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Social Media Marketing

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Introduction

The increased use of the internet has changed the way things are done socially and economically by business owners, managers, and marketing officers. Social media marketing is the modern marketing technique that uses social media platforms or networks to market the company’s products and services. Suck social media networks may include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Google, Instagram, YouTube, WeChat, and Snapchat. Using these social media platforms, your company’s mission, vision, products, and services can be shared with your customers with not only the intention of promoting the new products but also attracting old customers and creating new ones (HAYES, 2021).

The overall benefit of using social media is that you can reach billions of potential customers within less time while creating great exposure for your brands and services and getting increased traffic on your website. Facebook remains the most used network for companies to market their products and services with active users of about 2.8 billion people worldwide (Research, Statista, 2021)

Social media websites allow companies and individuals to utilize a broad range of marketing tricks and strategies to promote content and have people engage with it. They allow users to provide their businesses’ details of geographical, demographic, and personal information, which enables business marketing officers to tailor their messages to what is most likely to be needed by users.

Marketing is the business strategy that requires activities such as announcements advertisements, promotion, and these marketing components need effective communication. As one of the best contemporary innovations, social networks are exceedingly becoming the focal point of human social interaction, thus presenting unique entrepreneurial experiences (Dave Evans, 2010).

Social media is one of the new communication means that most business owners have found to be most powerful in influencing informal and formal communications while enabling huge numbers of potential consumers to interact freely. The ability to allow users to engage in active interactions has let most businesses use it as their number one choice for marketing the brands.

Social media platforms currently tend to associate with flexibility, effectiveness, convenience, and efficiency in business communication where investors can share important information with their stakeholders, who include potential business clients (Bailyn, 2012).

Social media marketing becomes successful if it is based on the following pillars:

1. **Strategy:**In this step, the marketer or business owner determines the goals, the type of social media network to be used, and the kind of content that will be shared with viewers. For example, different types of content require a different amount of time and budget investment, therefore, it is important to find out the types of content your target audience engages with most to align it with your goals and budget.
2. **Planning and publishing:** The managers or business owners must develop draft plans about what their content will look like. For instance, are they going to include pictures or videos and how many words will the scrip have? and decide when it will be put out on the platform and for how long will it run?
3. **Listening and engagement:**Monitoring what users, customers, and others are saying about the posts, services, brands, and any other business assets. This may require the adoption of a social media engagement tool.
4. **Analytics and reporting:**As a business page owner, you must make sure that you are aware of how your post on your page is performing. This will help you to analyze how many users are sharing, commenting, liking your post, the total number of positive mentions, the increased number of followers compared to those of last month, and hence whether your post has reached many people or not.
5. **Advertising:**Purchasing adverts on social media is a great way to promote and further develop a brand. Adverts will not only help you to spread awareness about your brand and reach the maximum number of users but presenting your information to a targeted audience (Tan, 2019)

**Social media marketing compared with Traditional marketing**

Both are forms of marketing brands that are aimed at enticing the customers and boosting awareness of the company’s products and services. Social media marketing involves an online marketing method that focuses on gaining traffic through social media channels, while traditional marketing mainly involves advertising through radio, TV, newspaper, and magazines.

With social media marketing, you can find out how many people have liked your post, how many people have shared your post, and which web pages are visited. It may not be easy for you to know the number of people who have listened to your radio spots or read magazines and newspapers. Social media marketing is an economical and faster way to promote your services and products as compared to the more expensive and time-consuming process of traditional marketing. Social media requires you to set up accounts on various platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn, whereas traditional marketing would involve approaching a publishing house with your marketing message. It is always difficult to change or edit the information once already published using traditional marketing but with social media, you can be able to make changes and edit instantly.

Social media is a multi-way in engaging clients making it possible to induce those who were not your original target. It is done in a way of the brand to customer, customer to brand, customer to customer, thus highly engaging and promoting word of mouth with immediate feedback, whereas traditional marketing is one-way.

**Advantages of using social media Marketing**

**It is cost-effective:** Social media marketing can produce good results without costing a lot of money to the business owner. Moreover, signing up and creating the profile is free. This becomes true when you know how to do it well and individual business owners may require social media marketing experts to create their profiles while others may be able to do it themselves and cut down the costs. However, business owners are encouraged to always consult marketing professionals or agencies with a history of proven social media marketing success. Once they have gained skills, they can start doing it themselves.

**It increases sales:** It promotes the brands and awareness of the existing products and services among the millions of potential customers within the shortest possible time. The customers will always give their feedback by commenting on whether the products and services are good, and or if they need the new products, hence, providing adequate information for you to serve them better with increased demand and hence increased sales (Mary Dowd, 2021)

**It helps you get marketplace insights:** The vital function of social media is gaining marketplace insight because it allows the business owners and managers to know customers’ needs and opinions which may not easily be known if you were not using SMM (Joshi). Through using social media, you can easily know the geographic locations of your customers, their needs which will therefore help you market your products and services accordingly.

**It helps you to monitor your competitors:** Through using social media advertising tools like Facebook and Twitter, business managers can research their competitor’s latest trends and get insights into how to better market their products and services. These activities may include business strategies or marketing efforts that you and your social media marketing consultants can adapt and incorporate into your plan and as a result, you get to improve marketing campaigns and activities making ensure that your targeted audience finds you on social media and get to know your products and services.

**Disadvantages of SMM**

1. **It is time-Consuming:** social media is always the online conversation, so business marketing managers may need to be constantly feeding their pages and profiles with interesting things and links to keep people interested. They also need to monitor and respond to comments every day, hence making it time-consuming.
2. **It may act as an opportunity for a business enemy to embarrass you:** Being on social media is like exposing yourself publicly to all kinds of people who may or may not be interested in your brand. Therefore, social media makes it easy for people who don’t like your services for any reason to post bad comments which will go viral on social media and expose your weakness to all your potential customers. Therefore, when using social media marketing, you must be very careful about your products and the content of your post to avoid embarrassment from the viewers.
3. **It can result in security and privacy threats:** Using social media for marketing your brand requires you to share your information, both public and personal, to get the best results of your marketing effort. This exposes you to targets of potential hackers and malicious people who may want to steal your data and information and use it to damage your business name (Owen, 2019).
4. **Social media marketing may not work for all people:** The fact that some people may not be active on social media, while others use different forms of social media, this method of marketing brands may not work for all groups of people. For instance, if you post your brand on Facebook, those who have social media accounts with other kinds of social media but not on Facebook will not be able to view your post. Hence, a need for you to first know your target audience as the marketing strategy.

## **What is posted on the Internet stays**: The truth is that whatever information is on the Internet will never be completely deleted. This makes it difficult for those engaged in the use of social media marketing to fully remove the negative comment, a marketing mistake, or a fake sales flier posted on the Internet since it will not go away once it is simply taken off your social media page. It can be easily accessed by those who saved it to their hard drive or server.

**Conclusion**

Social media marketing is a very powerful tool that every organization whether small or big needs to utilize to maximize its visibility, enhance relationships, establish two-way communication with stakeholders, provide a forum for feedback, and improve the awareness and reputation of the organization. Therefore, social media websites are good platforms for organizations to improve their marketing agendas. However, it must be clear that for you to achieve good results, a good communication strategy must be developed to analyze the target audience and the content to be published (Brent Barnhart, 2021) Assess what is working for your brand and what is not working and don’t forget to make sure your content is delivered as timely as possible.

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