

Social media – A protagonist in marketing

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Abstract

Social media marketing is the process in which the link with the audience in order to increase the sales and to build the brand is performed through the social media. It has become a very important tool for the people to connect with other people or organisation. People use social media as a tool to share their experience, tips or any issues they face with their friends and connections. The study aims in analysing the four major social media platforms, which includes, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube on how they use the five core pillars of the social media marketing which includes strategy, planning and publishing, listening and engagement, analytics and reporting and finally advertising.

Keywords: *connections, strategy, social media, advertising*

Introduction

Social media is an internet based tool that is used to share information among the people. Although social media was introduced initially as a means of communication in order to engage people, now it has become commercial. Due to its popularity, the number of people using social media has increased. It has become an issue of fashion, if a person is not having account in any social media he is in fact considered as weird by so many people. Social media which was once used only for communication has now totally changed for advertising means too.

During 1930's if we talk about media then only two sources will come to mind. One is newspaper and the other is magazine. And Procter and Gamble is the first company to use media advertising. And it was during 1950's television commercial came into existence and made marketers to shift their strategies in order to attract the people through advertising. With the introduction of cable TV in 1980 the entire nature of advertisement had a swift. After the introduction of World Wide Web

(WWW), AT & T was the first company to use internet to market the service.

This has become an advantage for the marketers. They started shifting their focus towards social media by changing their mode of advertising. Internet is not only used in computer, but in mobile, tablets, i-pads and other smart devices including watches. And the key advantage is the marketers can reach the customers 24/7 through variety of media. Many online apps give great discount during midnight. The market has become very competitive, and it is becoming very difficult to use traditional marketing to reach customers.

The key advantage is social media is instant, that is customers can access all the details with the single click. It has created a culture of active mind-set among the people. The traditional marketing cannot create such a mind-set. Social media has the power to make people buy the product by the attractive way of advertising and in fact reminding them frequently by using pop-ups, which is not possible in traditional marketing. Social media is a platform which is easily accessible by anyone who is having internet.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is considered as a group of internet based application which aid in creation and exchange of content among the users. Apart from being a tool for good communication in order to keep in touch with family and friends, it has become a place where customers tend to learn more about a product or service. Marketers should try to use this as an opportunity to device new methods to shop (Shankar et al. 2011).

Consumers perception towards marketing plays a key role in their purchasing behaviour. When the marketers are marketing their products through the social media they should be aware of consumer technology readiness. They should do proper research and then start social media advertising. If

what they are advertising is not accessed by people or if it creates negative impact on them, then it is of no use (Mady, 2011).

The research study conducted by Georgi and Mink (2012) found seven factors that contribute to the success of social media marketing. The factors include: security, content, convenience, atmosphere, quality, social and hedonic (emotional aspect that customer face when they interact with the product/ service). Chu (2011) in the study found that facebook users have more intense attitude towards the social media usage and marketing. Customers who have more positive attitude towards advertising will join a brand or will become a member of retailer facebook group. Basically college goers have more positive attitude towards social media and it means that social media sites act as a rich target market for younger market.

Ghulam Rasool Madni (2014) in his research found that social media plays a vital role in influencing the customers to purchase online. The research proved that giving a constant information about the product and making the customers aware about the details of the products frequently through social media helps in increasing the purchasing behaviour of the customers. The research conducted by Mredu Goyal (2016) identified that the preference of customers to go to a hotel or restaurants depends on the reviews which is posted on the social media and other sites like food panda, zomato, swiggy etc. Now-a-days consumers have become digitally active and so through the social media the consumers choose the restaurants which are highly rated.

FIVE PILLARS IMPACT ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND YOUTUBE

STRATEGY

In facebook and Instagram when the business people are advertising their products, they should be very clear with the goals of the business. They should be clear with the content which they are going to advertise. The images should be catchy and attractive in such a way that it should instil the customers to buy the products. Now-a-days many customers are either getting attracted by the catchy offers that the business people provide in social media or the comments given by the users will make them to buy a product. Where as although

videos have impact on facebook and Instagram it has a greater impact on youtube users. There are many homemakers who watch serials, series, music and other shows frequently and when the products are advertised in the middle they get a chance to view the advertisement and sometimes if it is really worth or the more frequent the advertisement is put the frequency of purchase will increase.

PLANNING AND PUBLISHING

Anything done in hurry will not touch customers heart. For instance be it Flipkart or Amazon, when they are giving offers during Diwali or New year, they start with their advertisement few days before itself. And the frequency they do will also increase when the offer is nearing. Everything should be pre-planned. The content or the video should be planned accordingly. If the same content is posted again and again customers will be bored. There may be customers who are using facebook and Instagram simultaneously. If the same content is repeated in both it won't reach them properly. Everything should be planned in advance and done according to the target audience. The business people should have content calender, where the contents which the customers are going to see will be listed according to the days. The content should be published according to the schedule. Same content cannot be posted on the first day as well as tenth day. As the days are nearing for the offer, the content should vary. Planning is really needed to attract the customers. This is because the customers will not have a direct contact with the products when they are buying through social media. The videos posted in youtube should be in such a way that the customers are getting a real view about the product. And in fact social media is using the digital attitude of customers to target them. In television there is prime time when people will watch the shows for sure, so if advertised the people will watch the advertisement for sure. In the same way people will not always be in social media, there are times when the frequency of users will increase. Many office goers and college students are more active during nights, so if the content is published at that time it will reach more customers, compared to publishing in afternoon. Many sites give offers during mid night, because that is the time when many youngsters are active in social media. Though videos in youtube can be posted frequently in between shows, publishing the

content should be carefully done in the right time in facebook and Instagram to target the customers.

LISTENING AND ENGAGEMENT

After publishing the content/image or video comments will be coming from the customers. The comments may be positive or negative. The advertiser should be very careful in replying to the comments. A wrong reply may spoil the entire business. In facebook and Instagram we would have seen customers replying to the product advertisements. There are people who first post the negative comment. Immediately if the advertiser gives back to them in a negative way then many customers will be lost. Careful investigation should be done before replying to the comments. For positive comments encouraging and enthusiastic reply should be given. This will motivate the customers and in fact increase the customers to buy the product. Similarly when posting a video careful administration should be done before doing it. There are people who can easily track even a minor mistake, if commented the advertiser should kindly oblige it and rectify the mistake instead of arguing. This is because there are many advertisers who are in the queue to advertise their products to the customers. Community management is very essential in this area. By spending money, time and energy the advertiser would have built the community which should not be broken by the advertiser's attitude. A proper two way communication should be maintained.

ANALYTICS AND REPORTING

Although publishing and interaction is done, how effectively it has reached the target audience have to be found out. The marketers should know how the advertisement in social media is effective. There are many social media analytics too, that will help in identifying the customers reach of a product. Reports like page engagement rate, total reach, fan demographics, video views, etc can be found. Analytics is really needed to check the reach of the advertisement because money spent should not be wasted. The analytics helps in where to start, continue and stop the advertising based on the report.

ADVERTISING

The advertising in social media help to reach broader and targeted customers. It should be based

on location, demographic, interest, behaviour, app users, site visitors and connection. Since the social media is targeting the users according to the group the products are reaching the customers at a faster rate compared to television advertising. When the marketers are targeting the customers then the reach will increase. So based on the category of users proper advertisement should be done to target them and to get more customers.

CONCLUSION

Social media acts as a platform in creating the brand awareness among the people. In the sense that the people will give top priority to the brand by communicating about the positives of the brand to their peers. Although in facebook we think it is just a post but actually the content is shared and it is becoming the talking point for many. Advertisers should be very careful and choosy in choosing words and images as it reaches millions in a single click. Social media helps in getting new customers at a lower cost compared to traditional advertising. The facebook page and Instagram page helps in getting people to the product page. On the customers side they get more products at a single click and sitting at a same place. The present generation have become tech savvy, the business people should use the social media platform in a right way to target the customers.

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