



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

SOCIAL MEDIA – A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

Dr. G. Jeyamani,

Guest Lecturer in Commerce, Alagappa University Evening College - Rameswaram

ABSTRACT

Promotion is the process of marketing communication to inform, persuade, remind and influence consumers or users in favour of the product and services. The promotion mix includes four major ingredients, viz Advertising, Publicity, Personal selling and Sales promotion. Advertisement is most powerful among these promotion tools. Nothing except the Mint can make money without advertising. Mass production and mass distribution totally depend on all forms of advertising and publicity. We can tell numerous people about a product or service in the quickest time interval at the lowest possible cost.

Social media permits individual to interact with one another and build relationships not only in our country but also worldwide. When business concerns join the social channels, consumers are able to interact with them and sharing their ideas directly. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, MySpace, Skype etc., are used extensively for communication. One of the most important merits of the use of social media is the online sharing of knowledge and ideas among the different groups of people. In the internet and computer world, it is actually impossible to design a marketing tool without considering social networks. Social media has become really important in today's marketing mix in general and in promoting the new product and existing on in particular. This article highlights the importance of social media as the most powerful marketing tool in the present scenario.

KEY WORDS: Social Media, Social network, Marketing tool, Marketing Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Social media refer to “the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that facilitate anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationship”. The introduction of personal computers, the Internet and e-commerce have had a great impact on how businesses operate and market. The introduction of social media technology is accelerating and we can expect it to have a similar impact on businesses now and into the future. India currently has a total population of over 1.36 billion people (it's the second most populous country next to China). Of that population, 230 million or 70% are active social media users. Even in the villages, we can see the people with android cell phones which has Face book, whatsapp. Before some years, we could see many people in front of TV and screen in the theatre. Nowadays, TV is prevailing in the homes with less no. of viewers and many theatres have been closed as very less no of consumers. It happened only because of Computers and cell phones with all facilities including internet and social media.

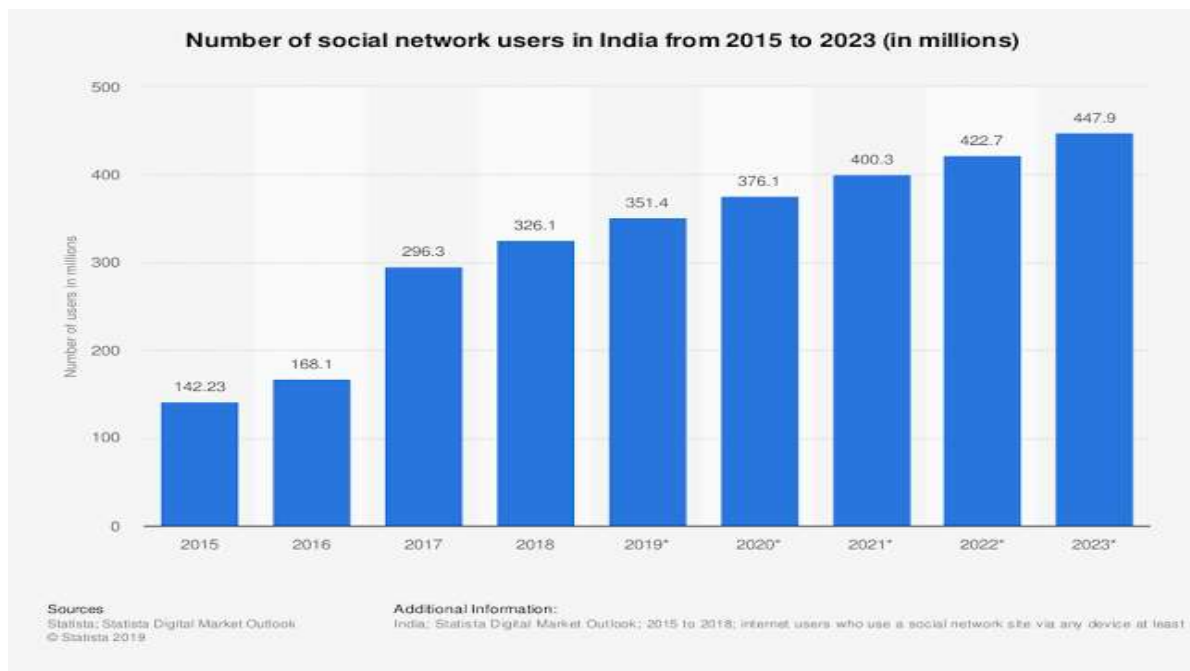
At present in the world, social media has become the important part of peoples' life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool. Social media plays an important role in changing people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Since the emergence of these social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter as key tools for news, journalists and their organizations have performed a high-wire act. Such Websites have become a day to day routine for the people.

Social media Statistics in India

- Though internet penetration is low in India in December 2018, 566 million users were online in India. Out of this - 493 million people are using the internet regularly (source:livemint).
- At the end of 2018, the number of social media users in India stood at 326.1 million. (statista)
- At the end of 2019, this number has been increased to 351.4 million.
- In a Survey, it is found that Internet users in India spend 2.4 hours on social media a day (slightly below the global average of 2.5 hours a day). (Source: The Hindu)
- It is mentioned that 290 million active social media users in India access social networks through their mobile phones (Source: Hootsuite - We Are Social report)
- It is understood through a research that 86% of the total number of social media users engage in some form of activity on their social channels (Source: Hootsuit e- We Are Social report)

- 97% of Indians watch videos online when they are connected to internet.

Major Social Media and their Usage in India



This picture reveals that no. of persons using social media in India in different period of time

- Facebook is the most popular social network in India when it is compared with others. Source: Social Samosa. Facebook is used by 241 million people in India. (Source: Investopedia).
- There are 69 million people on Instagram in India in the month of November 2018.
- Our country has 7.75 million users on Twitter. (Source: statista). In India, 18% of social media users look at Twitter for daily news. (Source: Reuters). The most followed person on Twitter is Shri Narendra Modi, PM of India, with 50.2 million followers.
- Most visited websites according to SimilarWeb. 1. Google.com, 2. Facebook.com, 3. Youtube.com, 4. Xvideos2.com 5. Amazon.in

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data has been collected from 100 respondents in the researcher's college and village. Secondary data has been collected from Websites, Reports, articles and Theses

A Survey and Data Collection

The researcher has made a simple and convenient survey among 50 students of various departments in the college, where he is employed, to know how many students are using social media in day to day life. It has been found as mentioned below

Table 1. Users of Social Media in College

S3

S.No	Department	No. of respondents	No of Social Media Users	Percentage of Users
1	Commerce	20	16	80
2	Maths	10	8	80
3	English	10	9	90
4	Comp Science	10	7	70
Total		50	40	80

It is understood from the table that 16 students out of 20 in the department of commerce are using the social media regularly. It is clearly known that 9 students out of 10 in the department of English are using the facebook and other media. It is found that out of 50 students, 40 students are using the social media regularly.

Table 2. Users of Social Media in Researcher's Village

The researcher belongs to a village in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil nadu. He made a convenient survey among 50 villagers to know the usage of social media as mentioned below.

S.No	Type of Persons	No of respondents	No of Social Media Users	Percentage of Users
1	Farmers	20	10	50
2	Govt and Private employees	10	8	80
3	Students	10	6	60
4	Job Seekers	10	8	80
Total		50	32	64

It is revealed from the table 2 that even half of the farmers are using facebook and others in the village. 80 percentage of employees of both private and govt sector are the users of social media. 60 percentage of students and 80 percentage of job seekers are also users of social Media in the village.

SOCIAL MEDIA – A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

Today, consumers are constantly connected to World Wide Web. To attract them, designing and maintaining a website is unavoidable. Some of the following networking sites are Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Linked in, other sites etc. With the help of them, a business man can post a product and ask for opinions and reviews and create banner about products, organizations etc. Business concern can post promotional codes for products likes discount coupons etc. He can create pages for products, organisations, celebrity etc. ask for suggestions. The business people can send links, product details to the members, groups for getting opinions, reviews etc. The following are proofs for Social Media as an inevitable marketing tool or strategy in this Electronic world.

- **Popularity of Social Media**

Generally, Marketing is very effective where large no. of people meet. Crores of people are at same place at same time ie social Media. With more than 1 billion people on Facebook, 200 million people on Twitter, and 200 million more on LinkedIn, social media touches nearly every customer that walks through door. For most small businesses, Facebook is the jumping-off point for getting started with social media marketing. With its extensive reach and dynamic functionality there are very few businesses that couldn't benefit from having a presence on Facebook and starting there will make it easier when they want to try something new.

- **Social Media at Free of Cost**

The Social media such as Face book, Twitter can be downloaded at free of cost. We can have an account without any charges. E mail id and Phone numbers are enough to create and maintain accounts in the social media. LinkedIn offers paid accounts with features that are targeted at more advanced users, but for the purposes of getting started, there is no upfront cost for most of the social networks. As it is available freely, no of users are getting increased every second.

- **Connectivity with the target Audience**

It provides the opportunity to an organization to maintain the connectivity with that target audience. Facebook Fans, Twitter followers, and LinkedIn connections are people who know the organization, have likely done business with in the past, and will be most likely to tell their friends about the organization. Social media allows concern to strengthen relationships with these connections through social engagement because that engagement is easily visible to the connections of current fans and followers. It can introduce the business to a whole new audience and enable to reach your next great customer.

- **Users in all age group and area**

The social media such as Facebook, Twitter and others are liked to use by all type of people including youngsters and aged. It has users in rural and urban areas. Some of the users are even illiterate.

- **Two -Way Communication**

There is no marketing tool available to small businesses today that provides the type of two-way communication that comes with using social media. It has the power to take any of the feedback which may be received from using a tool like email marketing and supercharge. It allows customers to share their thoughts, questions, and ideas quickly and publicly without having to take the time to write an entire email.

- **Perfect Customer Service**

Providing customer service is likely already a top priority for small business. Social media has changed the face of customer service. At present, Customers choose Social Media to post rather than talking to call center executives. They would rather share their problems

faced relating to the product on social media, with an intention to gain immediate action from the brand. By monitoring social media for customer feedback and offering a response, it really assists to drive real business results.

- **Transparency**

No cheat code involved. No black hat techniques allowed. All that happen in the social networking landscape is fool proof. Companies cannot fake authenticity in an attempt to get more people involved. Members can choose to associate with the company easily. Opinions made on social networking platforms are taken into consideration sincerely and more authoritative the companies get, more seriously they are taken.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The benefits to marketing via social networks are unlimited and highly gained at a low cost. The following are some of the benefits attained through social media marketing.

- **Branding**

All marketers agree that their most ideal customer is one who is a loyal as we all know that keeping customers is more cost-effective and efficient than creating new ones. Marketing through social networking sites increases recognition and awareness by increasing the online presence of your products and brand. When the company creates a group or organizes a promotion on a social networking site, the members are reminded about your brand and website with every interaction. Building brand awareness requires dedicated efforts over a long period of time where you need to constantly prove to your customers that they can lay their trust on your brand. As the customers are deciding what groups they want to join and what information they want to receive, this information is usually received by them automatically.

- **Website Traffic**

Communication and other sharing on social networking sites contain web links. If the company is mentioned and a link is given, these postings drive traffic to your site, increasing brand and product awareness. Due to the makeup of social networking sites, these links are naturally created and targeted to potential customers who are interested in the company, products, or services. Social media supports various formats such as text, images, videos, podcasts, etc. so that you can draw large no. of clients to your website. Social media is a great medium where the posts can be easily shared thereby allowing your brand to reach to multiple users, in different locations across different time zones.

- **Customer and Brand Loyalty**

Promoting the company or products by designing a social network can extensively enhance customer as well as brand loyalty. If persistence of the company is constant and honest, adds value by supplying useful content and appears personal, it will greatly enhance company's reputation while building trust and credibility. Provide assistance firstly and promote products only when asked and when appropriate; otherwise your attempts could be considered spam.

- **Introduction of New Brand**

Social networks provide a great opportunity to conduct a market survey upon the relevant community and their wants. The community can guide and participate in the product development process. Giving them a voice in the process can increase loyalty and guarantee when a new product is launched. Users of social networking sites profile themselves upon joining a network. These profiles can be very detailed and their purpose is to help the user who shares similar interests and activities. These profiles contain not only basic information about the user but also information on their education, areas of technical expertise, publications, memberships with other groups, geographic location and job marketers. Using these available groups with detailed profile, the similar products and services can be introduced easily to the needy.

- **Low Marketing Cost**

Introduction of a product or services through social media is very cheap. No need of having separate media and collection of list of consumers, we can post and share all ideas about our products within a fraction of second throughout world. Creation of web page or site and having a link is not so costly as other media.

- **Watching Competitor's Move**

Social media is changing the nature of competition. With social media marketing, you have to compete with everyone on real-time. It is impossible to ignore the presence of brands on social media. Competition drives most of the brands to perform higher on social media. You can easily check your competitors' actions, the campaign they launched recently, best performing posts and so on. Your competitors

might already be ahead of you in building a strong social media brand presence and there are much of chances that they are investing their time and efforts to build a positive online social presence to promote their business.

- **Other Important Benefits**

- ❖ Better customer experiences
- ❖ Rise in search engine rankings
- ❖ More Chances to convert
- ❖ Higher conversation rates
- ❖ Enhanced market insight
- ❖ Building new business partnerships
- ❖ Creating exposure to businesses
- ❖ Decrease in overall marketing expenditures

METHODS OF SOCIAL NETWORK MARKETING

Social media marketing is popularly known as Internet marketing or web marketing. Social network marketing is grown to such a height that today many people can't earn without it. Some of the most recognized network marketing tools are Facebook, My Space, Twitter and LinkedIn. Twitter became regular place for people who have newly entered the field of social network marketing. There are some most popular methods of social network marketing:

Blogging

Websites and blogs are the most effective tools for social network marketing when matched with other networking tools. Blog is a powerful tool which offers many other facilities in addition to just marketing business. It also helps to communicate with other clients in case of any problems.

Private Website or Blog

It is also important to have private or personal website which helps the clients to know about the company and it makes them clear about the company and its products with features.

Marketing through Publication of Articles

It is a mode of advertising trade just by writing articles and attracting endless number of users across world. Today it provided free business to many advertisers and publishers and they are really benefited through their articles.

Sending of E-Mails

Communication through Electronic mail is the best way to marketing. The best way is to collect list of email addresses through portfolio websites and mailing about business to all clients. Email should be attractive in such a way that recipient will be impressed to get back to you.

Marketing through Video

In social media, particularly video marketing is very effective as millions of Internet users look at videos every day. A short video about your services and products can reach millions of potential customers. Several video distribution websites is very important for marketing. These websites uploads service to the whole world. All that is needed to do is film a video about marketing and send it to video uploading sites like You Tube. It seems this is the easiest way of marketing than any other modes since many people are interested to watch videos better than word form of advertisement.

Social networking websites and Sales Promotion

Social networking websites like Twitter and Facebook can be used to promote volume of sales. They provide the best platform for all who are thinking of online marketing. When a brand prefers a proactive social media marketing approach, it will strengthen its marketing strategy. You should learn how to engage and inform your social media audience about your products so that ultimately they will be ready to buy. As such networking websites covers large group of people at the cheapest cost, there is no doubt on high volume of sales and high earnings.

CONCLUSION

Social media is the latest marketing strategy that includes business, organizations and brands which helps to create news, make friends, make connections and make followers. Business uses social media to develop an organization's performance in various ways such as to accomplish its objectives, increasing annual sales volume. Social media facilitates two way communications between a company and their stock holders so that business can be promoted through various social networking sites. Many of the organizations promote their business by giving advertisement on the social media in order to attract maximum users or customers. Customers are able to connect and interact with business using social media. If an organization has established a brand, social media can help to develop the brand.

A high percentage of 90% of marketers claim that social media has made a great effect on their brand. Social media technologies are capable of reaching audiences all over the world. Therefore social media marketing has become a substantial portion of every marketing strategy.

REFERENCES

- <http://www.brickmarketing.com>.
- Social Media Marketing For Dummies By Shivsingh
- Social Media Marketing (Validation Time Tested Ways To Grow Your Business)
- WwW.Wikipedia.Com
- Adrian Palmer, N. K.-L. (2009). An experiential, social network-based approach to direct marketing. International Journal of Direct Marketing, 162 - 176.
- WwW.Youtude.Com
- WwW.Socialmediamarketing.Com
- <http://www.EzineArticles.com/3510735.htm>
- <p://www.constantcontact.com/learningcenter>.
- <http://www.ijsrp.org>.
- www.Statista.com

