



Social Media Marketing - A powerful and adaptable approach for achieving and sustaining positive consumer behaviour

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Abstract: With the emergence of social networks and online communities, it has again proved that man is a social animal. Man like to interact with other people, whether online or offline. The birth of the social networking trend has brought a change in the way people surf the web and above all the way people interact socially. The success of social networks marks a dynamic shift in how people are using the Internet. Social networks also provide a very good platform for entrepreneurs or business owners to market their businesses. Social network marketing makes use of the process of advertising, promoting and selling ideas, theories, values and philosophies in a social environment. They have evolved from just searching for information to creating and participating in social spaces with other individuals through the Internet. Social network marketing model is based upon the mentality where people identify themselves as part of a group with similar likes and interests that draw them together. This makes it easy to do business / marketing of a business online because the traditional communication barriers of geographical locations no longer exist. The greatest advantage of social network marketing is that it does not, unlike conventional marketing, involve a huge marketing team or a prohibitive budget. Also, the communication with the customers becomes very easy. This article will reveal how to use social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ etc. as a powerful marketing tool for positive consumer behaviour with respect to your products / services. Also it will show how advertising and marketing through social networking websites can definitely enhance the prospects of business.

Keywords: Social networks, Online communities, Facebook, Conventional marketing, Social media marketing

I. Definition of Social Networks

There is no universally agreed definition of social marketing. However, it is generally accepted that it is more than mass media or public education campaigns. Social marketing differs in that it involves and the strategic use of marketing principles and practices.

Social media or social network can be broadly defined as “A process that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate and deliver value in order to influence behaviours that benefit society (public health, safety, the environment and communities) as well as the target audience” [Kotler, Nancy Lee & Rothschild, 2006].

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Since their introduction, social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have attracted millions of users. As of this writing, there are hundreds of social network sites, with various technological affordances, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around these sites are varied. These sites help to connect based on shared interests, political views, language, region, nationality or some other common interest. These social networks also vary in the content like personal information, blogging and photo/video sharing.

II. Getting started

When users join a social networking site they create a profile of themselves. The profile describes their interests and activities. Once the profile is set up, users connect with “friends” (other users) who have similar interests by searching the network, or inviting others to join. Most services require that both users confirm that they are friends before they become linked in the network. Once linked, it is simple to communicate to your group and update them on activities of interest. Because users tend to self-organize by affinity, life stage, and psychographics¹, these networks offer a unique opportunity for highly targeted marketing. Users share opinions and make recommendations on social networking sites. It has been repeatedly shown that consumers seek others opinions when considering the purchase of products and services. In fact, 78% of global consumers say they

trust and believe other people's recommendations for products and services more than any other medium². Among life scientists, others' opinions are also seen as more objective than companies' own marketing messages. Consumers use online sources including social networks, to find those opinions. Members of social networks serve two roles; they both supply and consume content. The creators of content are typically highly engaged consumers and, as a result, influential¹. If the proper influencers are reached with a message that they perceive as valuable, it can become viral. This is tremendously powerful to marketers, assures don't feel that the information is being pushed at them, but referred to them by a trusted friend in a trusted network. Social Networking can be use in a numerous business initiatives, including:

- Amplifying word-of-mouth marketing
- Market research
- General marketing
- Idea generation & new product development
- Co-innovation
- Customer service
- Public relations
- Employee communications
- Reputation management

III. The benefits of Social Network Marketing

The benefits to marketing via social networks are numerous and largely gained at a very low cost. Through social networks, the company can:

- Increase product and brand awareness
- Increase web traffic
- Increase customer loyalty
- Increase success of new product launches

1. Increase Product & Brand Awareness

Marketing on social networking sites will increase awareness by increasing the online presence of your products and brand. When the company creates a group or organizes a promotion on a social networking site, the members are reminded of your brand and website with every interaction. Since the customers are deciding what groups they want to join and what information they want to receive, this information is usually positively received.

2. Increase Web Traffic

Communications, recommendations, and other postings on social networking sites often contain web links. If the company is mentioned and a link is included, these postings drive traffic to your site, increasing brand and product awareness. Due to the makeup of social networking sites, these links are naturally targeted to potential customers that are interested in the company, products, or services.

3. Increase Customer Loyalty

If done correctly, promoting the company or products by building a social network can greatly enhance customer loyalty. If participation of the company is consistent and honest, adds value by supplying useful content, and appears personal, it will greatly enhance company's reputation while building trust and credibility. Offer help first, and promote products only when asked and when appropriate; otherwise your attempts could be considered spam.

4. Increase Success of New Product Launches

Social networks provide a unique opportunity to survey the relevant community on their products wants and needs. The community can guide and participate in the product development process. Giving them a voice in the process can increase loyalty and guarantee success when a new product is launched.

Users of social networking sites profile themselves upon joining a network. These profiles can be very detailed, and their purpose is to help the user connect with others who share similar interests and activities. The profiles contain, not only basic information about the user, but also information on their education, areas of technical expertise, publications, memberships in other groups, geographic location, and job position (among other information). For marketers, this information is invaluable as it can be used to develop highly targeted marketing messages.

IV. Methods of Social Network Marketing

Social network marketing is popularly called as Internet marketing. Today people can find many ways for internet marketing. Many people who enter this online marketing are less worried because of its guaranteed

success. Internet attracts many business people to promote their business online. Social network marketing is grown to such a height that today many people can't earn without it.

Some of the most recognized network marketing tools are Facebook, My Space, Twitter and LinkedIn. Twitter became regular place for people who have newly entered the field of social network marketing.

There are some most popular methods of social network marketing:

1. Blogging: When person starts blogging or posting data about any product, later it can become big business via blog. Websites and blogs are most powerful tools for social network marketing when matched with other networking tools. Blog is an amazing tool which provides many other facilities in addition to just marketing business. It also helps to communicate with other clients in case of any problems. Very effective can be to combine social media with article marketing and blogging, for example, creating links back to landing pages and get maximum exposure for products. There are many article directories that allow for free article submission. Each article should be unique. Blogging is also very popular for creating brand. As with anything it is important to make sure that brand stands out from the rest.

2. Personal website or blog: It is important to have private which will help clients to know about the company and it will make them clear that your company has a serious business and help to make huge revenue via online marketing.

3. Article selling: It is also best and most cost-effective internet marketing method. It is a mode of advertising trade just by writing articles and attracting endless number of users across world. Today it provided free business to many advertisers and publishers and they are really benefited through their articles.

4. Email sending: Electronic mail sending is the best way to marketing. The best way is to collect list of email addresses through portfolio websites and email about business to all internet users. Email should be attractive in such a way that recipient will be impressed to get back to you. It is also difficult to tread that fine line between spam and building up a social media audience. If individuals are contacted purely to make money then the company is sending out spam. This is a very unprofitable way to go about marketing. The company should be honest and truthful about what they are selling or promoting. A bad promotion can completely kill reputation and it can lose entire social media audience.

5. Using social networking websites: Social networking websites like Twitter and Facebook can be used to promote sales. These provide best platform for all who are thinking of online marketing.

6. Video promotion: In social media particularly video marketing can also be very effective. Millions of Internet users look at videos every day. A short video about your services and products can reach millions of potential customers. Several video distribution websites is very important for marketing. These websites uploads service to the whole world. All that is needed to do is film a video about marketing and send it to video uploading sites like You Tube. It seems it is the easiest way of marketing than any other modes since many people will be interested in view videos rather than word form of advertisement.

7. Press Release or media release: It attracts several public clients and increases relationship among them.

Social network marketing must be used to grow business. Online marketing is a huge arena and social media has quickly followed in its footsteps. These social sites are well established and they all work in slightly different ways. However it is not necessary to master every single social networking site. The potential marketer needs to identify which ones can be useful. Creating and establishing company or product as a brand can take time. However, when it establishes in one social network media it is quite easy to transfer this to another system. There is a lot of technology involved with this type of marketing, but there are many online tools that make it quite easy to work within social media. Social networking software makes it very easy to deal with the different interfaces as well as the ability to merge different accounts. This way it is possible to communicate directly to the target audience. Many software packages also make it possible to manage their marketing campaigns using their phone and other mobile devices. Social media is not typical affiliate marketing. Unlike affiliate marketing it will be necessary to explain why the targeted individual needs special services or product. A landing page which provides a quick explanation is best.

5. Facebook – Internet Marketing Oasis

In October 2003, a Harvard sophomore named Mark Zuckerberg hacked into the university's private dorm ID database and created Facemash, a site that let students compare two ID photos to select the more attractive one. Narrowly avoiding legal action, Zuckerberg went on to create "The Facebook," a social network that began as an exclusive site for Harvard students. Slowly the site allowed other colleges to join — initially only Ivy League schools, and then other colleges, and then, eventually, high schools. Finally, in 2006, anyone with an email address could sign up. Sometime between April 2008 and February 2009, Facebook overtook the long-standing king, MySpace, as the world's most popular social network. Finding a good place to showcase your products, services and websites for free in the online world is a dream for everyone – Facebook has made this a reality. With more than half a billion Facebook users and thousands of online communities to choose from, Facebook

has brought potential customers much closer to sellers. It's not big secret that Facebook can help in online marketing. However, there are many people who believe that just registering on Facebook is enough. It's definitely not. There is much more to marketing on Facebook than just creating a profile. Keeping fans engaged is the key.

V. How to use Facebook to increase customer base

- 1. Facebook Profile:** By creating a profile people are establishing their identity. This will take them a long way in developing relationships with fellow users and in positioning their business. Profile lets them interact with people on a personal note, more so if it's a local business.
- 2. Fan Pages:** Facebook Pages, known as Fan Pages, are designed for businesses, brands, companies, products and celebrities. It enables public figures, organizations and other entities to create an authentic and public presence on Facebook. Sellers can encourage users to become fans of their page and share information with them by uploading pictures, videos, status updates, hosting discussions and displaying wall posts. Unlike Facebook Profiles, Pages are visible to everyone on the internet and are generally better for long-term relationships with fans, readers or customers.
- 3. Groups:** Facebook Groups allow people to come together around a common cause or activity to express their views. One of the best features of groups is the ability to send messages directly to members' Facebook inboxes. It's a great way to form a community and help your brand image. Nowadays, it's almost a necessity for movies to establish their presence on Facebook during its post-release period as Facebook users look for movies here. The good thing here is that users can send bulk invites to friends, while it is manually done on Pages. Groups are generally better for hosting quick active discussions and attracting attention.
- 4. Events:** Simply put, Facebook Events can help users connect with their target audience and invite them for events, even if they aren't on their friend list or one of their fans. Events can be created individually or even from Profiles, Pages.

VI. How to use Facebook for online marketing

Social Media Marketing is still in its infancy. This as an advantage because there are not many set rules, users can experiment with different methods and techniques. However, if somebody doesn't want to experiment, here are some tried and tested methods that will ensure success:

- a. Be Unique and Keep Updating:** There's nothing more boring than bland Facebook pages. Users should add lots of personality and fun to profile. If possible, they should try to create applications just for their page. Offer something different so that fans keep coming back, instead of letting them wait for updates from user.
- b. Use a Big Profile Picture:** Using a big profile picture is one of the best ways to brand. This way, company stand out in a crowd.
- c. Tag Fans in Photos:** Users can tag their fans in pictures of new collections, or even ask them to tag themselves as a part of a game or contest. For example - musician Lenny Kravitz uploaded pictures of his concert in Italy in 2009 and asked everyone to tag themselves. This gave him good publicity as the update on being tagged appeared on the fans' walls.
- d. Reward Loyal Supporters:** Users have to encourage loyal supporters to join their Page and reward them. Tabs or badges like 'member of the month' that can be placed on their profiles for visibility can be awarded to them. A happy customer on Facebook can get company lots of attention.
- e. Use Contests and Polls:** Holding contests encourage fans to interact directly with seller.
- f. Marketplace:** With Facebook Marketplace, people can buy and sell anything using the listing service. The Marketplace application page displays all the most recent listings in your networks. The difference between normal listings and the Marketplace is that user doesn't see another boring list of business, but they show up as the site's own updates.

VIII. Conclusion

Social network marketing has become quite the trend amongst network marketers looking to promote their businesses online. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it easy for eager entrepreneurs to hop on the internet and network with people from around the world. Terms like tweeting, sharing, and voting have created quite the buzz amongst those who want to hop aboard the viral marketing trend. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity for those that truly capitalize on the social network marketing boom.

Social network marketing is perspective and interesting way to make successful business and generally network with people from all over the world. The power of social marketing is so huge and the opportunities are endless.

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