

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Social media is playing such a major role in our everyday lives today that without it, we can't even imagine a single day. Technology has been so handy that we have at our fingertips every imaginable thing in the world. In the present study, an attempt is made to find out how people are influenced by the plethora of social platforms, especially users, and how it shapes their actions in general, what motivates them, what kind of behaviors they participate in, and what challenges it presents to marketers. Social networking is also a central component of marketing campaigns for companies. Being able to communicate directly online with a brand representative will increase the loyalty of a customer to a business by creating a personal link that might not be possible for the consumer to achieve with other businesses. And when the customer has a concern, much of the consumer's frustration can be minimized if the company representative is competent, compassionate and understanding.

Keywords: Advertisement, Consumer, Social, Media, Marketing, Networking.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social networking essentially means any online human contact or exchange of information that occurs through the device, tablet or mobile media. There are numerous websites and applications that allow it. Social networking is now becoming one of the main contact tools and is quickly gaining prominence. Social networking helps you to exchange ideas, content, news and information etc. at a much faster pace. Social networking has evolved exponentially at an unexpectedly fast pace in recent years and has captured millions of users across the globe. In the Indian market today, social media has emerged as a game changer. The industry today is experiencing a multitude of social media channels with the advent of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) [1].

Today, individuals from all walks of life have gained easy access to technology, whether professional or unprofessional, male or female, old or young. This has, in fact, facilitated people's social connections. People get digitally addicted [2]. As a pervasive mode of

communication in culture, social networking sites are emerging. Taking this cue, advertisers around the world have the ability to show themselves to a broader population volume that is geographically dispersed along with their goods and services. In order to reach out to the masses, advertisers have also started relying heavily on this network. This paper aims to examine and research how other marketing channels have been taken over by social media and how consumer behavior in relation to Indian markets has shifted [3].

The fact that social media has become a tool of modern advertisers nowadays has also been supported and proven by numerous research results. To reach out to their clients, it has become a simple and very convenient method. In his paper, Laeder James (2018) argued that social networking sites are built to make customers addicted to them in such a way that they generate a sense of belonging to them. The Gao et.al,2017 and Yang et.al.,2016 studies have also reinforced this view [4]. Such research has helped to better understand the determinants of how a sense of belonging influences the actions of an individual customer. These studies have concentrated mainly on the positive aspects of these aspects of consumer behavior, but they may also have negative implications. There is currently a growing interest in digital interactivity in marketing, especially in social media consumer behavior. Consumers have been motivated and their function has changed from being passive participants to being active participants. (2002: Stewart & Pavlou). When customers invade the marketing sphere, this active consumer behavior shifts the media and marketing platform (Berthon et.a;.,2008).With the enormous interest in social media and user generated content i.e. UGC on sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Wikipedia, Consumers are seen to be actively contributing to the content [5].

While using social media as a tool for purchasing, consumers generally look for:

- Product-related learning: By following a brand on social media, if they continue to follow the business, a user wants to know more about what he will get. It is also decided by the product details he will use if he wishes to buy one from the company.
- Quality of information: When a user chooses to start following a business or brand on a social media site, the main factor he/she looks at is the quality of information given to him by the website.
- Economic benefits: Consumer is also interested in knowing if he /she can get a chance of some economic or other gains from making the deal with a particular brand or offer.
- Interaction & Collaboration: Social networking sites act as a connection between customers and the business, allowing customers to quickly access the information they need and explain their questions and misconceptions, if any.
- Social presence: This digital era enables users to influence others to a certain degree, where they can create themselves as opinion leaders and experts on the usage of the products concerned on various company and product pages.

The survey found that entertainment, spending leisure time, knowledge searching and social networking, online shopping were the most coveted reasons for using social media. It also reflects the frequency of their use and the use of social media applications, showing how people use their time on social media successfully or ineffectively. Studies have also shown that users can be divided into high and low engagement levels to understand the degree of brand engagement across profile and page visits and to comprehend it. This provides an indication of how much time is spent on profile/page visits by the average user. An active user would visit maybe once or multiple times a day while a user with low level of engagement will visit maybe once a month or would only read the updates while not taking an active part in it [6].

It would not be at all incorrect to note here that social media has had such a huge influence that it has so cleanly knitted itself into the fabric of Indian society and culture today. Consumers, in particular, have undergone a dramatic shift as a result of our culture, from being gullible and naive; they have turned out to be more mature and responsible. It is not possible to undermine the role of social media in India's business and consumer market. It has become a very convenient method for advertisers to promote their products by creating relationships in different communities and spreading awareness of their services. Any company, whether big, medium or small, has an online presence on different social media sites. This has made them available 24×7 to their clients with their convenience of location and time, too. Besides this, it also allows marketing firms to constantly track and evaluate consumer actions [7].

II. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

The entire marketing environment is shifting as customers are gradually undertaking practices traditionally dominated by businesses. In order to create shared gains from the use of social media, businesses also need to better consider the changing behavior of customers. By permitting mass cultural interaction and intercultural transactions, the advent of social media has made the planet a small market. Social media and the use of websites for networking have become a pattern that virtually every Indian follows. It helps to build an individual sense of connection with the communities of virtual marketing. It has proven itself to be a powerful marketing tool for companies, entrepreneurs and new start-ups. Around the same time, rather than being a blessing to both customers and advertisers, it could turn out to be a curse, just as any coin has two sides, the same is for social media. Its effect on our Indian consumers depends entirely on how they use it and take advantage of it rather than becoming a victim of it.

Being able to communicate directly online with a brand representative will increase the loyalty of a customer to a business by creating a personal link that might not be possible for the consumer to achieve with other businesses. And when the customer has a concern, much of the consumer's frustration can be minimized if the company representative is competent, compassionate and understanding. Although this is no different from a customer service employee working in a store with an angry patron present, the online environment allows the business to take its time to formulate the right response and ensures that responses to different

customers are consistent. Word-of-mouth advertising for a brand has always been an integral part of achieving profits.

No ad is as persuasive as getting a product or service endorsed by someone you trust. With social media, with a single message sent from a single user, word-of-mouth ads will go worldwide in a moment. With some networks, at the click of a button, the user can connect with thousands of people, easily spreading a message about the brand. Also, by continuing to post regularly and consistently, they can aim to make their brand more and more accessible to clients. Marketers should also attempt to develop a deep emotional connection with their viewers, thereby strengthening relationships with them. As every customer problem is unique and therefore needs to be addressed accordingly, they should try to react quickly and appropriately. Customers are relying heavily on social media networks for customer care & service these days, so businesses can make themselves accessible to render this support in the digital media. This will help them to retain their image as a brand in the public eye. Last but not least, marketers should also strive and establish a detailed and realistic set of targets that they should be able to calculate, evaluate and find out how effective they have been in developing their brand.

III. REFERENCES

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