A Study of How Social Media Marketing Influences the Customer

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ABSTRACT

In this world of digitization, Brands are using social media marketing more and more frequently to connect with consumers and engage with them. Numerous studies have been conducted on the effect of social media marketing on consumer behavior, and the findings indicate that it may have a big impact. Social media can help brands build awareness, establish social proof, target advertising, leverage influencer marketing, and engage with customers in real time. By doing so, social media marketing can affect customer behavior, driving them to try new products or services, purchase from a brand, and become loyal customers. However, it's crucial for brands to use social media ethically and transparently and prioritize building authentic relationships with their customers to build long-lasting trust and credibility. To guarantee they're using the potential of this formidable marketing tool, companies need to keep up with the most recent trends and best practices as social media continues to develop.

Social media marketing has emerged as a critical tool for businesses looking to expand their reach, connect with customers, and drive sales. Through various tactics, including influencer marketing, targeted advertising, and customer engagement, social media marketing can significantly impact customer behavior. The use of social media can help build brand awareness, establish social proof, and target advertising efforts more effectively, all of which can influence customer decision-making. However, it is essential for businesses to use social media ethically and transparently, prioritize building authentic relationships with customers, and stay up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices. As social media continues to evolve, businesses must understand how it can influence customer behavior and use it to their advantage to build brand loyalty, trust, and credibility.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Traditional marketing, Influencing Customer and Social Media platform

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, social media marketing has revolutionized the way businesses approach customer engagement and brand promotion. Businesses may engage directly with consumers and reach a larger audience by utilizing the power of social media platforms. Social media marketing can impact customer behavior in various ways, including building brand awareness, establishing social proof, targeting advertising efforts, leveraging influencer marketing, and engaging with customers in real time. The influence of social media on customer behavior is well-documented, and businesses that use it effectively can drive sales, boost customer loyalty, and establish a competitive advantage. However, it's crucial for businesses to use social media ethically and transparently, prioritizing authenticity and building genuine

relationships with customers. In this paper, we will explore how social media marketing influences customer behavior and discuss best practices for businesses looking to leverage social media as part of their marketing strategy.

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives and has a significant impact on businesses and consumers alike. According to Statista, social media has influenced the purchasing decisions of 74% of consumers in 2021. This influence is largely due to the ability of social media platforms to provide access to product information, reviews, and user-generated content that helps consumers make informed decisions.

Furthermore, Businesses now require social media marketing as a crucial tool for connecting with and promoting to their target markets. **According to Statista**, global social media advertising spending is expected to reach 132.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2021, which is a testament to the power and effectiveness of social media marketing. **(According to Statista - online statistics, market research, and site of business intelligence)**
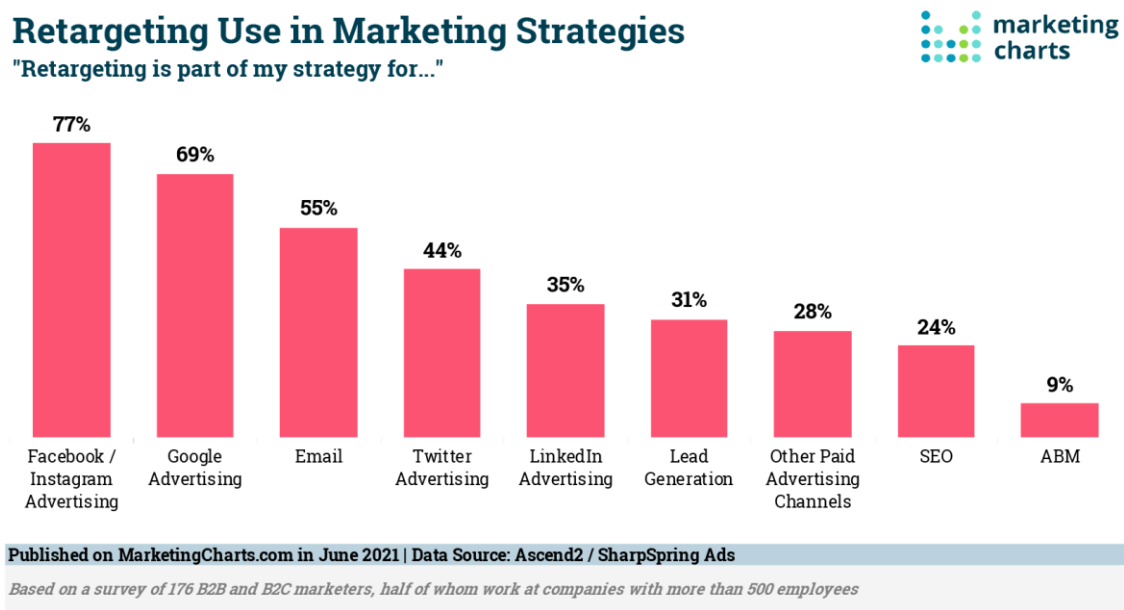

Fig 1 No. of the percentage of social media users

So many businesses market their goods and services online.. As of my knowledge cutoff date in September 2021, it was estimated that India had around 448 million social media users. However, I don't have access to real-time data or future predictions beyond my knowledge cutoff date. The number of social media users in India is expected to rise in the upcoming years, according to a number of analyses and research.

According to a report by Statista, it is estimated that the number of social media users in India will reach 448.6 million in 2022. This would represent a growth of approximately 9.5% from the estimated number of users in 2021. However, these are just projections, and actual numbers may vary based on various factors such as changing user behaviors, government policies, and technological advancements.

Marketing is also described as the process of determining the wants and requirements of the market/customer and satisfying them profitably (Philip Kotler). Marketing is also described as the fulfillment of customers' demands via the exchange process.

1.1 Key Process Marketing: -

Marketing is a broad term that encompasses many different activities and processes, but at its core, it is all about creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging value to customers. Therefore, the key process of marketing can be broken down into several steps:

- **Market research**: This is the process of learning about the target market's needs, preferences, and behaviors.
- **Segmentation and targeting**: Based on market research, the marketer divides the market into different segments and selects the segments that are most likely to respond to the marketing message.
- **Positioning**: Once the target market is identified, the marketer positions the product or service in the mind of the consumer, highlighting its unique features and benefits.
- **Marketing mix**: It includes the product or service, price, promotion, and place (distribution), all of which need to be tailored to the target market.
- **Implementation**: This is the stage where the marketing plan is put into action, and the marketing message is delivered to the target audience through various channels.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**: The final step is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing campaign, using metrics such as sales, customer feedback, and market share to assess its success.

1.2 Different methods of Traditional Marketing are:

Traditional marketing refers to the traditional methods of marketing that were commonly used before the advent of the Internet and digital marketing. Some of the most common methods of traditional marketing include:

- **Print advertising**: This includes newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers, and other printed materials that are distributed to potential customers.
- **Broadcast advertising:** This includes television and radio commercials, as well as advertisements in movie theaters.
- **Outdoor advertising**: This includes billboards, banners, and posters placed in high-traffic areas such as highways, bus stops, and city center
- **Direct mail**: This includes sending promotional materials, such as postcards, letters, and catalogs, directly to potential customers through the mail.
- **Telemarketing**: This involves making sales calls to potential customers over the phone.
- **Events and trade shows:** This involves setting up booths or tables at events and trade shows to showcase products and services to potential customers.
- **Public relations:** This involves using press releases, media interviews, and other forms of communication to generate positive publicity for a brand or organization.

While digital marketing has become increasingly popular in recent years, traditional marketing still has its place in the marketing mix and can be effective for reaching certain target audiences.

Previously, these were methods for advertising and selling goods or services, but as time passed and technology took over, the concept of social media marketing emerged. Businesses have started utilizing social media marketing tools for a variety of marketing initiatives.

1.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have made social media marketing a relatively new idea. Social media marketing entails utilizing these networks to advertise a company or product and interact with potential clients. It is employed to advertise a good or service, increase brand recognition, and interact with customers. As more and more users spend time on these platforms, social media has grown in importance as a component of the marketing mix and is now a prime channel for companies to connect with their target market.

Social media marketing may take many forms-

Paid social media advertising: This involves creating ads on social media platforms that are targeted to specific demographics and interests.

- **Organic social media marketing**: This involves creating and sharing valuable content on social media platforms to attract and engage potential customers without paying for advertising.
- **Influencing marketing**: This involves collaborating with social media influencers that have a sizable fan base to promote a company or item.

Social media analytics: This involves tracking and analyzing data from social media channels to learn about consumer behavior and enhance marketing tactics

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of studying social media marketing are:

➢ To comprehend the influence social media platforms, have on purchasing decisions.
➢ To examine how social media affects how people perceive a brand.
➢ To enhance social media marketing initiatives.
➢ In order to get a competitive edge.

> ➢ Overall, the objectives of studying social media marketing to influence the customer are to gain insights into how social media platforms impact consumer behavior, identify effective marketing strategies, optimize campaigns, improve brand perception, and gain a competitive advantage.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is an essential aspect of any study, The quality and validity of the research findings are greatly influenced by the research technique, which is a critical component of any study. When selecting a research technique for the study of how social media marketing affects the client, there are numerous crucial factors to bear in mind. The research design, sample, data collecting, data analysis, ethical issues, and constraints are a few of these factors.

The Research design chosen for the study should align with the research questions and objectives. The design may vary, including surveys, case studies, and experimental designs. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population to participate in the study, and the sampling method chosen should depend on the research design and research questions. Data collection methods should be chosen based on the research design and questions and may include surveys, interviews, or content analysis. The data analysis method chosen should also align with the research questions and data collected.

Ethical considerations are also important when conducting research on social media marketing influences the customer. Researchers must obtain informed consent, protect data privacy and confidentiality, and ensure that study participants are not harmed.

Finally, it is crucial to note the study's shortcomings. Limitations may include sample size, data collection methods, or external factors that may impact the study findings. Overall, the research methodology chosen for studying social media marketing influences the customer should provide valid and reliable data, consider ethical considerations and limitations, and align with the research questions and objectives.

4. Result and discussion

One of the key expected outcomes is gaining insights into consumer behavior, particularly with regard to how social media platforms impact decision-making processes. This includes understanding how consumers use social media to gather information, engage with brands, and make purchasing decisions. Another expected outcome is the identification of effective social media marketing strategies that can be used to reach target audiences, drive engagement and conversions, and achieve marketing objectives.

In addition to these outcomes, studying social media marketing influences the customer is also expected to provide insights into the impact of social media on brand perception. By analyzing the ways in which social media can impact how consumers perceive brands, businesses can gain a better understanding of how to improve their reputation and brand image on social media. The study is also expected to provide guidance on how to optimize social media marketing campaigns, including how to track metrics, measure effectiveness, and adjust strategies based on data-driven insights.

Finally, studying social media marketing influences the customer can provide businesses with a competitive advantage. By identifying gaps and opportunities in the market and analyzing competitors' social media strategies, businesses can refine their own strategies and gain an edge over the competition. Overall, the expected outcomes of studying social media marketing influence the customer is to provide

businesses with valuable insights and guidance on how to effectively leverage social media to achieve their marketing goals

and gain a competitive advantage.

5. CONCLUSION

Now, Businesses depend heavily on social media marketing to interact with consumers and shape their behavior. According to the literature study, social media marketing may affect consumer behavior by raising brand recognition, boosting customer interaction, and establishing credibility and trust with consumers. Studying the impacts of social media marketing on consumer behavior has certain drawbacks, though, including selection bias, self-selection bias, measurement challenges, dependency on social media platforms, transient effects, and external influences. Future research must thus address these issues in order to offer a more thorough knowledge of how social media marketing affects consumer behavior. In general, companies must use social media marketing efficiently to acquire a competitive edge and create enduring relationships with customers.

6. Acknowledgment

7. Review of the Literature

A review of the literature involves analyzing and reviewing different sources of information, such as research articles, books, journals, and research papers. This process is an essential step in conducting any research study, including social media marketing influences the customer. The purpose of the literature review is to identify the relevant theories, concepts, and empirical studies that have already been conducted in the area of study.

The literature review should be comprehensive and systematic, involving the identification of relevant keywords and databases, the evaluation of articles for relevance and quality, the analysis and synthesis of the literature, and the summary of findings. In order to conduct a thorough review, it is important to select relevant keywords that capture the core concepts of the study.

Once relevant articles have been identified, they should be evaluated for relevance and quality. Articles that are relevant to the research questions and objectives should be included in the literature review. Quality articles should be published in reputable journals, have a strong methodology, and provide valid and reliable data.

After identifying and evaluating relevant articles, the literature should be analyzed and synthesized. This involves identifying common themes and trends, assessing the strength of the evidence, and identifying

gaps in the research. The literature review should also include a critical analysis of the existing research, highlighting the strengths and limitations of previous studies, and identifying areas where further research is needed.

Overall, a thorough review of the literature is an essential component of any research study, as it provides the foundation for the research questions, methodology, and findings. By reviewing the literature on social media marketing influences the customer, researchers can gain a better understanding of the current state of research in their field of study and identify gaps in the research that the current study aims to address.

Parkash S. & Banerjee S. (2016) conducted a literature review on the impact of social media on consumer behavior. They analyzed various studies on the topic and found that social media has a significant influence on consumer behavior. Specifically, they found that social media influences consumers' product evaluation, purchase decisions, and brand loyalty. Additionally, they identified various factors that affect the impact of social media on consumer behavior, such as the type of social media platform used, the content of the message, and the characteristics of the consumer.

Wang and Kim (2017) reviewed the literature on the effects of social media on consumer behavior in the context of e-commerce. They found that social media has a positive impact on consumer trust, purchase intention, and post-purchase behavior. They also found that the use of social media in marketing can lead to increased brand awareness and customer engagement.

Kim and Ko (2012) conducted a literature review on the influence of social media on consumer behavior and found that social media can affect consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward brands. They identified the importance of building relationships with consumers through social media in order to increase brand loyalty and engagement.

Sathya P. (2015) conducted a literature review on the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior. In the review, the author analyzed various studies on the topic and found that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer behavior. Specifically, the review found that social media marketing influences consumers' product knowledge, purchase intentions, and post-purchase behavior.
The review also identified several factors that affect the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, such as the type of social media platform used, the content of the message, and the characteristics of the consumer. The review further found that social media marketing can be an effective tool for building brand awareness and customer loyalty.
In addition, the review discussed the importance of engaging with customers through social media and building relationships with them. It highlighted the need for businesses to listen to their customers and respond to their needs and concerns in order to build trust and loyalty

Vetrivel T. & Balachandran N. (2018) conducted a literature review on the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, with a particular focus on the use of social media in the hospitality industry. The review analyzed various studies on the topic and found that social media marketing has a significant influence on consumer behavior in the hospitality industry.

Specifically, the review found that social media marketing influences consumers' perceptions of service quality, brand image, and trust in the hospitality industry. It also highlighted the importance of social media in building customer loyalty and generating positive word-of-mouth.

The review further identified several factors that affect the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior in the hospitality industry, such as the type of social media platform used, the content of the message, and the characteristics of the consumer. The review emphasized the need for businesses in the hospitality industry to develop a strong social media marketing strategy that takes into account these factors and effectively engages with their target audience.

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