIAL FOR EMBARRASSMENT

It’s easy to get caught up in social media and post whatever comes to mind, which can have huge consequences for any business. For example, when DiGiorno pizza noticed that “#whyistayed” was trending on twitter, and jumped on board with a tweet that read “#whyistayed you had pizza.” This doesn’t sound awful until one would consider that the hashtag was being used to discuss why victims of domestic violence stay in abusive relationships. For companies with a large audience, mistakes like this don’t go unnoticed. Thanks to social media users’ quick reactions and tendency to share, the tweet was all over major media outlets within hours.

TIME INTENSIVE

It takes a lot of time and effort to maintain an interactive social media presence. If one have a small team or limited resources, it is sometimes difficult to devote the needed resources to social media. People have to monitor each social network, respond to questions and feedback, and post valuable updates. While some people may view this as a drawback, investing time into social media can help your business create lasting relationships with customers that will keep them coming back for years to come.

SOCIAL MARKETING SEEN AS INTRUSIVE

Some avid social network members feel that marketing and advertising is intrusive to their privacy. According to web pro news, eight out of 10 social media users feel ambivalent to uneasy about sharing personal information and place social networks low in security confidence. The practice of shaping ads and campaigns off member information collected from social networking sites has stirred a wave confidentiality controversy, and marketing efforts can be met with bitterness and offensive reactions.

TOOLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

FACEBOOK

Facebook is the single most effective social media platform used by the marketers. Facebook was ranked as one of the top three drivers of Return on Investments (ROI) by 95.8 percent of respondents in The Future of Social Marketing among all the social networks. According to January 2017, there are over 1.86 billion users. Out of those 1.23 billion users log on daily. Facebook is more effective for Business to Customer companies. 77% of B2C companies said that they acquired customers through Facebook. Facebook profiles are more detailed than other social media platforms. They allow marketers to provide photos, videos and a detailed description which attracts more customers. Most of the marketers prefer Facebook for advertising as the demographic information is widely available to them. Marketers trust Facebook for all the types of ads. The marketers can easily target the audience group by age, interests, location, gender, etc. The ads viewed by the users will also be viewed by the friends of the user which multiplies the effectiveness of the marketing efforts. Facebook has a option of re-targeting which enables the marketer to show the ads only to those who have previously visited their site. The marketers can start a business page in Facebook and provide all the information of their product and profile of the business. The feedback of the marketers to the customers is very crucial in Facebook. It is believed that consumers appreciate companies that respond to the customer issues and complaints than those who don't take time to reply. Online shopping sites use Facebook as their major advertising platform. They promote their products through Facebook. Every time a big sale is going to happen, they start promoting it weeks before making the customers eagerly wait for the day to arise. Almost all the business websites have their Facebook link page on their website. This enables the customers to follow the page and get notified instantly rather that visiting the website every time. The marketers can also come up with polls or contest and giveaway prizes as people love responding to polls. The marketers should be very careful in handling the posts. They should post the content that encourages people to visit your page frequently.

TWITTER

Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, "tweets," restricted to 140 characters. Registered users can post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface, SMS or a mobile device app. Twitter account can be used to create Brand Awareness. A company or a brand to reach out to millions of people, in just a few minutes its posts has to be made viral. It's not very easy to go viral on internet. Twitter can helps a brand to a great extent in reaching out to the maximum number of target audience. The retweet feature works wonders in spreading out the company news and creating their brand awareness. Twitter has proven its worth by making several news viral better than any other news resources. Twitter drives Customer Engagement and services.

Twitter has a huge global reach. To engage as many people as possible with quick and constant flow of information is the main purpose of this microblogging site. The Retweet feature helps in fan engagement. Also, because of its high speed, twitter is highly popular. It can be used as the two-way communication channel to answer the customer queries. This is a popular tool among marketer, brand controllers, and customer care executives for fixing customer service issues, openly in public. Twitter boosts Search Engine Ranking. The website receives tons of unique views when a piece of content from a particular company goes viral. This increases the search engine page rank of the website. A company can conduct market surveys using their twitter profile. It can be used to understand consumer behavior and accordingly, a company can decide what works in their niche if there is any market gap, which they can fill in.

Twitter, being an interactive platform, companies enjoys the facilities to ask direct questions to their target consumers. Also, the brands can review their own twitter activities and analyze what works in favor of their company and what do not work. Based on such analyze, they can either leverage on their past or existing twitter campaigns, or make improvisations, if required. Recently, it launched a new feature for mobile users, which displays more context of the hottest trending topics. It shows information like when the topic started trending first and how tweets and retweets are there about the same topic. The 'Highlights' feature of Twitter provides the snapshots of the best tweets. Twitter regularly updates their existing features and launches new ones just to improve the casual users twitter experience. They aim to become an indispensable part of one's daily digital routine.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a free photo and video-sharing program and social network that was launched in October 2010. The service enables users to take a photo or video, apply a digital filter to it, and then share it with other Instagram users they are connected to on the social network as well as on a variety of social networking services. It enables its users to take pictures and videos, apply digital filters to them, and share them on a variety of social networking services, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr.

There are three different formats for marketing in Instagram:

Photo Ads: These look like regular photo posts, but they have a Sponsored label above the photo. They also have a Learn More button in the bottom-right corner, under the photo.

Video Ads: Like the photo ads, these look like regular video posts, but with a Sponsored label on top.

Carousel Ads: These ads look identical to photo ads but feature multiple photos that users can swipe through.

There are many ways to interact with other users on Instagram. For instance, one can tag other users in their photos, or privately message people. Interaction can be made with other customers through tagging, commenting or liking the posts posted. Instagram facilitates the users to perform private chats also, through which direct customer-seller contact can be maintained.

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video-sharing website. The site allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favorites, report, and comment on videos, subscribe to other users. The key to succeed in marketing on the social media is to create high-quality content that would attract people to view and share with their network. It offers small businesses a home for their videos, presentations, demonstrations and client testimonials.

The Viral Video: YouTube marketing is important to small businesses because of the potential for the video to go "viral" or get tons of views from a lot of potential customers. A viral video is one that is funny, useful or controversial. It is repeatedly shared on social media sites or by email with thousands of viewers generating a large amount to traffic to your video and your website.

Types of Videos: Many small-business owners don't know what type of videos to put on YouTube, so they neglect this social media network. Many types of videos varying in their pixel qualities and many technical aspects are played through YouTube (Eg. 3D videos, 360-degree videos etc.,). Also, on the other hand, YouTube videos need not be complicated or huge productions. On using just a video camera, testimonials are created from the customers, product demonstrations, training videos or commercials for the company. One may also use screen casting software to create how-to tutorials on the computer. Screen casting software records the computer screen so one can record step-by-step through a computer-related process.

Connect the Website: At the beginning and end of the video, annotations are to be used to place the website URL on the video. Annotations are small notes on the videos that alert the viewer to important information. By placing the website URL in the video, one would direct traffic to the website and increase the website traffic. YouTube also offers widgets and buttons to place on the website directing the website traffic to your YouTube videos. It has more than 60 million users in India. More than half of them use it in Smartphone. One-third of Internet users view YouTube. In India, 70% of YouTube users are of below 35 years of age.

GOOGLE

Google+ is an interest-based social network that is owned and operated by Google. Google+ is an amazing tool for many business people and it is especially effective for marketers. The excuse of not using it because the target audience members are not using the tool does not really hold any water. It is certainly easy enough to get the target audience to connect and to begin to interact with the business. The many features that Google+ offers are so effective and they really will allow to interact effectively with your target audience and to build your mutually beneficial relationship together. After all, social media can only succeed through relationships that flourish.

Many marketers have a variety of reasons for why they don't use Google+ or why they have never really gotten into using it in any profound way. Some of those reasons are:

Lack of convenience: To many people, Google+ may not seem as easy or convenient to use as other popular social media channels. It may simply be a matter of getting used to using it and just proceeding with it.

Complicated to learn: Some people have an issue with how long it takes to learn to use Google+ effectively. It may be true that there is a long learning curve to really get up to speed but the effort will definitely be well worth it.

The business owner cannot connect with his or her target audience: Because Google+ has not been around for as long as some of the other social media channels that have become so popular, the number of people who have connected may not be as great. However, more and more people are

joining Google+ communities all of the time and if the business owner's target audience members have not been connected up to this point, they can join easily and that issue will completely be eliminated.

6. CONCLUSION

The marketers (and all other people) would like to use social media tools that are as simple and straightforward as possible and they want to get the most that they can from their efforts. Social Networks have earned over \$8 billion from advertising in the year 2015. More organizations plan to spend more than 20% of their total advertising budgets on social media channels. According to Hubspot, 92% of marketers in 2014 claimed that social media marketing was important for their business, with 80% indicating their efforts increased traffic to their websites. And according to Social Media Examiner, 97% of marketers are currently participating in social media—but 85% of participants aren't sure what social media tools are the best to use. Analyzing the above mentioned statistical data would demonstrate the huge potential for social media marketing to increase sales, but also the lack of understanding on how to achieve those results. Only very few social media is used aptly for marketing purposes. Not everyone are aware of the marketing techniques that can be implemented through social media. This research article focused and discovered various usages and facilities provided by various social media, which liberates marketing aspects. Therefore the research article would conclude that this is the "Prime time to double tap and realize the potential of social media" and efficient use of the same must be ensured.

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