

PHENOMENAL RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN SERVICE SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Communicating thoughts and opinions require use of a medium. Through passage of time and development of technology, man has moved from written to audio to audio-visual media. Electronic media is the latest form of communication of which social media is of paramount importance. The revolutionary growth of internet usage due to the invention of smart phones and consequently the in-depth involvement of people in social media has affected various fields. The voice of the people can be heard from the likes and tweets on various social media sites. Different institutions have recognized the impact of social media on the mindset of people and thus have adopted its use as well. In the paper "Phenomenal Rise of Social Media Marketing in Service Sector" like politics, armed forces and education have been picked up, to find out how they are being used both in India and world wide, to convey their view points to society. Also, the positive and negative impact of social media usage in these sectors has been studied.

Key Words –

Social Media, Communication, Interaction, Marketing, Information.

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a Cyber-era surrounded by smart phones, ipads and social media networks. YouTube blogs and the like under the overarching shadow of internet. Social media is an enabler. Social media marketing (SMM) also known as WOM marketing or viral marketing is the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communications by professionals marketing techniques. This is not to be seen as a replacement for the traditional marketing techniques but rather as an additional marketing channel that could be integrated with the traditional ones as a part of the marketing mix. Like the telephone it is revolutionizing the way we interact and consequently change our consumption behavior. The benefits of instant interaction and transfer of rich information across space and time allows for new ways to create and deliver value for customer, get market intelligence, and improve functions. Social media describe the different means by which people, enabled by digital communication technologies connect with one another to share information and engage in conversation on topics of mutual interest. Social media is an umbrella term describing a variety of communication medium and platforms including social networks, blogs, mobile application and others..

Life has changed as never before-it has turned digital. Today, social media has become one of the leading ways to interact, share and learn. The effect of social media has grown over ages and now it has become an opportunity, a platform to reach to masses and communicate one's mind, shopping, reading, browsing news items, listening to music, paying bills, accessing bank accounts, looking for jobs, interacting with friends-all is now done online.

The way people get information has changed and the desire to have real conversation with individuals, organizations and government entities has increased. It has assumed a vital role in social interaction not only for the youth but also for the people of higher age groups who exploit it for professional and business use. Billions share experience and interact through the medium instantly. Snail mail, print or even the electronic media seen to have lost to this powerful medium in terms of speed and reach.

The new media that is a combination of the internet and software like Google social networks etc. has three striking features.-

- It diffuses mass media and social interaction.
- Merges and blurs the message.
- Costs of communicating being low, it has led to massive increase in number of participants.

Since the rise of the internet in the early 1990s, the world's networked population has grown from the low millions to the low billions. Infact, Facebook, the social media giant alone has around 1.32 billion users, 110 million of them in India. Recently in Delhi, founder and CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** put his India target at 1 billion. India has 243 million internet users now according to internet live stats, India growing at 14% will overtake the US (280 million , 7%) very soon.

Social Networking sites (SNSs) are now among the fastest growing internet resources. Business-to business marketers have been using Internet Applications widely for several years now (Leek, Turnbull and Nande 2003), and there is an extensive body of knowledge around the use of web-based branding in the sector.

The advantage of this new electronic channel is that it can be used to communicate globally and to enrich marketing toward consumers at the personal level (Brandt, 2008).

SNSs have become the choice for youngsters, who reach out to others on the web, receiving and distributing information on a real-time basis. Appadurai (2001) states that media has always played a crucial role in the stepping up of globalization and internet can be considered as a breakthrough in the globalization era. The internet has provided an opportunity to build a global communication base that would link people around the world together. Miller and Slater (2000) argue that most discussions of the internet have accentuated both the abolition of distance and a following detaching of relationship from particular place. In their research they showed this conclusion to be deceptive. They state that, "The internet media are very capable of bringing dispersed

things into immediate, virtually face-to-face contact, prices and commodities, families, music, culture, religious and ethnic diasporas.”

Flow (2007) opines that with web 2.0 technologies the internet has become a communication platform on which virtual communities are formed and it provides scope for interactivity, collaborative learning social networking and participation. So there are tremendous advancements taking place and most importantly youngster form the majority of the consumers.

The Paper focuses on various fields (like Politics, Defence and Education) that have recently recognized the importance of social media as a way of reaching out to the masses with speed and accuracy.

POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA- A LOVE HATE RELATIONSHIP

Over a period of time social media has become a fact of life for civil society worldwide involving many actors-regular citizens, activists, non-governmental organizations, telecommunication firms, software providers, governments, etc.

Even political parties and political leaders around the world have used popular social media networks including Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube etc. for campaigning. Politicians from all levels of Government are using social tools to raise support, connect with voters and spread their message. Spronsen highlighted 5 reasons for investing time & energy into social media for campaigning-Amplify effect, Personal Connection, Ability to respond, Fundraising & Get out the vote strategy.

Social Media in World Politics

On January 17, 2001, during the impeachment trial of Philippine President Joseph Estrada loyalists in the Philippine congress voted to set aside key evidence against him. Less than two hours after the decision was announced, thousand of Filipinos, angry that their corrupt president might be let off the hook, converged on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, a major crossroads in Manila, The protest was arranged, in part, by forwarded text messages reading, “Go 2 EDSA. Wear blk”. The crowd quickly

swelled and in the next few days over a million arrived, choking traffic in downtown Manila.

The public ability to coordinate such a massive and rapid response- close to seven million text messages were sent that week-so alarmed the country's legislators that they reversed course and allowed the evidence to be presented. Estrada's fate was sealed; by January 20, he was gone. The event marked the first time that social media blamed "the text-messgaing generation" for his downfall.

Social Media & Indian Political Scenario

In India as well media penetration has helped shaped country's politics. Apart from the traditional media (television, print and radio), the last decade has witnessed the growing influence of the internet and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube and so on. In the 2014 elections, most political parties and leaders made an attempt to reach out to voters through these new forms of media. They redesigned their official party websites to make them more interactive, and opened accounts on various social networking platforms to reach out to more voters, especially young ones who are believed to be more technology savvy (Doron and Robin 2013; Chopra 2014).

Table : Media Penetration in India

| | |
|------------|---|
| Television | The number of TV news channels increased to 393 in 2014 from 241 in 2009. |
|------------|---|

Of a total of 246.7 million household, 60.7 million are DTH subscribers registered with private service providers

According to Census of India figures, TV ownership increased from 32% in 2001 to 47% in 2011.

| | |
|------------|--|
| Newspapers | There are more than 12,500 daily newspapers today, compared to around 8,500 in 2009. |
|------------|--|

Total certified circulation of newspapers increased from 38.4 million copies in 2006 to 48.29 million in 2012.

Newspapers readership increased from 296 million in 2006 to 340 million in 2012.

Five Hindi newspapers, four regional language ones, and one English newspapers are in the list of top 10 newspapers according to readership.

| | |
|----------|--|
| Internet | Internet subscription saw a massive increase from 12.8 million in 2009 to 21.6 million by 2013 ;143 million people access the internet through mobile phones. |
|----------|--|

Of a total of 246.7 million households, approximately 10% have computers/laptops, and one-third of those with computer/laptops are connected to the internet.

Facebook: in 2010, India had 8 million users. The company claims to have crossed 100 million users in March 2014, of which 84 million are active users.

Twitters: The estimates ranged between 18 and 33 million at the end of 2013.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Telephone | Tele-density increased from 2.86 per 100 people in 2000 to 73.32 in 2013. The number of mobile phones increased from 35.6 million in 2004 to 867.8 million in 2013. |
|-----------|---|

| | |
|-------|---|
| Radio | There are 242 private FM radio stations in the country. Radio had an audience of around 158 million people in 2012 of a total 246.7 million household, 20% has a radio/ transistor. |
|-------|---|

Source: Registrar of Newspaper in India, Ministry of information and Broadcasting, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

It may seem from the table that contribution of internet & social media is minimal as compared to traditional media but the impact of this modern medium of communication is remarkable and on the increasing size.

Mobile internet, broadband smartphone and social media played a major role in the debut win of **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** and its chief ministerial candidate Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi. Throughout their campaign, AAP members used social media, text messaging, voice and mobile internet to mobilize voters. Their success was visible in the number of likes and shares each page of the party and its candidates got on Facebook.

At a time when **Samaj Wadi Party** chief Mulayam Singh Yadav demanded the use of Hindi in Lok Sabha and opposed English as the primary medium for official communication, Arvind and his team used social media to communicate and mobilize young voters.

Social media, by the **Election Commissioner's** own admissions, played the role of a game changer. In a scandalous revelation, a furtive operation by Cobra Post has exposed about two dozen IT companies running the business of building or destroying reputations online.

The operation, codenamed **Operation Blue Virus** shows how IT companies across the country were using social media platforms to help politicians falsely increase their fame and malign their opponents.

The companies are offering their clients bogus fan following on Facebook and Twitter. Moreover they are also doing negative publicity against a political leaders or a party or a corporate house, at the behest of their opposite camp, all for money. Rampant use of Facebook, Twitter and other social media, has set the tone for election campaigns for most of the political bigwigs. But their use of social media has been caught by the hawk-eye of the Election Commission of India. The ECG has thus decided to pitch in information technology experts, who would keep an eye on use of social media by political parties.

The idea is to ensure that political parties and candidates do not flaunt the model code of conduct by any means. Chief Election officer Umesh Sinha said, "though social media was used in the UP assembly election in 2012, its use has grown manifold since, so much so that political parties have come up with separate IT cells to propagate their ideologies". Huge money was being spent on using social media as the medium of campaign.

Political parties in India relied more on social media ahead of the 2014 election as way of increasing voter support, even though politicians in general did not expect such efforts to significantly influence election results. Parties rode on the digital wave by conducting workshop to teach leaders how to improve engagement on websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Politicians are learning the potential of the online medium, which already plays a big role in election campaigns in countries such as the United States.

Other than Twitter and Facebook, leaders in recent months have used platform such as Google Hangout to connect with the public, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ex- Finance Minister P. Chidambaran among the early adopters.

Modi, who successfully used social media for win in 2014 Lok Sabha Election is among India's Famous Social Media celebrities with 4.4 million Facebook 'like' and 2.3 million Twitter followers.

Social Media Usage by Colleges and Schools

Today's students have grown up communicating and sharing experience on social media sites. Thus, it is no surprise that many educational institutions have also embraced social media to attract students, interact with current students and stay connected with alumni. Schools and colleges have taken notice of what students are looking for, and are using social media to share their campus culture including academics and extra – curricular activities with prospective students and their parents. This helps to convince the latter that their ward is not going to be just another face in the crowd but will be given maximum exposure throughout his academic life.

Social Media and Foreign Education Institutions

As Koyla Germain, E- Media, Coordinator, College of Saint Rose has commented, "Social Media has the key for us and has been a great audience connector not only with prospective students but with prospective parents." From the students perspective, to find a window into college life and social life, they look for profiles, reviews and perspectives from current students, communities that connect prospects with current students and pictures and video of fun events at the institutions. Elise Perohio Daniel, senior e – communications marketing manager at University of

Washington at Seattle reinforces the importance of social networking sites, “Having a strong media presence increasingly seems to fill their needs in that it makes it easier for them to experience a friendly and dynamic relationship with what can sometimes seem like a difficult to navigate and faceless institution.”

Stephen Boucher, Director of Marketing & Communications, Southern New Hampshire University opined, “We use social media to answer students’ questions, listen to their opinions & take action so that they understand that they are being heard”.

In a survey of 7000 high school students in the USA by online education resources Inignol and Zinch, it was found that in 2012, 2/3rd of the students used social media to research colleges and universities of which 57% checked Facebook, 42% looked in you tube, 18% searched Twitter and 6% tapped Interest.

Another higher education consulting firm called the Art and Science Group found in its research of 39000 students that in 2012, 44% students had used social media sites up from 18% in 2008, Of students who did use social media, half said that the sites had influenced their decisions of where to apply.

Social Media and Indian Education

The same trend can be seen in Indian Business Schools as well. Students of every programme at IIM Bangalore are active on social media and launch their own pages IIM started using social media sporadically back in 2012 and are now frequent users. The Facebook page of IIM features event announcement and photo albums and also meaningful information about their think tanks, their Centre of Excellence and research were done by faculty and students.

Indian School of Business (ISB) has 29 social and professional clubs run by students. These clubs generate a lot of contents and also run a number of events engagements on and off the campus.

SP Jain Institute of Management Research (SPJIMR) has created an engaging environment on Twitter using **hash tags** of events taking place within campus.

“Social media and education should interlink with all strength considering that youth is the back bone of this medium of communication,” says Apeksha Harihar, editor at Social Samosa, a social media consultancy, She said ,”Opinions, discussions, theories, networks and almost an entire classroom can be built through this world of virtual connections. The faster we adapt this within education, ecosystem the faster we win”.

In a dynamic education environment, institution that do not adapt to the changing scenario and adopt the social media as a way of communication are bound to close business sooner or later. These institutions should realize that social media is a **resourceful network** which seeks to serve many purposes.

Social Media in Education Sector – Providing resources for –

1. Branding and presentation for the institution.
2. Career and job search services.
3. Communication: ask questions, receive feed backs, and submit blogs.
4. Community engagement and connecting with alumni.
5. Expanding students access to educational opportunities, online schedules and classes.
6. Knowledge centre for extended learning.
7. Students recruitment.
8. Fundraising and political rallies.
9. Sharing campus maintenance updates, security events and other notes.
10. Statistical info graphics, educational games and maps.
11. Trade degrees, certificates and high school diplomas.

The fact found by one survey is that one in every three schools in the USA say that social media is more efficient than traditional media in searching the target audience.

Pearson learning Solutions Wider Tools a survey in 2013 of over 8000 faculty found that 41% of college professors use social media as a teaching tool, up from around 34% in 2012, it helps the professors to connect better with students and also gives shy students another way to participate.

Negative marks for Social Media in Education Sector

Social Media comes in with its fair share of criticism. As the saying goes, “Excess of every thing is bad”. Students hint that using social media for academic purposes can be only be beneficial as long as it does not get too personal.

When it starts **encroaching** their personal lives, then it may become a humble in achieving desired objectives.

Also the students feel that posting on social media is usually done on a whim thus, using these sites deliberately may be a **little difficult**.

The two biggest concerns for professors, who are hesitant to begin using social media are **privacy and integrity** of students submissions. Many are worried that third parties might be able to view class interactions on social media, potentially compromising the personal privacy of instructor and students.

Class size can also become barrier to social media use. Many instructor stopped using social media when class sizes increased.

Social Media is the thought of the day. It envelops the minds of both the learner and the learned. To make active use of technology, to import knowledge in an effective way is important in lieu of the competition that exists in the education market these days. Self – control and wise application of the tool can help shape the future of the students and their almatmater.

Armed Forces and Social Media

Social Media has encroached almost every sphere of life and the Armed forces cannot be left behind.

According to a survey done in 2013 social media has permeated into a large section of society.

Facebook –

Total active users-845 million

number of friends every user has-130

average number of minutes spent on FB daily – 23.

Percentage_of users over 45 years of age-46%.

Twitter –

Total active users-127 million

Average number of minutes spent on Twitter daily – 14

Percentage of users over 45 years of age – 33%

Linked In –

Total active users – 150 million

Users using Linked in for business purpose – 75%

Number of companies on linked In-2 million

The Figures demonstrate the impact of social media platform on society that make them interesting for government and intelligence agencies and increase the possibility of supporting military operation such as-

- Psychological operation
- OsInt
- Cyber espionage
- Offensive purpose

Social Media and International Armed Forces

The US department of defense has created a dedicated web portal to provide any kind of information related to the use of social media for militaries modern militaries exist is a new media landscape, where geo-tagged photos real time tweets and regular Facebook updates are everyday occurrences. Soldiers armed with a internet

connection and a Twitter according can share their experiences of life a front line with anyone who cares to follow them.

The UK military has accepted these realities and put in place on online engagement strategy which encourages the use of social network (terms and condition applicable). There is an expectation that soldiers maintain a sense of responsibility and a mind fullness of both personal and operational security to navigate there online communications.

The US department of defense has also decides to expand access to popular social networking sites from the military's non-classified computer network NIPPNET (again terms and condition applicable) The US military recognize the importance of balancing appropriate security measures while maximum the capabilities afforded by 21st century internet tools.

Social Media and Indian Armed Forces

The Indian Army has jumped on the bandwagon of social media to convey the ongoing happenings is the army. They have leveraged two of the most popular social networking platforms – Facebook and Twitter. The FB page of India army was launched on May 15, 2013. The presence of India Army on FB is very active as they are very particular in posting and updating. The posts are focused on varied topics and deals with diverts activities on going in the army.

The Twitter handle of Indian army is @ adgpi, which represents the additional Directorate General of Public Information for Indian Army. Through their tweets Indian army is giving the nation a deeper insight into their work and accomplishment. It is in return getting positive and patriotic responses for their updates. People are showing all hues of positive emotions – from pride to happiness to that kindness. The use of social media has given a better staging to Indian Army, and has given their admirers a better way to interact with them. The idea of uploading pictures with every post is part

of their social media activity through which it becomes easier for fans to get a better insight.

However the flip side of the coin is that confidential information may be leaked the social networking sites which may put the lives of many soldiers as well as the safety of media, in jeopardy. In fact in April 2013, three Navy officers were terminated from service for divulging secret information on FB. So on espionage ring that had been passing on sensitive information on army training sessions and exercise held in the border areas of Rajasthan to the inter-service intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan through social media sites was busted recently. During the questioning of the two persons by official of Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG) and intelligence Bureau (IB), it was revealed that the used code language to pass on information to FB Pakistan handler on Facebook.

It thus become imperative that a proper plan is developed to manage the FB, Twitter sites of the army keeping in view the following elements.

1. Site administrators – Grant permission to multiple administrators to ensure there is no single form of failure.
2. Reflect on the aim to be accomplished.
3. Target the potential audience.
4. Type and frequency of content to be posted may include stories, images, original content or local events depending upon target audience.
5. Comment policy – Comments can be moderated or automatically punished.
6. Time gap between monitoring the page for comments and policy for engaging is dialogue with community members.
7. Policy for transfer of administrative rights and handover to new personnel.

Department of Defense Policy

Department of Defence Instruction (DODI) 8550.01, released 11 Sep 2012, encourages the use of social media and provides guidelines for military use of social media. The instruction acknowledges the internet based capabilities are integral to operations across the Department of Defence.

Navy issued two ALNAV official guidance document – ALANV 056/10 and ALNA 057/10 – to establish official guidance for official and personal use of social media.

Top Emerging Threats for Social Technology –

| Emerging Threats | Status / Trend |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Worms/ Trojans (by abusing fake trust in social networking malware infection vectors are being implement. | ↑ |
| 2. Abuse of information leakage (including data mining from available information) | ↑ |
| 3. Physical theft/lose/damage (of mobile device including Oredentials to access user data) | ↑ |
| 4. Phishing attack (using social engineering techniques based On social networking content) | ↑ |
| 5. Spam | → |
| 6. Exploit kits (by means of malicious advertising from Compromised ad severers) | → |
| 7. Identity theft (especially by taking over mobile and users Devices) | ↑ |

8. Drive by exploits (applications from parties that have generated fake trust over social media) ↑
9. Rogue wave/ scare wave (using fake trust built over molocious advertising with in social media sites) →
10. Targeted attack ↑

The greatest advantage of social media for perception management is its reach and speed. It can reach even an audience that is otherwise difficult to reach using conventional means. The medium is interactive and swaying. It allows dynamic modification of the themes to shape the environment based on the feedback. Due to its interactive nature, it can act as an important tool to gauge the effects of the perception management endeavors.

Conclusion

Even though there are fears and threats from the social media still, as the communication landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action.

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