

ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AS A MARKETING TOOL

Dr. Manita Matharu*

ABSTRACT

The corporate sector has become more competitive, and on a wider scale, the entire world has been transformed into a market for firms. However, the Internet has developed into a tremendous opportunity for firms of all kinds, and e-marketing has become an essential part of 21st-century business, regardless of the more dynamic environment in which they operate. With the growing importance of social media, advertising companies are on the lookout for efficient strategies to maximise return on investment. Among other strategies, influencer marketing has recently emerged, which is a sort of marketing in which selected individuals are given more prominence than the entire target market. The aim of this study is to examine and comprehend the notion of influencer marketing. Being the most transformational new marketing strategy to emerge in a decade, influencer marketing is designed specifically for people on the cutting edge of purchasing decision-making. This study highlights the importance of influencer marketing as a form of marketing.

Keywords: Social Media, Influencers, Influencer Marketing, e-Marketing, Corporate Sector.

Introduction

The business world has evolved more competitive, and from a broader perspective, the entire world has now been transformed into a potential market for businesses. The Internet, however, has been a tremendous opportunity for all kinds of businesses, and e-marketing has become an essential component of 21st century marketing, regardless of the more dynamic environment in which they operate. By way of social media platforms endure to grow and evolve, the advertising industry has been forced to modify and familiarize in order to influence and engage with customers. Over two billion internet users frequently utilise social media sites, which has gradually increased over the years. These statistics are anticipated to climb as mobile devices and mobile social networking sites advance popularity (We Are Social 2016).

Influencer marketing is basically virtual word of mouth that consumers are more likely to perceive and respond favourably to messages that come from a trusted contact or persona than those that come from a firm. According to Nielsen, 92 percent of consumers place greater trust in recommendations from friends and family than they do in any other type of advertisement (Whitler, 2014). The content of the influencer cannot be stopped, and the most effective approach of earning client confidence is to do so through someone in whom the customers already have faith. It is nearly impossible for a brand to establish such a close relationship with its customers and influencers on their own (Hall 2016). A truly great equaliser, influencer marketing has the ability to alter the balance of power from those in positions of power to those in positions of power who have the skill to share somewhat. Social media

* Assistant Professor, Amity University, Noida, UP. India.

can create new chances for businesses to communicate with customers, while also allowing individuals to connect with one another. The idea is to become a part of new connects a brand with a new onlooker by developing a reliable relationship with an influencer in that community.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore and understand the concept - Influencer Marketing. This study highlights the role of Influencer marketing in consumers buying behaviour.

Influencer Marketing – the Concept

"Influence" has been largely defined as the supremacy to have an impact on a person, thing or sequence of events (Brown & Hayes, 2008). An Influencer is "A third party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision, but may ever be accountable for it."(Brown & Hayes, 2008, p. 50). "Influencers are individuals who have the power to affect purchase decisions of others because of their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship" (businessdictionary.com-Influencers). Cialdini (2006) explains that the process of influencing is based on six principles of persuasion, which are as follows: consistency, reciprocation, social evidence, authority, like, and scarcity (to name a few examples). These concepts are based on the psychology of persons who, while making spontaneous decisions, turn beyond themselves for guidance.

Brown and Fiorella describes in their book "Influence Marketing: How to Create, Manage, and Measure Brand Influencers in Social Media Marketing" how the four M's of influencers should be become skilled at. The 4 M's signify: "make, manage, monitor and measure". Influencer marketing, like any other business discipline, has goals and metrics(Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

Brands are now engaging their consumers through influencers, characterised as "ordinary individuals" with a sizable following on social media (Tapinfluence, 2017). Influencers are now found on a variety of social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, promoting or representing brands. Customers increasingly like to seek the advice of other customers and influencers while making a purchase decision on a product or service in order to make an accurate selection. Hence, influencers seem to have become increasingly crucial in determining consumer attitudes about the products and services of a firm.

Influencer Marketing – as Marketing Tool

Marketing through influencers has emerged as the most significant new marketing method to emerge in a decade, catering mostly to those professionals who are at the forefront of purchasing decision-making. There are several ways that might assist in increasing sales. Nothing, however, can match the heights reached by influencer marketing in recent years. Direct word-of-mouth marketing between consumers (as in influencer marketing) has been proved to produce more sales than paid advertising. Consumers place a high premium on influencers and their recommendations; you may want to invest more time in collaborating with influencers to better your company approach. In this way, Influencer marketing is extremely successful.

The top five reasons marketers leverage influencers in marketing efforts are: to increase brand advocacy, to increase brand awareness, to reach new targeted audiences, to increase share of voice and to increase sales conversion (Nanji, 2017). As per the report by Social Media Examiner (Krasniak, 2016), another factor is growing concern about the increased use of ad blocking and ad avoidance by consumers.

Conclusion

User behaviour has changed in the age of social media, as they have moved from being fans to providing promotional content for businesses, and from being casual endorsers to obtaining micro-celebrity status through social media influencers (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016). Utilizing social media influencers can be a component of a targeted marketing approach geared at leveraging on an individual's innate desire to fit in. Bear in mind that renowned influencers already have a sizable following. Similar to leveraging celebrities as endorsers, influencers' prominence and influence over their audience can be utilised as a catalyst to activate their followers' natural desire to operate as a collective like-minded group.

Through the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships with social media influencers who share their company's values, marketers may take use of these influencers' abilities to reach large/targeted audiences and create interesting content. Traditional advertising and branded content can generate considerable returns on investment, but influencer marketing approaches can provide significantly higher returns on investment when implemented properly.

References

1. Brown, D., & Fiorella, S. (2013). *Influence marketing: How to create, manage, and measure brand influencers in social media marketing*. Que Publishing.
2. Cialdini, R. B. 2006. *The Psychology of Persuasion*. Sydney: HarperCollins Australia.
3. Hall, J. 2016. 'The Influencer Marketing Gold Rush Is Coming: Are You Prepared?' <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnhall/2016/04/17/the-influencer-marketing-gold-rush-is-coming-are-you-prepared/#26a8f05f2964>.
4. Hearn, A., & Schoenhoff, S. (2016). From celebrity to influencer. *A companion to celebrity*, 194-212.
5. Krasniak, M. (2016). Social Influencer Marketing on the Rise: New Research. Accessed online (February 1, 2017) at: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-influencer-marketing-on-the-rise-new-research/>.
6. Nanji, A. (2017b). The State of Influencer Marketing in 2017. Accessed online (February 7, 2017) at: <https://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2017/31524/the-state-of-influencer-marketing-in-2017?adref=nl020717>.
7. Swant, Marty. "Twitter Says Users Now Trust Influencers Nearly as Much as Their Friends." *Adweek*. Adweek, 10 May 2016. Web.
8. Tapinfluence. (2017, February 16). Do micro-influencers make better brand ambassadors than celebrities? {Weblog post}. <https://www.tapinfluence.com/micro-Influencers-make-better-brand-ambassadors-celebrities>.
9. We Are Social. "Leading Social Networks Worldwide as of April 2016, Ranked by Number of Active Users (in Millions)." *Statistic - The Statistics Portal*. Statistic. April 2016. Web.
10. Whitler, Kimberly. "Why Word of Mouth Marketing Is the Most Important Social Media." *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, 17 July 2014. Web.

