STRATEGIES & IMPACT OF ON-LINE MARKETING – A STUDY WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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Abstract

Today, the world is competitive. Change exists everywhere. We are in technological era. Everyday new technologies are coming up and Innovations are taking place. This is one of the changes which were referred by Lord Krishna in Bhagawat Gita. We have to adapt to the changing situations prevailing in the environment otherwise we cannot compete in this world and we will be thrown out of the race. Especially the advancement in communication technology brought everyone in the world, irrespective of their place and continent, much closer. Social media helps in connecting themselves with social networking sites through which now people can stay far and yet remain connected. Apart from this media like Facebook create a loyal connection between product/service and individual which leads to large advertising opportunities. Similarly, other social media like Blogs create a platform to post comment on any event which needs to be publicized also can be utilized as a promotional technique for customer’s adoption as well as for promotions. In the present day, users are acquiring followers & subscribers and directing them to your social networking page. These media has a competitive edge over other popular public media like Television because there is a time gap between social event occurrence and the time it is being broadcasted. This research paper emphasizes on the strategies which can take this digital marketing mode beyond the normal social media at present. Ultimately, digital marketer can build their community strong enough to make their marketing effective & initiative buying.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Social Media, Blog, Twitter, Facebook, Social Advertising.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing refers to digital marketing which is the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. Social media marketing programs usually revolves on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media. Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Increased communication for organizations fosters brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive, effective platform with more reach for organizations to implement marketing campaigns.
Objective of the Study

1. To make a detailed study on strategies and impacts of Social Media Marketing and to make it as an effective Promotional tool in the present day Marketing.

Methodology of Research

The researcher made diagnostic study and employed secondary data for this study. Secondary data were collected from various sources like Research Journals, Text books and websites.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chu (2011) also found that users who are Facebook group members maintain a more favourable attitude toward social media and advertising. Users who have more positive attitudes toward advertising are more likely to join a brand or a retailer’s Facebook group to receive promotional messages. Based on this result, Chu (2011) suggests that a link exists between consumers’ use of and engagement in group applications on a social media sites. The relationship between consumers’ use of and engagement with group applications influences the rate and effectiveness of advertising on social media, particularly Facebook. Generally, as Chu (2011) notes, Facebook’s college-aged users have the most favourable attitudes toward social media advertising and are the largest growing demographic, which suggests that social media sites are a potentially rich platform for online advertising campaigns, especially for companies with a younger target market.

Cox (2010) also investigated the correlation between age and attitude and found that social network user attitude toward online advertising formats (i.e. blogs, video, and brand channel or page) differed to some extent across age groups. She explains that users who fall in the 18-28 age brackets had strong positive attitudes towards blogs, video, and brand channel ad formats. This was because users’ found these ad formats to be eye catching, informative, and amusing. The 35-54 age groups preferred ad formats on video and brand channels because they found them to be more eye catching, informative, and had better placement within the online page layout. Overall, online advertising formats with positive attributes are welcomed by users; however, ads that are intrusive or interfere with online social networking activities, such as pop up, expandable, or floating formatted ads were disliked by network users (Cox 2010).

According to Chi (2011) users perceive advertising differently depending on the social network, which suggests user motivations for online social networking may play a vital role in defining consumer’s responses to social media marketing. As mentioned previously in the explanation of Pookulangara and Koesler’s (2011) study, the technology acceptance model (TAM) was also used by Harris and Dennis (2011). Harris and Dennis (2011), however, used TAM as a loose framework that combined trust and the factors associated with TAM (i.e. perceived enjoyment, ease of use, and usefulness). The TAM determined that consumers, specifically students, hold a hierarchy of trust when using social media such as Facebook. Student’s trust ‘real’ friends, then Facebook friends, followed by expert blogs and independent review sites and lastly celebrities and e-retailer sites (Harris and Dennis 2011).

Di Pietro and Pantano (2012) conducted further research using the TAM to discern that enjoyment is the major factor that influences consumers to use social networks as a platform for assisting in their buying decisions. They found that the fun provided by Facebook, as well as the opportunity it provides users to ask for suggestions in an easy and entertaining way, motivates individuals to pay more attention to the products promoted on Facebook. “Facebook promotes a consumer to consumer approach, exploited by consumers to share
experiences and create a common knowledge on products and services; on the other, it provides managers a direct channel for communicating with clients through a business to consumer approach” (Di Pietro and Pantano 2012, 20). Retailers can improve their Facebook page appeal by adding games, contests, and interactive applications, which can attract more users (Di Pietro and Pantano 2012).

Various Platforms of Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Zorpia, Instagram, Google+, Blogs

Social networking websites allow one to interact with one another and build relationships. When companies either product oriented or service oriented join those sites, people can interact with the company. That interaction feels personal to users because of their previous experiences with Social Networking site interactions. Social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, interest and blogs allow individual followers to “re-tweet” or “repost” comments made by the product being promoted. By repeating the message, all of the user’s connections are able to see the message, therefore reaching more people. Social networking sites act as word of mouth. Because the information about the product or service is being put out there and is getting repeated, more traffic is brought to the Product/Service.

Through social networking sites, Products/Services can have conversations and interactions with individual followers. This personal interaction can instil a feeling of loyalty into followers and potential customers. Also, by choosing whom to follow on these sites, products can reach a very narrow target audience.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phone usage has also become a benefit for social media marketing. Today, many people started using smart phones have social networking capabilities: individuals are informed of any happenings on social networking sites through their mobile phones, in real-time. This constant connection to social networking sites means products and services can constantly remind and update followers about their capabilities, uses, importance, etc. Because mobile phones are connected to social networking sites, advertisements are always in sight. Also many companies are now keeping QR codes along with products for individuals to access the company’s website or online services with their smart-phones.

Engagement

In the context of the social web, engagement means that customers and stakeholders are participants rather than viewers. Social media in business allows anyone and everyone to express and share an opinion or idea somewhere along the business’s path to market. Each participating customer becomes part of the marketing department, as other customers read their comments or reviews. The engagement process is then fundamental to successful social media marketing.

In 2007, Adidas, and their agency Carat, created a social media experience for soccer players. Adidas pitted two different cleat types against one another and asked people to “choose your side.” The content focused on fostering an environment of friendly discussion and debate of Adidas’ two models of elite soccer cleats/boots, Predator and F50 TUNIT. Visitors to the community had the opportunity to align themselves with one product “team” and offer comments in support of their preferred model. The community included content about professional Adidas soccer players on each “team,” rotational product views, downloadable graphics, forum discussions, a link to additional product information, and a link to the adidas Mexico Fútbol profile page.

Social networking sites can have a large impact on the outcome of events. In 2010, a Facebook campaign surfaced in the form of a petition. Users
virtually signed a petition asking NBC Universal to have actress Betty White host Saturday Night Live. Once signed, users forwarded the petition to all of their followers. The petition went viral and on May 8, 2010, Betty White hosted SNL.

2014 LOK Sabha Election

The 2014 Lok Sabha campaign had a huge presence on social networking sites. Mr. Narendra Modi Ji, Prime Ministerial Candidate of BJP, used Twitter and Facebook to differentiate his campaign. His social networking site profile pages were constantly being updated and interacted with followers. The use of social networking sites gave Mr. Narendra Modi Ji, Prime Minister of India, campaign access to e-mail addresses, as posted on social networking site profile pages. This allowed the BJP Party to launch e-mail campaigns asking for votes and campaign donations.

Local Trades

Small Businesspersons also use social networking sites as a promotional technique. Merchants can follow individuals social networking site uses in the local area and advertise specials and deals. These can be exclusive and in the form of “get a free drink with a copy of this tweet”. This type of message encourages other locals to follow the business on the sites in order to obtain the promotional deal. In the process, the business is getting seen and promoting itself.

Twitter Tactics

Twitter allows companies to promote products on an individual level. The use of a product can be explained in short messages that followers are more likely to read. These messages appear on followers’ home pages. Messages can link to the product’s website, Facebook profile, photos, videos, etc. This link provides followers the opportunity to spend more time interacting with the product online. This interaction can create a loyal connection between product and individual and can also lead to larger advertising opportunities. Twitter promotes a product in real-time and brings customers in.

Face book

Facebook profiles are more elaborate than Twitter. They allow a Product/Service to provide videos, photos, and longer descriptions. Videos can show when a product can be used as well as how to use it. These also can include testimonials as other followers can comment on the product pages for others to see. Facebook can link back to the product’s Twitter page as well as send out event reminders. Facebook promotes a product in real-time and brings customers in. As marketers see more value in social media marketing, advertisers continue to increase sequential ad spend in social by 30%.

Strategies to extend the reach with Sponsored Stories and acquire new fans with Facebook ads continue to an uptick in spend across the site. The study attributes 85% of "engagement" or clicks to Likes that link back to Facebook advertising. Today, brands increase fan counts on average of 10% monthly, increasing their fan base by two-times the amount annually.

Blogs

Blogs allow a product or company to provide longer descriptions of products or services. The longer description can include reasoning and uses. It can include testimonials and can link to and from Facebook, Twitter and many social network and blog pages. Blogs can be updated frequently and are promotional techniques for keeping customers. Other promotional uses are acquiring followers and subscribers and direct them to your social network pages.

Various Gears of Social Media Marketing

Besides research tools, there are many companies providing specialized gears for social media marketing, such as:

- Social Media
- Social Media Monitoring
Social Aggregation
Social Book Marking and Tagging
Social Analytics and Reporting
Blog Marketing
Validation
Automation
Application Of Digital Marketing
Traditional Advertising Vs. Social Media Advertising

Traditional advertising techniques include print and Non-print media. The Internet had already overtaken television as the largest advertising market. Websites often include banner or pop-up ads. Social networking sites did not always have ads. In exchange, products/services have entire pages and are able to interact with users. Television commercials often end with a spokesperson asking viewers to check out the product website for more information. Print ads are also starting to include barcodes on them. These barcodes can be scanned by cell phones and computers, sending viewers to the product website. Advertising is beginning to move viewers from the traditional outlets to the electronic ones.

Social Networking and ItsLeaks

Internet and social networking leaks are one of the issues facing traditional advertising. Video and print ads are often leaked to the world via the Internet earlier than they are scheduled to premiere. Social networking sites allow those leaks to go viral, and be seen by many users more quickly. Social networking sites have become a hub of comment and interaction concerning the event. This allows individuals watching the event on the west coast (time-delayed) to know the outcome before it airs. Grammy Awards highlighted this problem. Viewers on the west coast learned who won different awards based on comments made on social networking sites by individuals watching live on the east coast. Since viewers knew who won already, many tuned out and ratings were lower. All the advertisement and promotion put into the event was lost because viewers didn’t have a reason to watch.

Advanced Social Media Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses

The definition of an advanced social media strategy is a technique that goes beyond the normal social media presence. It introduces or reinforces a marketing message while pushing a user to another profile or business site. Before moving forward with an advanced strategy, it’s important that your business understands social marketing, has experience engaging consumers, and that you possess a basic understanding of online marketing.

Strategy: Usage of Software

“A picture is worth a thousand words” is famous saying. But in the present digital era, it has never been truer. Consumers are now using the web to look for product pictures and videos; they want more information and want to see what they’re considering buying. The good news is that it’s easy for a company to create and publish videos and pictures. In addition to taking photos of products/services, you can also take pictures at office events as a way to highlight company culture. This not only helps convince others to work with you or to buy from you (consumers see that you are down to earth and one of them, instead of a stuffy company), it also helps your HR department recruit new employees. Who doesn’t want to work for a company that celebrates birthdays and has a good time? Videos are useful for explaining complex how-tos or concepts. Showing step by step directions can have a greater impact than even the most well written article. Businesses don’t have to invest huge sums of money to create good videos, either. Researcher highly recommends the relatively cheap Flip camcorder, which takes great videos and is easy for even a non-technical marketer to use. Software can break down the faceless business-to-consumer sales flow and make your company appear friendlier. Use
videos and images to show that your business is fun, you care about your employees, and most importantly, that you care about your customers.

Example: WorldMusicSupply.com

WorldMusicSupply.com, an online retailer of musical instruments and accessories, has used YouTube to build a strong online community. Their channel has built over 8,000 subscribers and has over 280,000 views.

Strategy: Integrate Offline and Online Advertising

Many small businesses do some sort of offline advertising, whether it be radio, print, or cable. Social marketing allows a business to extend their offline sales pitch. Including your Facebook Page or blog URL in offline ads act as social proof, inviting potential consumers to see your community and increase trust in your business. Not only can integrating online and offline advertising help the conversion process, but it can also help build your community. Introducing potential consumers to your social profiles means they may join your community now and adopt your product/service later.

Strategy: Revision of Message

leverage more online platforms. However, most deliver the same message over multiple platforms instead of tailoring communications for each individual site. Social platforms each have an ecosystem of their own. What might be acceptable on Tumbler might be considered spam on Facebook. A specific style of writing might spread on Twitter but fail on FriendFeed. Understanding that each site is different and then customizing your message ensures they do well on each respective site. Not only does customizing messages across sites help the message spread but it keeps users from receiving multiple identical communications. Be sure to maximize your potential by sending a user that follows the business on Twitter and Facebook two different messages, instead of the same thing.

Strategy: Social Networks of Local, Beyond Call

For a small business, local search can be a big win. Being visible to consumers looking for a business in their area is extremely important. Make sure your site is included in local business directories in order to help ensure that consumers find you when they need you. Sometimes finding many sites can be difficult. However first, make sure you check your competitors. Where are they listed? Check their inbound links to check for business directories you can add yourself to. Also, make sure your business has been added to Google Maps, using the Local Business Centre. Take the time to include all the information you can and update any old news. For many consumers, this will be their first interaction with the business.

Example: Bella Napoli is a small pizzeria in New York that has done a great job of making sure they appear in as many local searches as possible.

Strategy: Sales Promotional Strategies

Building a community is only the first part of social marketing. Using that community to drive sales, propagate marketing, or crowdsourcing operations is the true power of social media. One way to excite the community is to collectively do something to create a contest or offer an exclusive discount (i.e., the contest can create competition between users). Not only does a contest build buzz organically but if contestants need to, for example, publish an article that gets the most comments in order to win, the contest itself becomes viral. A good social media contest should include some sort of sharing or virality as a requirement for winning. Discounts are also a great way to connect with your community. By giving exclusive coupons to your social community, you’re rewarding and reminding them that you are not only a brand to engage with, but also to buy from.
Example: Netfirms.Com

NetFirms.com decided to make it easier to register a domain by allowing people to do it via Twitter. Those who participated or spread the word by tweeting were also entered into a prize drawing.

III. CONCLUSION

Social Media marketing plays a major role in promoting a business irrespective of its volume. The modern generation of business professionals believes in technologically advanced tools. Social media is among these powerful tools which have capability to transform the work mechanism of start-ups. Small entrepreneurs especially the local business people are the more beneficiaries of social media. No matter how creative a startup’s business model is, it needs to send across the right message to the targeted audience. This can indeed be attained through the use of social media. This mode of reaching out to the masses is not just innovative but also delivers perfect results. Social platforms each have an ecosystem of their own.

Creating a basic social media presence is easy enough, getting your community to actually do something is more difficult. Make sure your site is included in local business directories in order to help ensure that consumers find you when they need you. Customizing messages across sites help the message spread but it keeps users from receiving multiple identical communications. By giving exclusive coupons to your social community, you’re rewarding and reminding them that you are not only a brand to engage with, but also to buy from. Taking advantage of these strategies can help you build your community, make your marketing more effective, and incentivize buying.

IV. REFERENCE

1) 5 Advanced Social Media Marketing Strategies for small business by Samir Balwani.