

Marketing and PR: The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior

Introduction

Today's era is the era of technology and advancements and all the processes are executed by using the innovative measure. Technology has taken over almost every field of life whether it is the corporate sector, sports or household activities. Like the other fields of life, the business sector has also transformed its operational mechanisms according to the latest technology. Considering the importance of technology, it is evident that business organizations have been provided with massive benefits by the utilization of technology due to which they have been able to accomplish the desired targets within the competitive market. Effective marketing is a major aspect that must be considered by the stakeholders to ensure the fact that all the company is receiving the desired response from the customers due to which the targeted aims are also being achieved (Jarvis). Numerous methods can be used for promoting a product or service. The most prominent approaches in this regard are electronics and print media, internet marketing, direct selling, conversational marketing, co-branding, point of purchase, and e-mail marketing. All these techniques can be used to promote a product or service efficiently. It is of great significance that the companies must promote their products efficiently because only then it would be possible to attract a large number of customers and to achieve customer satisfaction. This in return can prove to be quite helpful for the company to enhance the sales rate due to which the overall productivity of the organization will also be enhanced. Each marketing type is of great significance and is utilized according to the demand of the situation. The efficacy of the marketing approach depends upon the kind of segment that needs to be targeted by the organization. Social media marketing is a unique and dynamic kind of marketing technique where all the promotions are done via social media platforms. The most prominent platform that is used in this regard is Facebook, Twitter,

Instagram, and other relevant platforms. This marketing technique and have an interesting influence on consumer behaviour. This paper will provide the readers with an opportunity to comprehend the basic protocols of social media marketing and how it is executed effectively and proficiently. Moreover, the paper will also discuss the impact of social media marketing on consumer's behaviour. So, the readers will be able to explore each important aspect that is relevant to social media marketing and consumer behaviour.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a term that refers to the promotion of a product or service. The primary aim of this approach is to ensure that the product is advertised all over the world and customers belonging to far areas can view the details of the products and services offered by the company (Tuten). This has enabled the companies to promote the products effectively without spending a huge amount of cost on marketing. Moreover, the marketers do not have to move physically from place to place in order to promote the product as they have the liberty to advertise their products while using their computers. It has been observed that a large number of people use social media frequently and they are getting everything they want on social media. The organizations have noticed the importance of social media and that is why their management has decided to use social media for marketing. This has provided the people with an opportunity to explore their desired goods and services while sitting at their homes and due to this a great ease and convenience is being experienced by them. This kind of marketing is usually composed of the activities like posting attractive advertising content such as videos, images, poster, and other relevant things which can attract a large number of customers. Social media is used by almost every kind of age group and gender. It has been observed that women are more frequent users of social media as compared to men so posting attractive advertising stuff can prove to be quite

beneficial in order to attract a large number of women towards the product because the women are fonder of viewing attractive stuff on social media. Furthermore, the cost of social media is lesser as compared to traditional marketing. The managements of the top organization have become more adaptive towards social media marketing as compared to traditional marketing because it is less costly, and it reaches a greater number of customers than the other forms of marketing. People nowadays are also keen to purchase the desired goods and services via an online platform rather than moving physical due to their busier routines. Apart from the positives of social media marketing, it is important for organizations to understand the fact that why they should prefer it over the other forms of marketing. It provides the stakeholders with an in-depth insight regarding the demands of the customers and their attitudes towards specific kinds of services. This has enabled the organizations to develop such strategies that can prove to be advantageous in order to attract the desired number of customers and to gain their satisfaction which in return can provide massive benefits such as improved sales rate and the desired increase in productivity. Therefore, it can be said that social media marketing has modified the traditional procedures of the business world altogether and now the operations are executed in a more proficient manner as compared to the former times.

Creation of Social Media Strategy

Different techniques can be used to execute a particular process and the same is the case of social media marketing where the stakeholders can utilize different approaches in order to ensure the fact that all the services and goods are being promoted on social media in an efficient manner. The major step in this regard is to develop a perfect social media marketing strategy that is capable of attracting the desired target segment towards the product. The important thing is to understand the basic steps of social media strategy making (Li). The first step in this regard is to develop such

goals that provide a firm interconnectedness between the business objectives and social media marketing. The goals that are set by the management must be smart such as specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. For instances, if a company is using Facebook for advertisement, then it must keep a check on the number of viewers that have viewed their post. This can prove to help assess the quality of the marketing approach by comparing the number of buyers and the viewers. The organization will be able to evaluate the sales percentage by using this technique thus, the efficacy of social media marketing will be easily evaluated. The company can make the desired improvements in the marketing strategy if the desired number of customers is not achieved and this in return would also be crucial for the organization to assess the quality of its products and services. The company must also get continuous feedback from the consumers regarding further improvements that can be made in either the operational strategy or the quality of the goods and services. Another important approach that can be used in effective strategy making is that the companies must get a piece of detailed information about the customers and due to this they will be able to design the framework according to the demands of the customers. The most crucial step in this regard is to set a specific target segment. When the target segment is decided then the company can look for the information regarding the customers that belong to the decided target segment. The information that needs to be gathered may include the age, location, interests, job history, and the average income of the consumers. This information would prove to be quite beneficial for the organization to design the strategy such as the product, place, and pricing of the services according to the demands and preferences of the customers. The question arises that how the organizations can get this information. Well, the answer to this question is quite simple, companies can use different tools to obtain this information and google analytics is one of them. This is a tool that provides all the necessary information regarding the customers. This

information includes their age, gender, nationality, and other relevant details that can play a critical role in helping the organizations to develop a perfect marketing strategy. Competition is an integral component of a business market. The companies have to adopt such strategies that are productive and helpful in achieving the desired advantage over the competitors. Nowadays a lot of companies are using a social media marketing approach so it is of great significance that an organization must be aware of the approaches that are adopted by the competitors and must develop a strategy that is unique from the competitors. This in return would provide the organization with tremendous benefits and all the objectives will be accomplished with great ease and efficacy. After the strategy is designed and social media marketing is started now there is a need for a complete audit of the whole process to estimate the fact whether the designed strategy is efficacious or not. This can be done by conducting a thorough analysis of the outcomes of social media marketing after a couple of months. The major things that need to be investigated in this regard are consumer behaviour, the competitive advantage, customer engagement, the nature of the target audience, and evaluation of the fact that what is working and what is not. These kinds of evaluations are pretty handy as they can provide the management of an organization to think of ways to improve the productivity of the system in case if there is any need for improvement. Moreover, the competitive analysis will provide an in-depth insight regarding the impact of strategies in obtaining the desired advantage over the competitors and what kind of strategies have been applied by the competitors in the market. Once the information is gathered then further improvements can be applied and tremendous benefits can be achieved. The last step in this regard is to set up such profiles that are capable of attracting a large number of customers belonging to the decided target segment. The company might check whether the Facebook platform is much efficacious or not. If the desired results are not being obtained from Facebook, then the stakeholders might look for Instagram or

Twitter to expand the marketing of the product. After this hit and trial, the company can decide its go-to platform and the core focus will be on that particular platform. All these can be helpful in developing an attractive social media marketing strategy that will help the organization to achieve a formidable position in the overall business sector.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behaviour is a term that refers to the study of the attitudes and behaviours of people while they are purchasing their desired goods and services. The decision regarding the purchase of an item might depend upon their emotions, their likings and disliking, mental, and behavioural aspects (Hawkins). Considering the importance of consumer behaviour, it is evident that organizations must adopt strategies that are in accordance with consumer behaviour so that their products will be easily sold in the market. The behaviour is usually based on the psyche of the consumers towards different products. There are different kinds of behaviours that are adopted by the consumers while purchasing their desired goods and services in the market. The most prominent kinds of consumer behaviour in this regard are variety-seeking behaviour, complex buying behaviour, dissonance-reducing buying behaviour, and habitual buying behaviour. For instance, if a customer is new to the market, then he/she will take a lot of time to decide the fact that which product should be purchased, and which should not be. On the other hand, a consumer who has purchased many things over the past few years will be equipped with ease and skill to decide quickly that which product is good, and which is not. So, it also depends upon the experience that is possessed by the consumer in order to develop a specific consumer behaviour. Exploring consumer behaviour will help the marketers to comprehend the fact that what influences the consumer's buying decisions. This can prove to be quite helpful for the marketers to evaluate

the needs of the market and they are provided with an opportunity to develop such products that can fill the gap in the market and are in accordance with consumer behaviour.

Consumer Behavior & Social Media Marketing

In today's world, it has been observed that people are more vigilant towards using social media rather than using any other thing. People are finding solutions to every problem on social media and due to this they keener to use it to carry out various processes of their daily life. The rates of social media consumers have grown at a pretty high rate over the past few years and this has become possible because the people are provided with great ease and convenience by using the social media platforms (Jashari). The people have their profiles on different platforms, and this has helped them to connect with different people belonging to different cultures along with the globe. The introduction of extreme commerce has also revolutionized the business world and the business is performed more conveniently as compared to the past. The customers are provided with an opportunity to purchase their desired goods and services while sitting at their home and are receiving their products at their homes without moving physically to the markets. The people are interacting with different consumers across the globe due to which their purchasing decision making has been greatly affected. Different kinds of purchasing decisions are made every day and from time to time the people may look for suggestions and advice from the other colleagues. Each consumer would have different preferences so taking advice from the other consumer can only confuse and the consumer might not be able to decide accurately. Many people are also reluctant towards purchasing on social media because they might have been betrayed before. However, marketers must look to adopt such techniques that help develop a trustworthy relationship with the consumers and they are being satisfied by the services provided by the company.

Why Social Media Impacts Consumer's Decision Making

Word of mouth is one of the core factors that play a massive role in influencing purchasing decision. This is a mode of communication that involves friends, colleagues, and family members. For instance, an individual asks his/her friends regarding a mobile phone that they have bought from a particular site (Lee). The other person will be recommending the shop to the consumer and there is a possibility that the consumer might consider that shop for the future. Nowadays, the demonstration of this example can be observed on social media where different consumers are frequently interacting with each other. Consumers can convey diverse opinions, suggestions, experience, and knowledge that they have regarding a specific marketer or a product. If those customers are satisfied with the services, then they will recommend the product to the other consumers otherwise they will provide negative feedback. This can hurt the purchasing decision making of the consumer and he/she might get reluctant towards purchasing the desired goods via social media. The marketers will have to execute the marketing in a highly proficient manner to ensure the fact that the customers are getting satisfied with the advertisement of the product and are getting attracted towards purchasing it. To enter a specific market, the marketers must analyze the target segment and their behaviour towards purchasing the products online. The development of trust with the consumers will provide the companies with an opportunity to sell their product at maximum rate and the desired objectives will also be achieved. Therefore, marketers must understand the consumer's behaviour while entering a specific market.

How Consumers are Influenced by Social Media

Social media has a significant impact on the decision making of consumers. This impact can be constructive or destructive depending upon the kind of consumers. However, it is

observed that the impact of social media is usually positive, and it attracts the consumers towards buying a specific product or to avail of a specific service for themselves. The main benefits of social media in engaging the customers towards a particular set of services are the development of product awareness, the provision of social proofs that can act as a major force in encouraging the customers to purchase the products, the provision of different kinds of discounts and deals on social media, and the presence of social media influencers. As previously discussed, that social media is accessible by a large number of people so by using social media, they will be able to get an in-depth insight regarding the products and services offered by a particular firm. This will enhance the product awareness and they can decide in a better way as compared to the traditional marketing techniques. It also acts as a greater force that encourages the consumers to buy the products. This happens because the happy customers provide ratings and positive feedbacks that can be viewed by the other consumers (Power). The new consumer gets satisfied by exploring the positive comments and high rating that are being provided by the previous customers. This would help to decide whether they should buy the product or not and they will definitely buy the product in case of positive feedbacks. People can also view different kinds of promotions, discounts, and deals on social media. For instance, a product is offered in the physical market at \$100 and the company is offering a 20% discount on the product if it is purchased online. The consumers will definitely go for this product and it will be easier for them to decide in this regard. Moreover, as previously discussed in the paper that a large number of women are using social media platforms and it is a fact that women are easily fascinated by discounts and deals. Therefore, this plays a massive role in engaging a large number of customers towards the products and the company achieves the desired competitive advantage and a formidable position in the market. Another useful aspect of social media in the presence of a large number of

celebrities and influencers on social media. This kind of personalities are being followed by a large number of customers and most of them are even getting imitated by their fans. The top companies hire these professionals to promote their products on social media because they have a high following, and the products get promoted across an expanded segment of people. The followers do listen to their idols and if the product is being promoted by such celebrities, then the chances of a higher sales rate are increased. Therefore, along with other aspects the presence of celebrities on social media can play a tremendous role in helping consumers to make a better decision regarding the purchase of a specific product or a service. All these factors are quite crucial, and they play a vital role in influencing the purchasing decision making of the consumers. The marketers must consider these factors while designing their social media marketing strategy to ensure the fact that a large number of consumers are buying the products and the company is accomplishing its objectives proficiently.

Advantages of Social Media Marketing

Numerous pros of social media marketing have been discussed in this paper. However, there are some more advantages of this approach that are required to be explored to understand the efficacy of this marketing model proficiently. Social media has provided the stakeholders with great ease and convenience and now they can market their products more efficiently as compared to the past. This is because this mode of marketing is not much costly, and it reaches the maximum number of customers around the world. The most prominent advantages of social media marketing are the improvements in brand awareness, the enhancements in the rankings of the search engines, the provision of well-structured and confined traffic, better conversion rates and customer satisfaction, improved brand authority and loyalty, cost-effectiveness, improved leadership skills, and the accessibility to the marketplace insights (Nadaraja). All these factors

make social media marketing a success story and these advantages have made this mode of marketing the go-to mode for many organizations. The social media platforms have a specific set of users due to which the traffic is confined. By using different search engine optimization techniques, the brands can improve their value by reaching the maximum number of customers. This in return would prove to be quite beneficial for the marketers as they will be able to achieve a decent conversion rate because the more the number of viewers more will be the number of buyers. The cost-effectiveness has been previously discussed in the paper and it is the most prominent advantage of social media. The companies can save a lot of cost by using social media marketing technique and they can utilize the saved resources on other important sectors of the organization. The content posted on the platform must be fascinating and intriguing and it is only possible when the content is created by an individual who is equipped with proficient leadership and marketing skills. This would also help develop leadership skills in individuals which can provide them with great benefits for the rest of their lives. Social media marketing also helps the marketers to get the desired marketplace insight which can prove to be quite beneficial for them in order to design a feasible strategy to market their products. The tools that are used for this purpose can produce accurate results thus, benefiting the stakeholders tremendously. The desired customer satisfaction can also be achieved by utilizing social media platforms. The consumers can view the positive feedbacks provided by the previous customers on social media which can be crucial in developing their trust towards the product. Once the marketer is able to gain the desired confidence of the customer then it will be handy in enhancing the productivity of the company and the desired sales rate will be achieved. If the customer is provided with a high-quality product, then he/she will prefer returning to the same company in order to purchase the desired goods and services. Consumer behaviour can be altered in many ways by the use of

social media marketing as the consumers are provided with many options and they can easily access the suitable option for them. This has made it easier for the consumer to make their purchasing decision accordingly and they can take better decisions as compared to the past. Therefore, it can be said that social media marketing has revolutionized the marketing world and has provided numerous benefits to the stakeholders and that is why the top companies are vigilant towards adopting this mode of marketing.

Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

Along with the provision of numerous benefits and a constructive impact on consumer behaviour, social media marketing has some of its negatives too. One of the cons of this mode of marketing is that the brand that is being marketed must be reputable and the consumers should have some knowledge regarding the brand. If the brand is not well-known then the consumer might not opt for that brand to purchase their products and they will prefer purchasing their products from a well-known brand (Nadaraja). Therefore, social media marketing is not much suitable for new and small businesses. As discussed previously that the positive feedbacks can improve the brand reputation. However, the negative feedback can prove to be quite detrimental for the overall wellbeing of the brand and this in return can decrease the number of customers and the desired consumer' satisfaction will not be achieved. The negative feedbacks might be a consequence of the monopoly or the fake feedbacks that have been provided by the competitors in order to harm the reputation of the brand. The dependence on advertisements is also one of the negative aspects of this approach. The whole strategy is dependent upon the efficacy of the advertisements and if the advertisements are not up to the mark then the whole effort can go in vain. Social media is used by almost everyone but not everyone is aware of the technicalities and the back-end procedures that are used to keep the processes running smoothly. Only the experts

know how to operate these platforms effectively so there is always a need for an expert who can operate the social platform to ensure the fact that the marketing process is being executed efficiently. If the marketer is able to identify these disadvantages and designs effective strategies to counter these challenges only then he/she be able to achieve the desired objectives via social media marketing.

Conclusions

Marketing is defined as the promotion of goods and services offered by a company on different platforms. The marketing process must be executed effectively and proficiently. Effective marketing is a major aspect that must be considered by the stakeholders to ensure the fact that all the company is receiving the desired response from the customers due to which the targeted aims are also being achieved. Numerous methods can be used for promoting a product or service. Social media marketing is a term that refers to the promotion of a product or service. The primary aim of this approach is to ensure that the product is advertised all over the world and customers belonging to far areas can view the details of the products and services offered by the company. This has enabled the companies to promote the products effectively without spending a huge amount of cost on marketing. Moreover, the marketers do not have to move physically from place to place in order to promote the product as they have the liberty to advertise their products while using their computers. The rates of social media consumers have grown at a pretty high rate over the past few years, and this has become possible because the people are provided with great ease and convenience by using the social media platforms. The people have their profiles on different platforms, and this has helped them to connect with different people belonging to different cultures along with the globe. Social media marketing has influenced consumer behaviour in many ways. Most of the impact of this marketing mode is positive as it has provided the people with an opportunity to make better decisions while purchasing their desired goods and services. The people can get useful information regarding the product on social media, and they can also evaluate its efficacy by observing the feedbacks that have been previously provided. Moreover, the consumer' decision making might be adversely affected in case of fake negative feedback. Therefore, it can be said that social media marketing

has both positive and negative aspects but its overall impact on consumer behaviour can be considered as positive.

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