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Social Media Marketing : Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Consumer is the basic foundation of every business. What consumer seeks, thinks, prefers and buys is of great importance to marketers to know and study the buying behavior of people. Every person has their own taste and preferences. It is influenced by many factors. Traditionally buyers concentrate on different aspects of products like quality, price and brand preferences, but now in present time many consumers relied also on social recommendations while making purchase decision. Many consumers are using blogs/ face book reviews and ratings as mean to seek recommendation. Peer advice and find product / service information. So social media is serving as an all-purpose medium to engage with consumers at all stages of the consumer decision journey. India is in transition stage we are moving from traditional marketing tools like, TV, radio, magazine etc. to modern marketing tools i e. Social media tools face book, corporate blogs, video channels, banners as on social nets. The trend of online marketing is increasing all over the world as well as in India also. Main focus of the proposed study is to provide an understanding to the concept social media marketing and to find out the challenges and opportunities for social media marketing in India.

Keywords : *Concept of Social Media, Online Marketing, Challenges and Opportunities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays technology is constantly changing, and when your brand is a part of the social networks it is obvious that it be able to change with it. Globally, companies are increasingly using social media and adopting new type of networked enterprises to exploit emerging market opportunities. According to a survey by McKinsey & Co. released in November 2011, "Two thirds of big companies now use social networks or blogs." Most companies are using social media to increase their financial performance and market share. Companies use social networking technologies for a range of business processes as also generate new ideas. Social networking and blogs, in particular, are used largely in externally focused processes that gather competitive intelligence and support marketing efforts. Social media has changed the way companies interact with customers. A fully networked business environment

means better access to customer profiles and preferences. Companies seeking advantage over competitors cannot ignore social media as it helps them connect and engage with customers. The meaning of the term 'social media' can be derived from two words which constitute it. Media generally refers to advertising and the communication of ideas or information through publications/channels. Social implies the interaction of individuals within a group or community. Taken together, social media simply refers to communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool. Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Trusov, Buckling, and Pauwles, (2009), explained that social media platforms provide a user-friendly tool for users to invite and converse with other. This type of interaction has given voice to millions of consumers who now have the capacity to talk to each other and are able to share their experiences and opinions with a global audience at little or no cost.

Joseph, (2010), suggested that social media presents marketers with the opportunity to execute more emotional touch points in areas where consumers are able to connect with each other and share their experiences. These touch points are hugely emotional and offer marketers the opportunity to connect and engage with consumers correctly and generate exposure for the organization's brands.

Gunelius (2011), defined that social media marketing as a form of direct or indirect marketing that is used to build awareness, recognition, recall and action for a brand, business, and towards the product with using the tools of social web, such as blogging, micro-blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing.

Xiang & Gretzel, (2014), suggested that Social media content is intentionally crafted by customers in an attempt to educate and advise others about products, services, brands, and issues. By the Social media contents are updated frequently and indexed favorably by search engines in a more frequent manner. So Social media has significant and persuasive effect on brands.

India Trend Survey (2015), depicted that Indian organizations use social media much more than the global average and their counterparts in emerging economies. Survey answers key questions that many marketers have in India such as what is the business objective for using social media, what are some of the best tactics, what is the average social media budget, how do you measure social media, and what is the future of social media.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To provide an understanding to the concept social media marketing.

2. To find out the challenges and opportunities for social media marketing in India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is a descriptive in nature of study. Keeping in view the objectives, the Secondary data has been used to make the study more relevant and authentic. The data has been collected from the following sources, i.e. Books, Journals, Reports, Magazines, Newspaper and Social Websites etc.

5. CONCEPT SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The concept of Social Media Marketing is top of the agenda for many business executives today. Today, we are living in 21st century and people do not find time to come & interact with each other. Social media helps in connecting themselves with social networking sites through which now people can stay far and yet remain connected. **Traditional Media of Marketing**; Traditional advertising channels refer to those old advertising media that existed before the advent of the internet. Over the years traditional advertising channels have been used in promotions, marketers have used traditional forms of marketing such as, sales promotion, media advertising, public relations and direct marketing to encourage prospects to take action or persuade existing customers to continue buying their products/ services. This has been done with an aim of increasing sales through branding. **Social Media of Marketing**; Social media has gained a lot of popularity over the past few years, and as a result of this popularity, Social media marketing is now increasingly becoming an ingrained aspect of political campaigns, national defense strategies, public policy, public relations, brand management and even intra company communication. Since the major task of marketing as tool used to inform consumers about the company's products, who they are and what they offer, social marketing plays an important role in marketing. Other traditional Media have experienced decline in both business and popularity. Palmer and Lewis (2009), argued that the main stream media channels have faced many challenges in recent times that have led to closure with TV facing down turn in their profits

levels. The companies have been tightened their budgets especially advertising budgets which have shifted to online channels, i.e. Facebook, You Tube, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter and Corporate blogs etc.

Present Status of Social Media Marketing in India

Indian social media scene represents a fast-emerging and influential domain of information exchange involving nearly 60% of the 83 million Internet users in the country. While Facebook and twitter continue to dominate the social media scene, Twitter and some other Indian micro blogging websites are also becoming very popular. The rising significance of social media in India is demonstrated by the fact that almost all the conventional media have registered their presence on the social networking websites. According to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India data, there are 83 million Internet users in India and more than 56% of them are on broadband. According to media reports, an increasing number of Indian corporations are turning to social media in an attempt to reach out to their customers in the wake of marketing budget cuts. Indian corporations are not new to the virtual world, having made their presence felt in Second Life. As of today, top IT firm Wipro is running “Innovation Centers” on social media, while Infosys is using Twitter to address customer concerns.

Opportunities of Social Media Marketing In India- Effective use of social media can bring great opportunities for your business, but will require some thought and planning. Moving with fast-paced developments in online technology and interaction tools can help to enhance your brand, boost your profile and perhaps even win new business. However you need to keep a healthy sense of perspective on what your business is able to put into social media, and what’s realistic to expect in return. India has huge potential of social media marketing. Here is some current emerging opportunities are available in Market in the ways social media marketing, so they can improve their business.

1. Providing Competitive Edge to Businesses: Social media is a powerful tool that business owners can use to increase

chances of success. Social media marketing is providing competitive edge to the businesses in following ways: Market the business product, Relate to customers, Attract quality staff, Feedback from customers, Gathering information.

- 2. Brand Recognition :** Social media networks are just new channels for your brand’s voice and content. This is important because it simultaneously makes you easier and more accessible for new customers, and makes you more familiar and recognizable for existing customers.
- 3. Opportunities to Improve brand loyalty :** Brands who engage on social media channels enjoy higher loyalty from their customers. A strategic and open social media plan could prove influential in morphing consumers into being brand loyal.
- 4. Opportunities to Switching and Adaptation:** Every post you make on a social media platform is an opportunity for customers to convert. When you build a following, you’ll simultaneously have access to new customers, recent customers, and old customers, and you’ll be able to interact with all of them and every their reaction could lead to a site visit, and eventually a conversion. Not every interaction with your brand results in a conversion, but every positive interaction increases the likelihood of an eventual conversion.
- 5. Higher Brand Authority :** Interacting with your customers regularly is a show of good faith for other customers. When people go to compliment or brag about a product or service, they turn to social media. And when they post your brand name, new audience members will want to follow you for updates. The more people that are talking about you on social media, the more valuable and authoritative your brand will seem to new users.
- 6. Decreased Marketing Costs :** A marketer

found as little as six hours of effort per week has enough to generate increased traffic. If you can lend just one hour a day to developing your content and syndication strategy, you could start seeing the results of your efforts. Even paid advertising through Facebook and Twitter is relatively cheap (depending on your goals, of course

7. **Richer Customer Experiences :** Social media, at its core, is a communication channel like email or phone calls. Every customer interaction you have on social media is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate your customer service level and enrich your relationship with your customers.
8. **Improved Customer Insights :** Social media also gives you an opportunity to gain valuable information about what your customers are interested in and how they behave, via social listening.
9. **Brand development :** Brand development on social media could be described as marketing that never sleeps. Social media marketing allows brands to interact with customers outside of traditional marketing (i.e. postal mail, commercials, physical coupons). Brand development on social media is about developing unique content that resonates well with followers. Engaging content can create buzz and virality, thus generating organic (and free) viral reach for your brand.

Social media challenges for business :

Social networks can help companies spread good news fast. There are so many social media tools and platforms it can be hard to know where to begin and it can also spread bad news just as quickly. Moreover, if customers want to vent their anger on your product or service, they can use your social network account. Managers need to understand how to handle those situations quickly and effectively. It can be a drain on your time and a potential distraction from your core business. Some of the main challenges to consider are:

1. **Quick feedback :** Social networks can help

companies spread good and bad news just as quickly. Moreover, if customers want to vent their anger on your product or service, they can use your social network account. Managers need to understand how to handle these challenging situations quickly and effectively. Also, as social media is not as widely moderated or censored as mainstream media, individuals can say anything they want about a company or brand, positive or negative.

2. **Lack of Brand Control :** Several available Media laws, because social network marketing encloses publishing or transfer of the on-line contents there are also certain legal settings if it comes to the advertisement in social network. There are a Lack of Brand Control, Thus business must be especially careful in the market research and advertising laws not to cross legal borders.
3. **Competing with other Brand :** Directly and indirectly your brand is competing with other alternative brand. These days all business owners watch out on social media market to know the status of their brand and activities of other alternative brand. And it makes competitive behavioral challenge among the business owners towards their product.
4. **Time Allocation :** Taking time out for social media related activities, it is very likely that you are always in a pinch for time and might not be able to prioritize your efforts on social media. Most business owners believe that they need to spend hours on their media pages to make sure that they are building a solid online presence. However, that is not exactly true. You don't need to stay glued to your computer at all hours of the day, but exact identify peak hours and devote that time for strengthen your business with social media.
5. **Contents Management :** Creating fresh content on a daily basis can prove to be a challenges task for business owners. This is

another reason why business owners unwilling to adopt social media marketing.

6. **Other** : Some other important and business effective challenges which are given below :

- ❖ What do you hope to achieve by using social media?
- ❖ How much time you can devote to social media?
- ❖ What are the most effective platforms to use?
- ❖ What are you trying to achieve for your business?

While social media gives you the chance to build brand awareness and customer loyalty, there are also dangers in participating in a public conversation forum. We need to have a clear idea of how to handle negative feedback about your business. We need to ensure that what you post and how you interact with people presents a professional image to the world. Although this new web culture provides a richer customer experience, it also raises issues of how businesses use and manage these new technologies. It's important to consider the legal implications and best practice using social media.

6. CONCLUSION

It has been concluded from the research paper, Nowadays technology is constantly changing, and when your brand is a part of the social networks it is

obvious that it be able to change with it. Globally, companies are increasingly using social media and adopting new type of networked enterprises to exploit emerging market opportunities. Social networking and blogs, in particular, are used largely in externally focused processes that gather competitive intelligence and support marketing efforts. Social media has changed the way companies interact with customers. A fully networked business environment means better access to customer profiles and preferences. It benefits customers because they get more direct and personal access. The rapid growth of business through social media is an indication of a sweeping change in the way businesses are conducted. Companies seeking advantage over competitors cannot ignore social media as it helps them connect and engage with customers. We need to have a clear idea of how to handle negative feedback about your business. In addition to ensure that what you post and how you interact with people presents a professional image to the world. Writing down a set of rules for how you will manage and overcome these challenges. Although this new web culture provides a richer customer experience, it also raises issues of how businesses use and manage these new technologies. It's important to consider the legal implications and best practice using social media. Social media has also raised customer expectations. They now expect immediacy in their online interactions - where content is regularly updated and any comments they make are quickly replied.

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