

BRANDBUILDINGTHROUGHSOCIAL MEDIAMARKETING -INDIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Social media turned to be one of the amazing media to connect prospective consumers with brands. India also makes use of social media as a marketing media in the last few years. Globally Companies have been using social media as a potential plat form to boost up their advertising campaign. The social media builds a higher commitment among customers towards brands by connecting with them at deeper level. Social media provides customers and marketers an interactive plat form to communicate information regarding brands. In India, eight out of ten people from urban areas who buy products use the internet to search for information on brands and products before making a purchase. A major driver for businesses to use the social media marketing is the low-cost model compared to traditional marketing media. Thus Social Media Marketing can be considered as a new mantra for modern world. This paper discusses about the concept of social media, social media marketing, the state of social media marketing in India and how it helps in brand building

KEY WORDS: Social media, Social media marketing, social media platform, brand building.

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Introduction

Social Media Marketing makes use of social media sites to raise visibility on the Internet and to promote products and services. Social media sites are useful for building social (and business) networks, and for exchanging ideas and knowledge. Social Media is a popular mode for social communication. It refers to the use of web based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, My space, YouTube and other social networking sites are collectively referred to as social media.

Youth now widely make use of social media websites to search for their friends online and communicate with them, chat, share information, videos and photos. People seek to meet new people through social media, who share common interests and aspirations. Visiting a social networking site has become a habit for most youth, one which they cannot easily quit. This growing importance of social media has translated into its increasing use in marketing also. In today's cutthroat competition, brands are fighting for space in the minds of consumers. Though the traditional modes of advertising and marketing like television, print media and outdoor media still contribute to a major portion of the advertising budget, they cannot be solely relied upon to ensure reach to the target audience. Using social media like blogs and networking sites for marketing of products is fast increasing its importance. Social media marketing is the latest craze and here to stay. With sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc. attracting more than five million users every day. Having a presence on these sites is a must for all marketing organisations. Besides attracting a large number of prospective customers, the cost of social media for advertising is comparatively much lower than the other mass media options. Hence it is a value for money proposition.

Social media websites help generate interest in the brand and also to build trust in the company. This goes a long way in the brand building exercise. Besides, one can reach the relevant target audience and avoid disorder. It helps the company stay in constant touch with its customers, know their preferences and upgrade their products and services accordingly. It gives them enough room to receive prompt feedback from them. It thus leads to one on one interaction, leading to customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer spreads positive word of mouth for the brand and thus enhances the brand equity. All in all, it helps a company increase awareness of its

brand, generate leads, build its customer base, improve sales and market share. If planned and executed properly, social media becomes a very cost effective mode of online promotions.

Objectives

- To analyse the state of social media marketing in India.
- To examine the role of social media marketing in brand building.

Research methodology

The study has used secondary sources of information from books, journals, reports, surveys, Paper presentations seminars and workshops Working papers, periodicals and from websites. It is descriptive in nature. To loosen research question of this study, it provides all major facts, figures, major research findings. Research question is also supported by a case study which revealed upon social media for marketing purposes.

Brand Building

Brand building is developing a brand's image and standing with a view to creating long term benefits of brand awareness and brand value. Brand building strengthens an existing (or new) product/corporate identity. Building strong brands, differentiating them, and maintaining them are critical marketing functions. A strong brand provides financial benefits to a firm. The Social media offers interactive platform, for brand building that have previously not been available through traditional mass media oriented brand-building strategies.

Branding is both art and science. Marketers have developed increasingly sophisticated method for measuring brand impacts of mass media; direct marketing and online campaigns¹. They have been only partially successful. Traditional Media's impact is especially hard to track, given its setting, the difficulty of getting accurate responses from consumers about their branding exposure, delays between exposure and measurable actions by consumers, and difficulty in assigning causation between multiple exposure and eventual actions. Here one of the benefit of social media marketing is that it is able to track, each response of the customers can be counted through this media.

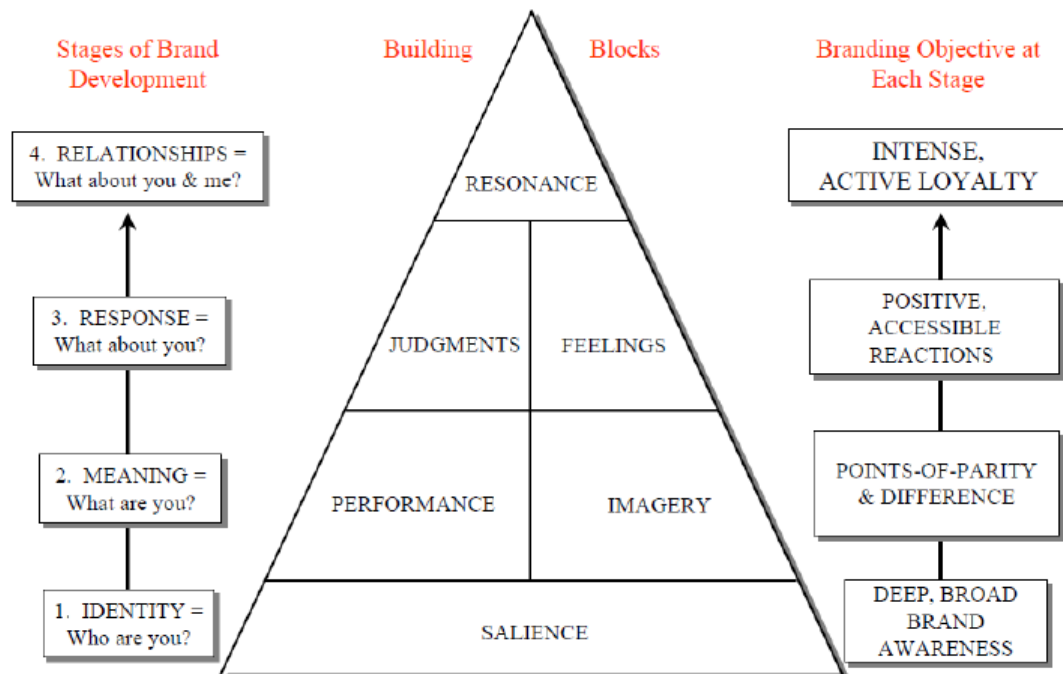
Marketing researchers have after devoting much time and study to branding, produced useful framework for understanding branding and its constituents. In a series of research papers and brand equity studies, Keller and co-authors present the customer based brand equity model. It focuses on four key stages composed of six “brand building blocks”². The model helps tie the full range of branding activities through social media.

The four stages of establishing customer based brand equity are:

- Establishing the proper brand identity.
- Create the appropriate brand meaning.
- Elicit the appropriate brand response.
- Forge appropriate brand relationships with customers.

Six building blocks implement the four stages .Each building blocks provide questions to ask of its online brand presence.

Customer Based Brand Equity Pyramid



Source: Kevin Lane Keller, "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer –Based Brand Equity," *Journal of Marketing*, 57(January 1993) illustrated in Internet marketing and e-commerce-Wardhanson&KirfhiKalyanam.

Brand Salience

The first stage in using the Net to enhance brand is to ensure that the brand has both breadth and depth of brand awareness. The goal is brand salience; when consumer considers a product category, the brand is automatically included as a possible choice. Social media can be used to provide an identity about the companies and the products or services that they offer.

Brand Imagery

It is more abstract and relates to consumer psychological and social needs. User profiles, purchase and usage situations, personality and values and history and heritage of brand all contribute to brand imagery. Functional performance aspects of the product include product features, service, and price. Social media makes companies "real" to consumers. If they want people to follow them they need not just talk about the latest product news, but share their personality with them.

Brand Performance

Social media content allows much more frequent modifications compared to traditional media. Performance information can be dynamic and localized.

Brand Response

Social media can be used to communicate and provide the interaction that consumer look for. The interactive and participatory power of social media becomes increasingly helpful for enhancing brand response.

Brand Relationships

A brand relationship is the commitment and resonance a customer has towards a brand. It goes beyond simple features, functionality, price or total cost of ownership. It marks upper point of brand equity pyramid and represents a goal only some brands are able to obtain. Social media

helps in creating relationships with people who might not otherwise know about the products or service or what the companies represent.

Thus the benefits of social media include: brand reach and awareness, consumer interactions through transactions, building brand relationships and reputation management. Some of the big brands like Coke, Ford, Dell, IBM, Intel are some of the well-known brands have powerfully used social media platforms to endorse themselves.

Social media marketing:

Social media marketing consists of persuading consumers through social media to purchase products and services of companies that are worthwhile. The use of Social Media was initially enabled by the launch of **Web 2.0**. It refers to a second generation of technology, service and tools that facilitate communication, creativity, collaboration and sharing between users. Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more.

Lazer and Kelly's (1973) define social marketing as "concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts, and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with the analysis of the social consequences of marketing policies, decisions and activities."

Major Social Networking Sites

Figure 2



Source: windows Photo Viewer

Social Media Marketing Techniques

Some examples of social media marketing techniques are:

- ❖ Joining relevant online communities or social networking sites to help promote your business.
- ❖ Adding RSS feeds to your website (RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication that can be used to easily update content).
- ❖ Blogging (where you add content to blogs).
- ❖ Creating your own business blog

Social media marketing in India

The Indian social media scene represents a fast-emerging and influential domain of information exchange involving nearly 66% of the 180 million Internet users in the country.[Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)]. While Face book 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.

Social media marketing in India is still in its early stage of development, and while companies are keen to redesign strategies to benefit from this platform, tools and knowledge on measuring returns on investment remain unclear. The global reach and interactive capabilities of social media, companies across key industries have started developing a social media marketing strategy with increased marketing budget allocations. The key influencers include direct access to a large user base of potential consumers, and insights into key changing trends and the thought processes behind buying decisions. Although it varies across industries, social media marketing's broad focus is on developing products targeted at specific consumer groups, launching new product offerings and monitoring brand image sentiment. The rapid growth in social media marketing is helping companies win business in India. Many companies were successful in broadening their customer base through digital media campaigns. The launch of 4G services will further fuel the growth of social media marketing in the country.

When companies consider their marketing strategies they must always take into account social media. In fact around 80% of companies use at least one of the most famous social media platforms, like Face book, Twitter, You tube etc...The use of social media among companies across almost all industry sectors is exploding as a key element of business strategy, from engaging customers in real time to adding sales channels and enhancing brand and market research.

STRATEGY: MULTIMEDIA USAGE

The term “A picture is worth a thousand words” has never been truer. Consumers are now using the web to look for product pictures and videos; they want more information and want to see what they’re considering buying. The good news is that it’s easy for a company to create and publish videos and pictures. In addition to taking photos of products, company can also take pictures at office events as a way to highlight company culture. This not only helps convince others to work with you or to buy from you, (consumers see that you are down to earth and one of them, instead of a stuffy company), it also helps your HR department recruit new employees. Videos are useful for explaining complex concepts. Showing step by step directions can have a greater impact than even the most well written article. Businesses don’t have to invest huge sums of money to create good videos, either. I highly recommend the relatively cheap Flip camcorder, which takes great videos and is easy for even a non-technical marketer to use. Multimedia can break down the faceless business-to-consumer sales flow and make your company appear friendlier. Use videos and images to show that your business is fun, you care about your employees, and most importantly, that you care about your customers.

Tata Docomo Social Media Marketing Strategy

Tata Docomo is one of the most influential companies on social media today. Its Face bookcommunity currently has almost 10 million members and counting. This telecom company is certainly not the market leader in the sector, Indian companies were not too keen to invest in social media marketing at first, but Tata Docomo planned and implemented a strategy that has certainly benefited them. Today, this company uses almost every major social media platform out there. Although their ‘*Do the New*’ tagline has been successful in attracting new customers, what separates Tata Docomo from other telecom brands is their focus on quality rather than

quantity. Its major marketing strategies involves, engagement, addressing problems & queries, crowd sourcing, brand Loyalty, communication

Vodafone Social Media Marketing Strategy

The marketing strategy used by Vodafone for promotion, the effort that have been put in making of zoo zoo and the impact it had on customers mind. zoo zoo actually was well directed social media campaign. The zoo zoo character looks quite funny and easy going on screen. Social networking websites helped Vodafone in promotion as there was a huge fun following of zoo zoo, on various social websites.

Social media marketing tools

There are many companies providing specialized platforms/tools for social media marketing, such as tools for:

- ❖ Social Media Monitoring
- ❖ Social Aggregation
- ❖ Social Book Marking and Tagging
- ❖ Social Analytics and Reporting
- ❖ Automation
- ❖ Social Media
- ❖ Blog Marketing
- ❖ Validation

Challenges of social media marketing

Although social media is an evolving medium, it has multiple platforms and is highly fragmented medium. The biggest challenge for any brand is to identify their relevant space on the web and work around that by bringing out relevant messages in the space. Also it is important that social media is not looked at separately. It has to be integrated to a brand's overall marketing strategy.

Limitations

The study depends on secondary sources for data. It limits only to the Brand building aspect of social media marketing. The study doesn't provide much technicalities regarding social media marketing strategies.

Conclusion

Social media provides platforms for the brands to exchange in private and public conversation with the public in amazing ways. 'One blog any platform can make or change your image'. With the help of well-defined strategies brands can be more successful. Through proper strategies brands create awareness, brand image, brand performance, brand response and thus brands are able to create more personal relationships with people who are interested in who you are and what you offer.

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