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BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

¹Aman Siraj, ²Bikash Kumar Sah, ³Dipesh Ghimire, ⁴Bishal Sarkar Joy, ⁵Goldi Singh

¹Student, ²Student, ³Student, ⁴Student, ⁵Student

¹Bachelor of Business Administration - Finance,

¹Center For Management Studies, Bengaluru, India

Abstract: The current trend of social media usage in today's twenty-first century has been tremendously increased. The rise of social media also affected consumer behaviors with a retailer brand. For example, out of 100 consumers who follow a brand on social, 87 visit the brand's website, 78 recommend that brand to family or friends, 67 increase spending with that brand, and 53 engage with that brand on social. Small businesses have found their presence on social media as it can help them build brand awareness and stay in touch with customers around the world.

This research focuses on the analyzing results from case company's Instagram and Facebook accounts as a primary data. The emerging of Internet and social media usage encourages the author to do research about its impacts on the business development. The quantitative research method will be used to gather statistical data, along with the deductive approach to structural data analysis. Targeted research involved the case company's audiences on Facebook and Instagram accounts. To obtain the results, analytical tools are employed to gather necessary data, such as Google Analytics, Later Tool, Instagram Insights and Facebook Business Suits. The findings related to the effects of community building, social engagement, content interaction, brand awareness on these two platforms. These findings will be beneficial for the company to explore the opportunities to build online social networks, which platforms are best used for building brand awareness and interaction, as well as increase website traffic and sales.

Keywords - Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Recognition and Customer Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Everywhere we look, social media marketing is taking place. Several websites employ social media marketing solutions to promote, broadcast, and advertise their products and services to millions of people online. Almost everyone on the internet uses social media solutions in some form or another, whether directly or indirectly. Online media solutions, which are used by a wide range of enterprises, have evolved into the natural approach for promoting websites. You will find some form of connections and recommendation texts on any social networking site, job network, or email account. Yes, all of this is taking place as a result of the social media marketing solutions plan. Social media marketing (SMM) solutions are made up of many components. The list must start with blogs, which are a great source of traffic. Social networking sites have played an important role in establishing SMM's current image.

Twitter's arrival rocked the online business sector. It's an excellent tool for publicizing your business and expressing your opinions. With the launch of Buzz, a new microblogging platform, advertisers are spoiled for choice. Delicious, StumbleUpon, Digg, Reddit, and other popular social bookmarking services have given internet users the ability to share, organize, search, and manage their favorite websites. Digital marketing organizations have already labelled bookmarking sites as the new wave of internet advertising, recognizing their value.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of social media marketing on people's attitudes and perceptions. More specifically, this study examines the perception of social media marketing and how it affects purchasing decisions. The effects of social media marketing on financial profit, the interest of the study is specifically directed towards the examined effects of the use of social media on brand awareness and customer loyalty, which can essentially lead to an increase in company income.

Specifically, the research might focus on identifying the most effective social media platforms, tactics, and strategies for building brand awareness, as well as examining the key factors that influence consumers' perceptions of brands on social media.

1. To know the most effective social media platforms for building brand awareness.
2. To know that businesses leverage different types of social media content to increase brand awareness and engagement.
3. To understand the key metrics for measuring brand awareness on social media and to know that businesses track and analyses these metrics to optimize their social media marketing strategies.
4. To know what role, do influencers and brand advocates play in building brand awareness on social media and how can businesses effectively partner with them to reach new audiences.
5. To understand how do consumers perceive and respond to brands on social media and what factors (e.g., authenticity, relevance, personalization) are most important in shaping their attitudes and behaviours.
6. To understand how can businesses use social media analytics and insights to identify their target audiences and tailor their messaging to improve brand awareness.
7. To know how to increase the visibility and recognition of a brand among potential customers and target audience on social media platforms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A survey was conducted about perception on social media marketing among 20 participants from Northern Virginia (NOVA) Community College. The responses to the survey showed that 95% of the participants use social media platforms on a daily basis. The most used social media platforms are Facebook and Instagram with 22.7% of participants having an account in these platforms, and 70% of participants indicating using more than 3 social media platforms. The results showed that 55% of respondents said online visibility would affect their purchase. The most important factor for a company using social media was customer engagement and the least important factor was the timing of the posts. The survey also found that only 55% of respondents post about a company's products or services. However, 95% of the respondents believe that a business will receive better results when it comes to customer loyalty and profits if social media is integrated into marketing and 75% of the respondents believe that social media is the best way to reach a business's targeted audience. The results also suggest that people are more likely to share and experiences they have had with a company than to share the sales or promotions that a company has to offer. Based on the results of this study, purchasing behaviour tends to have a positive effect on a company when social media platforms are used for marketing strategies. This conclusion highlights the importance of social media marketing for a positive increase in brand loyalty, brand recognition, and foot traffic.

The first sociologist to systematically use the term social network is J.A. Barnes, who first used the term in 1954 in his study "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish," (Barnes, 2013). The term used to describe the existence of social networks, "largely a system of ties between pairs of persons who regarded each other as approximate social equals", next to the other terms that were used in sociology in those days. Social media is described as consumer-generated media. This form of media, describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers", intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues (Nazzaro, 2006).

Businesses have taken advantage of the many marketing strategies that social media offers. One strategy is structuring their business model on ads that are similar to Google. When Google began to dominate online searches in the early 2000s, it did not take long for them to discern a then unique model of monetization of search, through online advertising (Edosomwan, 2011). This method is profitable because, on average, people spend a lot of time searching the web. The number of users who are constantly browsing the Internet has increased due to the availability of social media platforms. Companies have also created their own social media pages so that consumers can subscribe to their feeds and are essentially a forum for consumer-business communication. Not only can this give businesses a chance to interact with their consumers, but also to see what their competitors are doing and how they are interacting with their customers.

Most studies have shown that consumers see social media as a more reliable source of information than traditional marketing communication tools used by companies (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004) (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). The internet allows you to reach consumer groups that are not easily accessible and makes it easy to build brand awareness (Keller, 2009). Hence, marketing and brand managers can assume that brand communication will increase through communication on social media, (Smith et al, 2012). Researchers in the field of social media communication mainly focus on word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) studies (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001). Today's consumers look for product-related information on these websites because they can be more confident of getting feedback from their peer groups. In terms of marketing, social media can be categorized as a digital communication channel. Nowadays, many companies use social media marketing to promote their brands. Social media helps companies to reach their specific segments and to retain customers more than was traditionally assumed (Winer, 2009) (Toppi, 2012). So many studies exist that support social media to be incorporated into integrated marketing (North & Fin, 2011).

In order for companies to effectively sell products or services on social media, they need to develop a relationship with their target audience. Effective customer relationship management begins with identifying, maintaining and developing good customer relationships and creating added value in order to properly allocate marketing resources for relationship development (Taneja, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

The research method we have used for our study is the qualitative research method involving semi structured interviews for data collection. The qualitative method has a linkage with the hermeneutic approach in the focus area that is relative to text and interpretive character (Kinsella, 2006). Moreover, the qualitative research method does not focus on figures or numbers; such as the quantity of anything, or things that are countable. This method focuses on describing, or defining research into the lives, personalities and experiences of people (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002). Therefore, the qualitative method is suitable for our research study as the aim of the study is to understand the influence of social media in small business when creating brand awareness.

In order to increase our knowledge of this research, at the beginning of the study, we had to choose literature related to the field of our topic about creating brand awareness of small businesses with the influence of social media marketing. In the process of searching for the appropriate aforementioned literature, specific keywords were used; for example: “Social Media Marketing”, “Small Businesses”, “Brand Awareness” and “Advertisements”. Afterwards, in order to narrow down our findings, we read the abstracts of the articles to indicate which were suitable to use. We have used 105 references in our study which were from reliable resources as academic and scientific journals. After collecting all the sources, gathering the desired data from our search process, we evaluated them with relevancy, credibility and reliability; as they came from reputable sources. Furthermore, this information was used to formulate interview questions and afterwards analyze the responses from the interviewees.

The primary source of data of this research study is obtained through the responses of semi structured interviews. Sankar & Jones (2007) emphasize that the advantages of using semi structured interviews are many; especially when conducting qualitative research. For instance, the interviewers are allowed to combine open-ended questions as well as close-ended questions in order to get the interviewees’ stories more in-depth; this is a valuable tool for gathering 22 information about public views and preferences. Additionally, Barriball & While (1994) explain that the wording of the questions can be modified according to each person interviewed. To us this is a great advantage, considering the businesses selected are from different countries that speak different languages. Furthermore, we translated the interviews conducted into English (based on the interviewee’s native language). This allowed the responses to have a higher level of validity and consistency across interviews.

classification based on most preferred social media platform for business:

| S. No | Preferred social media | No of respondents | Percentage |
|-------|------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Facebook | 13 | 31.70 2 |
| 2 | Instagram | 15 | 28.84 |
| 3 | Pinterest | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | WhatsApp | 19 | 46.34 |
| 5 | LinkedIn | 4 | 9.75 |
| 6 | YouTube | 1 | 2.43 |

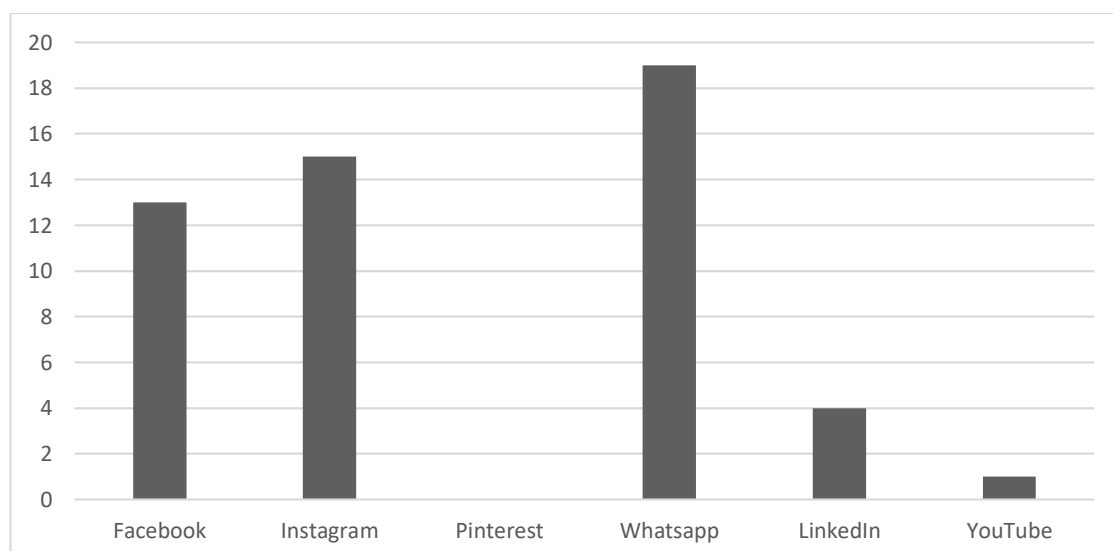
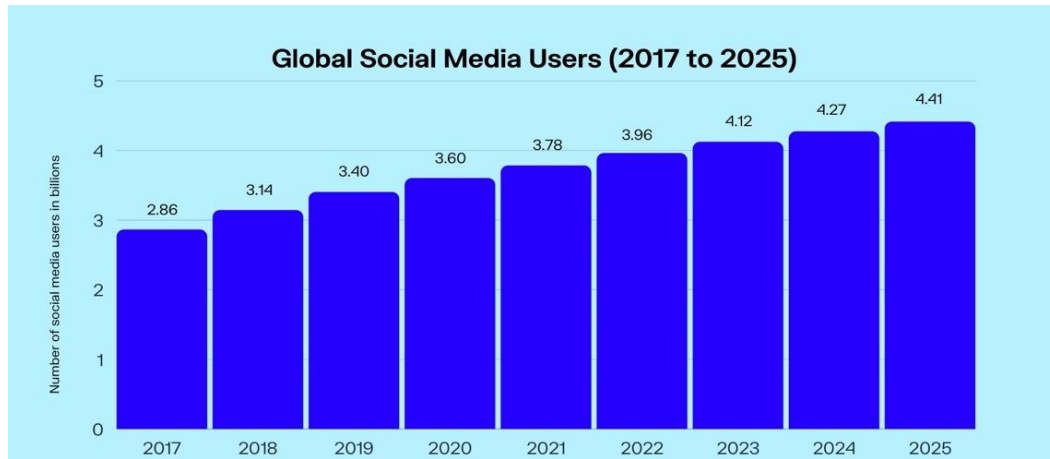


Chart based on most preferred social media platform for business

From the chart it is seen that 31.7% of respondents prefer Facebook for business 28.84% of respondents prefer Instagram 46.34% of respondents prefer WhatsApp 9.75% of respondents prefer LinkedIn and the other 2.43% of respondents prefer YouTube.

In 2020, over 50 percent of India's population was entering social networks. It was rated that by 2025, this penetration of social networks would be 67 percent of the country's population. This was thanks in part to a booming telecommunication company, delivering cheap mobile data, with Reliance Jio blazing the trail of digital communication for the average Indian. Around 60 of the world population is using social media spots in day-to- day life. Social media marketing is playing tremendous part in the field of digital marketing where companies can spread their product information to a wide range of consumers. Study shows that the marketing strategies are hung on the demographic target followership so social media gives the chance for the organizational to establish a relationship between the consumer to learn about their buying steps. (Jeevarathinam n.d.).



Social media's infiltration into the lives of internet consumer has been on the rise. The last figures show that there are 3.78 billion social media consumers worldwide in 2021-a five percent increase from a long time ago. It's also 920 million further than the number of social consumers in 2017, which represents a whopping 32.2 percent jump in just five times. The average monthly growth rate over this period is 7.2 percent. Despite the retardation, it's clear that social media will continue to be a part of consumers day-to- day lives, with smartphones and mobile widgets as the main driving force. further than nine in ten (91 percent) social media consumer apply mobile widgets to enter social networks.

FINDINGS

MediaLux's primary concern is to help small businesses establish a foothold in the market by providing effective social media strategies and increasing brand awareness, leading to increased visibility and customer engagement. By analyzing case studies and customer testimonials, we found out how MediaLux's services have impacted small businesses and contributed to their growth and success.

Here are some more detailed findings on the impact of MediaLux's services on small businesses:

1. Increased brand awareness - MediaLux's services have helped small businesses increase their brand awareness through social media platforms. By developing effective social media strategies, MediaLux has helped small businesses reach a wider audience, increase engagement, and build brand recognition.
2. Improved customer engagement - MediaLux's services have also improved customer engagement for small businesses. By creating relevant and engaging content for social media platforms, MediaLux has helped small businesses build meaningful relationships with their customers.
3. Access to expert knowledge - small businesses often lack the internal resources and expertise required to develop effective social media strategies. By outsourcing their social media management to MediaLux, small businesses can access expert knowledge and skills that they may not have in-house.

Cost-effective solutions - MediaLux's services have provided cost-effective solutions for small businesses looking to establish a foothold in the market. Small businesses often have limited budgets and resources to invest in social media marketing.

SUGGESTIONS

These are some suggestions for promoting your social media marketing and business. The key is to be creative and find what works best for brands.

1. Create a consistent brand: Make sure your brand is consistent across all social media platforms. Use the same profile photo, cover photo, and handle.
2. Use social media advertising: Invest in social media advertising to target specific audiences. Facebook and Instagram offer advanced targeting options that allow you to refine your audience based on age, location, interests, and more.
3. Host a social media contest: Host a social media contest to increase user engagement and build your brand reputation.
4. Promote exclusive offers: Use social media to offer exclusive offers and discounts to your followers. This creates a sense of exclusivity and promotes brand loyalty.

5. Monitor Social Media Analytics: Track social media analytics to identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions.
6. Use Hashtags Effectively: Hashtags help categorize your content and make it easier for you to reach your target audience. Increasing visibility and interaction with relevant and popular hashtags.

CONCLUSION

This study has contributed and confirmed to the literature marketing research, in the context of creating brand awareness for small businesses. Based on our findings as we can see these highlight that social media marketing actually influences businesses' exposure in a better way than other advertising methods. Moreover, our findings also show the usage of free advertisement based on pages in social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are influential in engaging customers and keep them aware of brand products online at any time. It shows most of the small businesses mainly focus on only social media marketing tools as it provides effective results in less time, is less expensive than other methods, and it has a higher number of people it can reach globally. Further, we have added that brand is not the only factor that consumers think of, but the product itself sometimes has more value that contributes to the brand image; in the sense of having unique properties of business products that they offer to a target market.

This study has arisen better implications for upcoming future entrepreneurs that highly focus on social media platforms as it shows effective results that are highly influential to the brand image. Furthermore, it is less time consuming and low cost as it has a variety of paid advertisements where you can decide the amount of money you wish to invest. Otherwise having a free account and doing self-promotion like posting or keeping up to date your online platform with current trends is a helpful way to increase the number of followers and customers in the long run and creating brand awareness in the way. Moreover, based on our findings, it shows that paid advertisements are highly beneficial in the sense of capturing more customers and retaining them to maintain a high position in the consumer's mind since they are most likely to pop up in people's stories; as they will have a higher priority to be seen by the public. Lastly, it is easier and faster to interact with customers, therefore increasing the relationship between company and client as their trustworthiness grows.

Moreover, this research has opened more doors for future studies, for example, how social media marketing affects the relationship not only between B2C but B2B as well. The best and most used platforms depending the type of organization it is (product or service). Even the influence that a family or friends' partnership may have at the moment of making major decisions for the company, as the amount of money invested in advertisements. It is for sure that more authors should be interested in the continuance of research of small businesses and social media marketing, since the main focus has been mostly for large enterprises only.

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