Social Media: The Future of Marketing

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Abstract:
Social media is a platform for people to discuss their issues and opinions. Before knowing the aspects of social media people must have to know what is social media? Social media are computer tools that allow people to share or exchange information's, ideas, images, videos and even more with each other through a particular network. The way of communication has changed with the evolution of social media, and every business irrespective of its size has a presence on social media. This review examines current literature on social media and social media marketing.

Keywords: social media, web2.0, user generated content

Introduction:
The ascent and wide spread of Internet and the rapidly developing consumers’ digital media use drove companies occupied in different businesses to think about a new way of correspondence with consumers (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Among the fastest growing online tools for reaching the consumers is the so called “social media” (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009). Social media is becoming an important part of peoples’ lives. Blackshaw & Nazzaro (2004) have flawlessly defined social media in the beginning of the era of social media, as the new source of online information, where the information itself is – created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers for the purpose of educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues. According to Chi (2011), social media marketing is a connection between the brands and consumers, that offers a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction. The way of communication has changed with the evolution of social media, and every business irrespective of its size has a presence on social media. This review examines current literature on social media and social media marketing. The tools and strategies for communicating with customers have changed significantly with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media. This form of media describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, spread and used by consumers’ intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues. Social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).
What is social media?

Traditional media, such as television, newspapers, radio, and magazines, are one way, static broadcast technologies. If you disagree with something you read in the newspaper, you cannot send the editorial staff instant feedback. New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create – and most importantly – distribute their own content. Social media allows customers to interact with companies instead of only being passive targets of corporations’ marketing messages. With social media, businesses can focus on consumers, respond to their needs and create an ongoing dialogue. Social media marketing allows companies to create new connections with customers and communicate with them, instead of sending one-way messages to people. Social media is based on a natural, authentic conversation between people about a subject of mutual interest. (Scott, 2010, p. 38-39).

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) a formal definition of the term social media first requires drawing a line to two related concepts that are frequently named in conjunction with it; Web 2.0 and UGC. Web 2.0 is a term describing a new way of utilization of the World Wide Web by software developers and end-users; a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the revolution of social media and the representation of the ideological and technological foundation. Social media era was started around ten years ago. It began with LinkedIn in 2003 followed by Facebook and Myspace in 2004, Youtube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006. The popularity has grown rapidly with sites like Facebook, Orkut, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube etc. which get attracted by more than five million users every day, besides using traditional method of advertising and get attracted by mass customers, social media marketing advertising cost is lower than other mass media and get reach to large number of prospective customers.

Social Media is a type of new group of online media, which has the following characteristics: -

1. Participation: - It boosts participation in form of feedback from people.
2. Openness: - These services are open for feedbacks and enhance involvement which encourages voting, posts comments, and shares information.
3. Conversation: - It has two-way conversations.
4. Community: - It allows communities to form for quick and effective communication among a group of people.
5. Connectedness: - Most of the social media success on their connections, making use of links to other sites, resources, and people.

Statistics and facts about social networks in India:-

According to Statista.com (portal of statistics), The lovechild of the World Wide Web is social media which has many forms like blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, social gaming, micro blogs, Chat apps, and social networks.

- The social networking power is such that, the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.5 billion by 2018, around a third of Earth’s entire population. An estimated half a billion of these users is expected to be from China and approximately a quarter of a million from India.
- The highest penetration rate of social networks region is North America where around 60 % of the population has at least one social account. As of 2015, over 70 % of the United States population had a social networking profile.
- Leading social network is Facebook which has number of user accounts and shows strong user engagement metrics. Facebook is the only social network exceeded the 1 billion monthly active users till 2015; Pinterest was the fastest independent website is to reach more than 10 million unique monthly visitors.
- As average internet users globally spend around 101.4 minutes per day on surfing social networks. This stimulates brands and their marketers to use this time and screen space worldwide to promote various products and services through social advertising or social media marketing.

Review of Literature: -

Ateş Bayazıt Hayta (2013) studied that social media is on the most important tools communication channels. Consumers do access to information about goods and services to be
purchased as per need by means of social media to a great extent. She also studied social media which affects our life in recent years that brings a new dimension to Internet and determine the effects of social media networks on purchasing behaviors of consumers.

Priyanka P. (2015) studied that social media can be used for increasing customer loyalty. With the help of continuous customer support services leads to improvement in customer retention. New applications and social platforms will flourish and allow even greater personalization and real-time, location-based engagements in media.

Priti S. et al (2013) studied the effectiveness of placing brand communication on social networking sites which shows that there is the effect of online comments and reviews of products/brands on the buying behavior of consumers. The study revealed that people do come across various advertisements on social networking sites also prefer to go through the online comments and reviews regarding the brand/products before buying the products for them brand communication on social networking sites plays an important role in influencing the buying behavior of the customers.

Amrita Pani & Mahesh Sharma (2011) study revealed that Social networking sites like Myspace, Orkut & Facebook were widely used. To get influenced by Gen-next consumers in India, there should be changes in their brand choices, shopping behavior, and lifestyle pattern which resulting through their social media. A marketer should implement a well-designed marketing campaign for penetrating new media segment.

Aline-Daniela Mihalcea et al (2013) studied that extensive use of SNS such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn has laid the possibility of using new platforms in order to generate more business revenue. It was demonstrated that social networking becomes profitable for companies in terms of brand exposure, brand awareness, and actual sales. The study explored the social media characteristics and their impact on business also provide guidelines for companies to decide about the implementation of Social Networking Sites (SNS) in three aspects like Product development, marketing communication and recruiting. Key findings of the research are in the case of product development companies can monitor Social Networking Sites to obtain data for their products/services and can talk to the consumer through content to build new, improved offers that better resonate with the buyers. For marketing communication demographic and behavioral data provided for creating targeted messages, but company should consider the negative online word of mouth dispersion possibilities and create strategies accordingly. While recruiting, offers for employers a better understanding of their potential candidates, Professional profiles on LinkedIn or adding personal information from Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Smita Sharma, Asad Rehman (2013), study analyzed the uses of SNS in marketing communication programs implemented by various brands and organizations among them Facebook is the favorite for social media-savvy organizations in India used to engage in everyday conversation and organized promotions and contests for fans. The study summarised the frequency of usage, budgeting, purposes of use, metrics of evaluation with respect to social networks within different organization that have incorporated by social media in their marketing communication programme. The study revealed that users were leaving traditional advertising outlets and paying more attention and impressing to new media which are used for customer service, sales, and marketing functions, brand building and innovation more on the need for a better approach and attention from the top management for better results. Marketers need to devise new purposes, metrics for use and evaluation of the same on the basis of market dynamics.

Neeraj Gohil (2015), focused on secondary data, a case study on Madhya Pradesh State Tourism used social media as a powerful tool for branding and positioning tourism in India and worldwide. The study concluded that social media is an effective form of marketing which was used to increase brand awareness, brand loyalty, customer services which lead to increase of sales. Madhya Pradesh Tourism has a comprehensive social media coverage that gives all necessary information and helped to create a ‘Professional’ brand image from the online approach. The challenge established by efforts of social media marketing lies in increasing the no of tourist arrivals into the state with the diversification of interest, tastes, and demands of tourists.

Mohammad Yousef Abuhashesh (2014), ‘Study focused on the importance of SM Integration...
process and impact of integration of social media on marketing, advertising, and customer service function. The study provides a detailed analysis of trends in the contemporary global business environment. The study concluded that social media based business model is essential for development and growth of companies in global business environment. The model provides opportunities to companies to have greater interaction with customer base with the ability to have and create a positive brand image. Also, highlight the high amount of public criticism, for that, it was suggested to develop the relevant organizational capabilities with core functions such as Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations. The businesses large and small, all have begun to learn how to use web 2.0 technology applications, so as to gain a competitive edge. Rather than shelling out millions of dollars for a Super Bowl ad, these marketing managers of the organizations are trying to learn the lessons and tips on generating the buzz by creating viral content and encouraging shares and likes on their respective brand-pages. Once a product or service becomes the one everyone is talking about, customers gravitate toward it, eager to learn more. (Hendricks, 2014).

Fowdar and Fowdar (2013) in their research study elaborated that the social media has changed the way organizations do marketing through online conversations and as a consequence, marketing through social networking sites has created its own niche. Organizations are hiring community managers and social media analysts and they are forming their own mechanics for this purpose. Advertisements can be posted on Facebook according to the demographics like age, gender, location, workplaces and education level, of the users. It can also be utilized for organizing surveys and polls in order to obtain valuable feedback from users. The cost of communication at social networking sites have fallen drastically and has created opportunities for the businesses to communicate directly, quickly and consistently, with millions of online customers. The increased time that the people are spending on such communication channels is creating a novel platform for the marketers to go with their marketing strategies. The social networking sites are not replacing the traditional communication tools but can be used as a complement to the existing traditional promotional channels. These days, one important source of creating a competitive advantage is the firm’s social-media literacy and social-media utilization. These sophisticated media channels have the potential to develop viral campaigns that could engage customers and create brand loyalty. The next-generation products are co-developed in open-innovation processes while making conversations with the customers and knowing their expectations, and therefore the organizations are working on shaping and reshaping their enterprises. The task of the managers is to cultivate a new technologically linked social infrastructure. The use of social networking sites promotes consistent non-stop interaction across physical and geographical boundaries in a 365*24*7 environment, which leads to a self-organized discourse and exchange. The use of social networking sites has created an ocean of information. The customers and the organizations are drowning in a never-ending flood of emails, tweets, Facebook updates and more that’s often hard to navigate. On the other hand, negativity may occur with the smallest mistake of the organization and with the increasing presence of people on social networking sites such information spreads like a wild fire. Therefore, it is imperative for the organizations to have a strong presence on the social networking sites not only to monitor but also to handle the negativity. The firms with a social media strategy in place are much better equipped to handle such negativity. Having a sound strategy in place will guide them to have timely knowledge of such conversations taking place and they can be prepared to be a part of the conversation and response to them. The firm can even apologize and provide alternate solutions to the customers. This will save their ‘image’ along with time and resources once a crisis hits. The firms are able to communicate their message much more quickly and also collect response in real time. All such generate an ongoing listening mechanism that gives them early warning and reminders on potential issues before they take the shape of negativity (Roland and Sylvain, 2013).

The technology is defining and giving a new shape to the future. It acts like a double edged sword that is empowering the individuals and businesses and also making them vulnerable in novel ways (Eric and Jared, 2013). Technology creates a ‘virtual system’ of doing any operations-

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business or marketing. The people are the ‘virtual users’ and the firms are the ‘virtual creators and providers’. (Bhargava, 2013)

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