

DIGITAL MARKETING: CHALLENGES WITH REFERENCE TO INSTAGRAM

Dr. Maneesha Kaushik*
Dr. Ravi Kant Modi**

ABSTRACT

Social media is a great way to foster a personal relationship between a brand and its followers. With over 400 million users and 80 million posts per day, Instagram has become an essential social media marketing tool for all business. Yet, with frequent changing of social media use patterns and preferences, it can be challenging to assign the right strategy to the right social media platform. The purpose of this case study is to explore how Instagram can improve as a mobile app for businesses and consumers. The study begins by exploring the rise of multi-platform use. The study will also evaluate and compare major social channels in terms of consumer and brand preferences. The study will then analyze and provide insights on ways Instagram can improve as a marketing platform for businesses. Data collection is achieved through case study analysis as an empirical way to examine social media platforms. This study provides individuals and businesses engaged in social media a comparison of major social media platforms and provides insight into digital marketing strategies for Instagram and businesses alike. The application of these conclusions could increase the survival rate of new social media platforms and provide a better understanding of Instagram as a strategic tool for practitioners. The study is significant because this research widens contemporary assumptions about strategic thinking for social media mechanisms. Social network marketing is becoming a popular marketing strategy for many business people. Follow after the well-known social media network such as Facebook and Twitter, Instagram has joined in the trend in 2010 and provided another favorable marketing platform for marketers to interact with their customers. Instagram is a worldwide used social media network, which has been used as a marketing tool by many global business companies. It is a significant marketing tool that allows business communication to take place. Through Instagram, marketers are able to interact with their customers by sharing photos and videos and leaving comments as a way of sharing information; receiving comments and likes as a way of gaining feedback from customers. In this paper, discussion on how Instagram can be used as a marketing tool in social network marketing will be done.

Keywords: Instagram, Social Network Marketing, Marketing Tool, Businesses, Consumers.

Introduction

Digitalization Objectives

- Brand awareness is one of the important aspects and objectives of Digital Marketing. if your business is small or limited to a smaller area, you can use digital marketing methods to grow your brand's name.
- Helps to get a high amount of leads which will fill your email list of potential Customers and you will definitely have a much better conversion. social media platform of digital marketing methods is one of the best ways to capture your potential customers online (lead generation).

* Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Swami Keshvanand Institute of Technology, Management & Gramothan (SKIT), Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

** HOD, Faculty of Commerce & Assistant Professor, Department of EAFM, LBS PG College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

- **Target Customers:** increasing your business to new customers will significantly help in the increase of profit shares.
- **Increase Sales / Profits:** Major objectives of digital marketing is to increase the number of sales your product and services.
- **More Website Traffic:** increase your websites traffic, rank in google with the different techniques of digital marketing like ON PAGE SEO, OFF PAGE SEO.
- **Less Costly:** Running cost of online marketing ds is almost 1/4th of the offline marketing because trough digital marketing you can directly target audience at right location. Introduction Marketing is a well-improved method or action that frequently changes the rules based on the requirement of promoting and selling products and services. Unlike the past, traditional marketing strategy such as television commercials and newspaper advertisements do not give much impact to the customers these days. People in the present day are likely to attach to the online services. Today, social networking is said to be an important part of our life. As technology improve, we are most likely to engage ourselves more to electronic devices. Now, with the invention of smartphones, we are in the time of mobile social networking. the rising of these new technologies does not only affect our living style but also created a new marketing strategy for marketers to promote and sell their products. As social media is getting more popular, marketers have to quickly adapt to the social networking space to be able to interact with customers. Social media, an online community that target to provide a space for people to communicate has now become a well-liked channel for brand marketing. Following after social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, Instagram came in 2010 and in January 2014, there are already 150 million people using. These social networking sites do not only provide user to expand personal network but also provide a platform for the business people to interact with potential customers. Hence, social media is affecting the phenomena of marketing. Currently, there are many different industries are advertising their product and services through social media. Through social media, big business can do better and small business can become better known without putting much investment on advertising. Social media has turn to one of the most favoured marketing strategy used by the business people around the world.

Instagram

Instagram is founded in 2010. It is a mobile application, which allows users to share their photos and videos to their followers. According to Instagram as cited in Instagram first started off with providing functions on editing and sharing photos and later on added in the functions of sharing videos and photo messaging directly to another user. Instagram allows users to snap photo or video anywhere they are at any time and share it with their followers nationally and also. According to Otto as cited in, users are able to take a 15 seconds long video and 13 artistic filters are available for user to edit their photos. Instagram is said to be the third most popular social network among the college students in the United States. Following the press released from Instagram cited in in the year 2013, Instagram has 100 million monthly active users, 40 million photos were uploaded per day, 8,500 likes and 1,000 comments gained per second.

How Instagram Contribute to Social Network Marketing

Instagram can help a company to promote their products or services. The point that makes Instagram different from other social media is that Instagram is applying a visual based strategy. Everything about Instagram is about photograph. Instagram marketing is an effective way to advertise a product as it is said that a picture speaks a thousand words. Additionally, Instagram can help one in saving cost for brand designing. Every image taken for a product can be edited and filtered using the Instagram functions. Moreover, social media also provide the marketers an easier way to understand their customers. In the case of Instagram, leaving comments and receiving comments on the photo posts can gain more feedback from the customers on the product. Followers are often interested to see the interaction between the organization and the users, so being attentive to the comments would help in improving the relationship with customers. Furthermore, Instagram has included a function known as direct messaging. This function could give the VIP customers another way to communicate and interact with the organization. Herman (2014) has stated that the direct message function allows the user to send message that only receiver can view and each message can send out to 15 users each time.

Review of Literature

Every day, billions of humans connect through various social media platforms that are widely used for communication and information exchange. Aichner and Jacob described social media as "web-based applications and interactive platforms that facilitate the creation, discussion,

modification, and exchange of user-generated content.” They also identify 13 types of social media: social networks, “blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks, forums, micro blogs, photo sharing, product/services reviews, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds”. As of today, Facebook is the most used social media platform in the world with more than 1.5 billion active users. As the world is getting more and more dependent on digitalization, social media is making the internet not only a source of information, but also a source of influence. Consequently, businesses should seek to integrate social media into their strategy to attract and interact with customers. A 2014 survey of 351 business executives revealed that 9% of marketing budgets are assigned to social media marketing. Social media strategies are now treated as an integral part of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and help in organizations’ promotional efforts by facilitating interaction between the organization and its customers and among the customers themselves. Therefore, most stakeholders expect organizations to have some presence on social media platforms, and a lack of these venues is considered unacceptable and non-normative in this day and age. Recent studies on the importance and impact of social media in the business world agree on the valuable benefits for a company to invest in social media marketing. First, social networks are tools to make a business stand out and increase awareness. Taken Smith, Blazovich, and Murphy Smith stated that 88% of marketers gained more exposure for their business and two-thirds of marketers experienced a rise in search engine rankings due to social media marketing. These numbers can be explained by the fact that customers trust social media more than corporate sponsored messages concerning product information. Second, by creating online communities, companies can earn customer loyalty. Social media allows businesses to establish a strong relationship with customers. They share their vision, values, and products, as well as receive in return feedback and new customers. Value is derived from online customer communities, the participants of which are so engaged with the company that they become loyal customers and even champions for the brand. These types of customers are instrumental in facilitating viral marketing and driving traffic to the company site. Thus, through social media platforms, companies can increase profits. Even though it is difficult to measure the Return on Investment (ROI) of social media, studies show that there is a positive correlation between social media activity and a firm’s financial performance. Indeed, the R&D, marketing, sales, and customer service that departments gain from social media insights about customers’ preferences can lead to the creation of new products and informed decisions about the best way to advertise and serve clients. Taken Smith et al., claimed that 80% of Fortune 500 companies are engaged in social media, and believe that the impact on the bottom line is most noticeable on long-term performance.

Challenges

- **Limitation of Internet Access:** The Digital marketing is closely reliant on internet. In some areas, internet facility may not be accessible to the consumers or with poor internet connections. The Digital Marketing can be unsuccessful in those areas having no or limited internet accessibility.
- **Limited Consumer Link and Conversation:** As digital marketing is highly dependent on internet, so the marketers may find it hard to make their advertisements more comprehensive and start a conversation with their consumers about the company brand image or products.
- **High Competition of Brands:** Digital Marketing has a drawback when a customer searches for a specific product of a specific company on internet, many competing goods, and services having same marketing strategies appear on the customer’s home page. This conflicts the customers and provides an alternative option to choose cheaper and better quality product of another company. As a result, some customers lack the trust on a lot of advertisements that appear on a website or social media and consider it as fraud and look like a dishonest brand.
- **Risk of Hacking Strategies:** The risk of hacking promotion strategies of a company always rests on digital channels (internet) that is one of the drawbacks of digital marketing. The hackers or competitors can easily track and copy the valuable promotional strategies of a well renowned company and can utilize for their purposes.
- **Anti-Brand Activities (Doppelganger):** Another drawback of digital marketing is that even a person or group of persons can harm the image of a recognized brand through 'Doppelganger'. Anti-brand activists, bloggers, and opinion leaders spread the term 'Doppelganger' to disapprove the image of a certain brand.

SWOT Analysis of Instagram

SWOT Analysis of Instagram. IG or Insta or Instagram is a US photo and video-sharing social media platform, a Facebook subsidiary brand. Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom laid the foundation of Instagram in Oct 2010. Initially, it was iOS, and the company developed it for android in April 2012.

Some of the top products and services of Instagram are;

- Video Sharing
- Photo sharing
- Social Networking
- Affiliate platform for influencers
- Sponsorship programs

Ever since launching Instagram publicly, it gained one million users within two months, and the platform attracted 10 million users in the first year. Such speedy growth drew the attention of Facebook, the world's largest social media platform, which bought the newly launched multimedia platform for 1 billion dollars in stock and cash. Instagram is the world's 4th most downloaded application since 2010. According to recent statistics, Instagram has approximately more than 1 billion active monthly users and over 500 million daily active users. Cristiano Ronaldo has around more than 253 million followers on Instagram.

Some of the top competitors of Instagram are:

- YouTube Shorts
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- TikTok
- LinkedIn

Today, we'll study the swot analysis of Instagram. It will focus on the internal and external factors impacting the growth of the video/photo-sharing social media platform. Here's the swot analysis of Instagram as follows:

Strengths of Instagram

- **Hashtags**

Hashtags are one of the most important features of Instagram. It allows people to reach a wide range of audiences and rank their posts in the searches if used correctly. Once it has reached mass people, if the content is good, it will attract many users' attention.

- **Global Reach**

According to an estimate, approximately over 1 billion & 500 million, people are monthly/daily active Instagram users. Various people use the multimedia platform for different reasons like friends & family, sharing their adventures and experiences, and selling products. Besides their different objectives, they all use Instagram and attract others to join the platform. Ultimately, it increases the growth and range of the forum.

- **Strong Parent Brand**

As many of you are familiar with the fact, Facebook is the parent brand of Instagram. Facebook is also one of the world's top 5 tech companies like Apple, Google, Amazon, and Microsoft. The company has a strong tech background and financial resources. That's why no one has tried to copy Instagram features and the platform because of its strong backing power.

- **Direct Messaging (DM)**

Instagram is multimedia social networking where people upload photos/videos, add captions, use hashtags, and share it. The post attracts people to like and comment on the content. However, Instagram also allows people to direct message the content creator. In case more people are commenting, then your message would be lost in the threads.

- **Filters**

Instagram offers a very efficient built-in filters tool. It allows people to fix their photos/videos and add various effects to them if needed. In other words, people don't have to download additional applications to improve their pictures. They can do it by staying on the social media platform.

- **First Multimedia Platform**

Instagram is the first pictures and videos sharing social networking platform, and it was very creative and innovative back in 2010. Other multimedia platforms came into the market much later. Being the pioneer and associated with Facebook helped Instagram to achieve over 1 billion, monthly active users.

- **Integration**

Instagram has successfully integrated with other social media platforms like Twitter, Google, Tumblr, Facebook, etc. It means that people can directly share their content on various platforms without leaving it. It's a very effective technique to make people active users.

Weaknesses of Instagram

- **Data Issues of Facebook**

Instagram's parent brand, Facebook, has issues like privacy issues, data breaches, and leakage of personal information. Since Instagram is also a product of Facebook, if it can happen to the parent brand, subsidiary brands could also be the next target. Such questions have made the people unsafe, and they now question the security of the platform.

- **One Way Traffic**

Many businesses use paid advertising and promotional tools of Instagram for the marketing of their business. It allows them to attach a link to their e-commerce platform. But it doesn't guarantee that people would leave the platform to visit your online store. Often, people watch the ad and scroll up.

- **Lower Communication Channel**

Instagram has limited communication channels. You can either comment or send a direct message. You can easily get lost in the crowd if more people are commenting on it. Some people say that only two communication channels are very low for over a billion users platform.

Opportunities Available to Instagram

- **Video Ads**

Many advertising businesses provide the services of ads and story creation. Instagram should consider providing a built-in one-minute short video ad creation option so that small businesses could create it by themselves without hiring any third party.

- **Social Media for Smartphones**

As we know, smartphone usage and the internet have been increasing for the past few years. Instagram should exploit this trend and market it's a perfect platform for smartphone users to take photo and directly share it on Instagram.

- **Sponsors**

Some of celebrities and influencers have millions of followers on Instagram. Businesses and companies reach out to them for the marketing of their products. It works for both parties; businesses get the sale boost, and the influencers earn money.

Even the livelihood of some people is dependent on the sponsorships and marketing of the company's products. It's increasing the traffic on the platform.

Threats Instagram has to Face

- **Beauty Race**

The cosmetic and fashion industry in the selfie culture is making people perform plastic surgeries on their bodies. Butt lift, Botox, and fillers are some of the top examples of it. Such pictures and selfies are often the results of photoshop and editing.

- **Schedule Posts**

Many automation tools allow people to schedule their posts for a month. They won't have to log in to the platform; the automation tool would keep posting on their behalf. The schedule posting features have decreased the number of active users.

- **Limited Visibility**

It was much to be visible on Instagram in the beginning. The businesses and paid promotion campaigns have made it difficult for ordinary users to become known, famous, and visible. Everyone is on Instagram, and very few people get attention.

Discussion

As the marketing strategy trend move from the traditional marketing strategy to social network marketing strategy, many companies have started to participate in promoting the company's brand through various social networking sites. In this era where everyone is always busy, many customers would prefer looking at visual based advertisement such as pictures and videos than advertisement filled with words. Therefore, the social networking site that best fit the marketing strategy is the Instagram. The popularity of Instagram is rising day by day. Besides being well known among the young people who is active in using social media, Instagram is also getting more popular in the business industry. Many business people uses Instagram as their new platform to market their products and services. The functions of Instagram do not only attract the attentions of all the social networkers but also the marketers. This research paper discussed that Instagram is one of the favourable platforms to market a product or service. It allows user to upload photos and videos, to like other users' photos and videos, and also to comment on other users' photos and videos. Marketers could like other users' photos and videos to attract the attention of other users and to get the company's name better known. Next, Instagram allows users to comment on each other's photos and videos; hence, marketers could identify the audience that can be targeted and also interact with customers who are interested in that certain product or service. This method also helps the marketers to gain feedback from the customers. These benefits given by Instagram to the marketers have make Instagram in becoming one of the strong tool in the social network marketing strategy. Nevertheless, every social networking site does face privacy issue. In the case of Instagram, they have been through a controversy on the changing of terms and conditions in 2012. They updated their policy to make it easier to share information with Facebook but it has brought in a lot of negative responses from the users. Due to the massive negative responses received, they have decided to revert the policy back to the original ones. Although Instagram was shown to be a very useful marketing tool in the new era, there are still disadvantages to be possibly gained by using Instagram as a marketing tool. The customers' information could not be fully protected and the interaction between customers and marketer are always through a media platform, so there are probability of the marketer for not knowing who are their customers because fake identity may be created for online businesses.

Conclusion

Instagram is now one of the popular social networking sites used as a mobile application. It helps in getting people interacting nationally and globally. Instagram have gathered all the people around the world who are interested in photography, as it is an application focus on photographic functions. Moreover, it has now become a new marketing tool in social network marketing. Online marketing is not something new to the business industry and social network marketing has been actively applied nowadays. Recently, there are many companies that use social networking sites to sell and advertise their products and services. Among the social networking sites being used, Instagram is widely used through mobile devices as an application. It has created a different platform for marketers to interact with the customers. In addition, Instagram can be used free of charge. Instagram is a strong tool that is different from other social networking sites in social network marketing. It provides a better visual based platform and have make it convenient for the people to interact with each other. Yet, there is always risk when one is using a platform owned by others to perform certain activity, so it is very important to clearly understand the terms and conditions of the social networking sites before engaging in any business activities through the online platforms.

Social media platforms are increasing in popularity since they allow users to connect and interact with each other and share their experiences, activities, and passions. Social media is also influential and one of the most important tools for marketing and branding. This study provided insights on various tactics that Instagram can utilize to improve as a marketing platform for businesses. Launched in 2010, Instagram evolved quickly to become one of the most favourite social media platforms for individuals and businesses. What makes Instagram unique is the instant photo and video editing and sharing with an audience of 800 million active users. This platform benefits from a good positioning and can take advantage of exciting advertisement opportunities and technological advancements. The main strengths of Instagram are having a high user base and having a strong supportive parent company. It is also utilized by many businesses and has allowed small businesses to grow their online presence. The disadvantages of the company are the photo rights issues and the strong competition. In order for Instagram to maintain their lead in social media, they should improve in favor of business utilization. For example, businesses would benefit from being able to upload photos from non-mobile devices and add a photo shopping feature for convenience. Another area of improvement would be adding topics like World Wide News, Sports, and specific events. Although privacy issues are inevitable right now on Instagram,

users and businesses could also benefit from an automatic watermarking feature. In summary, the research conducted on Instagram could increase the survival rate of new social media platforms and provide a better understanding of Instagram as a strategic tool for practitioners. The study is significant because this research widens contemporary assumptions about strategic thinking for social media mechanisms.

References

1. Aichner T, Jacob F. Measuring the degree of corporate social media use. International Journal of Market Research.
2. Pinterest statistics that marketers can't ignore. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/Pinterest-statistics/>.
3. Harris J, Lenox M. The strategist's toolbox. Charlottesville (VA): Darden Business Publishing; 2013.
4. Hanna R, Rohm A, Crittenden VL. We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. Business Horizons.
5. How Many People Use Snapchat? <http://mediakix.com>
6. Magazines and social media platforms: Strategies for enhancing us engagement and implications for publishers. Journal of Magazine & New Media Research.
7. <https://www.instagram.com/about/us>.

