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DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING AS LATEST MARKETING CONNECTORS

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Abstract

Social networking and Digital marketing: In a world where “one angry tweet can torpedo a brand,” corporations need to embrace all possibilities. Social media have transformed the business and communication landscape and organizations appear to, reluctantly or willingly, recognize this change. Evolving patterns of communication, collaboration, consumption, and innovation have created new domains of interactivity for companies and stakeholders. Social networking allow individuals and businesses to interact with each other and build relationships and communities online. Digital marketing is an endorsement of products, services, and brands on digital Medias like search engines, social media sites, emails and other electronic media. Digital marketing comprises of SEO (search engine optimization), social media optimization, SEM (search engine marketing), email marketing, mobile marketing, content marketing, blog activities etc. Companies can have more direct and personal interaction with consumers through social networking. An important aspect that was missing in traditional ways of outbound advertising and marketing. Also social networking sites act as word of mouth for businesses and brands. They allow users to share information, reviews or comments posted by others about a company or a product being promoted. As the post gets shared multiple times and reaches numerous networks, the product gets great exposure and company enjoys the benefit of traffic that gets redirected to them. Social media marketing is the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social networking sites. Social media marketing strategy involves use of top social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn and others to post content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it across their social networks. Thus building brand recognition and popularity. Social media marketing takes advantage of social networking to help a business gain brand recognition and expand its customer base. The primary aim is to create content that is attractive and informative enough for users to share it further in their social networks. Social media is hot. Social Media is now the trend. And for businesses it represents a marketing opportunity that transcends the traditional middleman and connects companies directly with customers. This is why nearly every business on the planet—from giants like Starbucks and IBM to the local ice cream shop—are exploring social media marketing initiatives. A year ago, businesses were uncertain about social media. Now it's here to stay and companies are rapidly adopting social media marketing. Much like email and websites first empowered businesses, social media is the next marketing wave.

Keywords: Social networking , Digital marketing, Google, twitter

Social Media Marketing in India - An Overview

Social Media is really picking up new heights in India. India tops the usage of social networking by business – it has the highest activity index, 127, far more than the US'97, and 52% of the Indian respondent companies said that they had acquired new customers using social networks while 35% American companies managed that. Many companies are coming big way for Social Media Optimization for their Product or Services nowadays. During Election 2009 Social Media was used for Influence Indian Voters. Social Media Marketing in India

is being undertaken by brands like Tata Docomo, MTV India, Channel V, Clear Trip, Tata Photon, Axe deodorants, Microsoft, Naukri, Shaadi and many more. Besides, numerous Indian celebrities are also using SMM platform to promote their movies, music and events via Twitter, Facebook and personalized blogs. Social Media Marketing is also boosting public relations business. Several PR agencies in India are undertaking brand building exercises for corporate organizations, brands and celebrities. However, to the delight of many among us, the biggest gainers from SMM till date have been the organizations from the Not-for-Profit sector. Several Campaigns like

‘Bell Bajao’ and ‘Jaago Re’ have been quite successful on Social Networking Sites. These campaigns have been spreading the word about their cause through blogs, Twitter and Facebook.

How Social Media Marketing Benefits Business

Around 40 per cent of the total population all across the globe, has access to internet, which was not even in two digits just a few years back. Besides this, the size of mobile market exceeds 4 billion, and its penetration rate is over 50 per cent. The best and simplest way to reach your target market in this cyber age is

to capitalise on the ever-growing technology – internet – which is mostly accessed by people through their smartphones. Gone are the days when information about your product reached to customers through you only. Now, in the presence of digital media, social interactions are increasing and people are more likely to believe a fellow customer than you. They want brands that can be trusted, services or offers customised as per their needs and preferences, and our internet marketing agency in India can play a significant role in building such image and designing the required product, respectively. This is the reason behind increasing number of digital marketing company in India. Social media marketing strategy works when users share content with their social networks. What makes these corporate messages successful is the fact that as such messages are shared further they seem to have come from a trusted, third-party source rather than the brand or company itself. So this form of marketing thrives on word-of-mouth, which means it results in earned publicity rather than paid publicity!

Growth of social media marketing:

Social media has emerged as the unfettered voice of citizens. There were more than 354 million Internet users in India in June 2015; 40 out of these, 143 million are on social media platforms⁴¹ such as Facebook (125 million users),⁴² YouTube (60 million users),⁴³ LinkedIn (30 million),⁴⁴ and Twitter (22.2 million users).⁴⁵ Many of these users are young urban dwellers. These numbers would have only grown since April 2016 when these figures were compiled. In recent times, events such as the happenings in Tahrir Square or the anti-corruption movement of Anna Hazare closer home show that those with an eye out for the future have embraced change. Public activism pursued through social media is no longer spasmodic, even for an epochal event. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are

the main protagonists that have transformed the way our entire society functions and revolutionized the ways in which we interact with our colleagues, friends, and family. Today, social media is an inextricable force for- change in nearly everything, political and commercial. According to study results it is seen that social media usage by small business owners increased from 12% to 24% in just the last year, and almost 1 out of 5, actively uses social media as part of his or her marketing strategy. In 2009, only 23% of marketers were using social media for years. Now that number has grown to 31%. Here's a breakdown of what the small businesses reported as the main uses of social media marketing: 75% have a company page on a social networking site. 69% post status updates or articles of interest on social media sites. 57% build a network through a site such as LinkedIn. 54% monitor feedback about the business. 39% maintain a blog. 26% tweet about areas of expertise. 16% use Twitter as a service channel.

Now here are some of the ways how social media marketing improves business –

- Social media marketing builds and enhances brand recognition. It makes us accessible to new customers while making you more familiar and recognizable for existing customers.
- Sharing regular posts on social media is an opportunity for lead generation. Social networking gives us access to potential customers, first time buyers, recent customers and old customers, and we are able to interact with all of them.
- Social media marketing results in higher conversion rates simply because it has a humane touch to it. Your social media profile and constant interactions make us act like people do rather than a company. And this is significant as people like doing business with other people, not with companies.

- Social media marketing improves brand loyalty. According to a report published by Texas Tech University, "Companies should take advantage of the tools social media gives them when it comes to connecting with their audience. A strategic and open social media plan could prove influential in morphing consumers into being brand loyal."
- The more quality content you share through social media, the more inbound traffic you get. Needless to say, more traffic means more leads and more conversions. Also social media marketing results in better search engine rankings. Social media marketing is highly cost-effective as marketing costs are reduced. Growth of social media marketing:



Why digital marketing acts as a effective marketing connector?

Cost: Digital marketing is very cost efficient compared to traditional marketing channels like TV and print media. In fact, the cost of digital marketing campaigns will be a fraction of traditional marketing channels like print and tv.

Tracking: In digital marketing tracking the results is easy compared to traditional marketing channels. There are many analytics solutions which offer us a detailed report of the campaigns and these are real time reports tracked hourly and daily basis which assists you to revise your campaigns and strategies if outcome is not up to your expectation.

Target Audience: Targeting audience for

our brands, products and services is very beneficial in digital media channels, like ads are a show based on age, profession, likes and dislikes region, sex and many other categories. Also ads are shown to people who have requirements like say a bookstore ad is shown to a person who is planning to buy books and searching for them on search engines. Digital marketing campaigns are inbound which increases the chances of conversions.

Interactive: Most of the traditional marketing channels are static and one-time production, where as digital marketing is an interactive channel where customers can engage with the brands, data can be shared effectively and using advance digital marketing techniques we can even influence them to get converted into potential clients.

Digital Revolution: One of the most important factors is rise of digital media platforms like search engines, social media sites, online portals, blogs etc in past few years, and the rate at which digital media is over taking a traditional medium. We are aware that many print magazines and news papers media user base has decreased and in fact few of them are even out of business today.

The recent tweet that made quite a stir in digital media industry, “28% of marketers have reduced their advertising budget to fund more digital marketing”.

This signals an important shift away from the old-school way of marketing towards more non-traditional online channels. Strategy changes based on results are much easier to put into action, businesses are able to stretch money further when digital marketing is working effectively, and marketers are confident that online options give them a higher ROI and a boost in sales.

With the emerging trends of Digital Marketing, it is forecasted that small businesses of India can increase their returns by 20% in the coming years.

Every business knows they need to market, but the trick is knowing how to split a marketing budget between traditional and online marketing—then allocate the online portion among various channels. To make the most of our money, shoot for where our target market hangs out online or where our competition has a strong presence. The best strategy is to try something, track results, then tweak our strategy to maximize ROI. Digital marketing is no longer about merely adding online channels to the media mix. It is more about integrating digital into all facets of marketing, and that’s what digital marketing strategies do.

Below are digital marketing strategies that are influencing less-is-more in digital marketing and have potentials to boost sales by 20%.

Apple’s Minimalism Movement Wins – Set Precedent

The standard has been set in terms of design, product and messaging. The combination of boldness and simplicity has changed the digital marketing game forever. The most successful and iconic brands of the day — Apple, Uber, Nike, Google— all market using bold strategies that say very little. Their success is due to creating massive channels of advocates. As well as their ability to brand an instantly recognizable image or slogan that instills particular values and warrants a calculable response.

Get Advocates to Spread Message by Implementing Digital Marketing Strategies

In the current world of “shares”, “follows” and “likes”, build the content that we want to send to our friends, post to the followers and connect with them emotionally. Say it quickly and say it well. Content has to be exciting and it has to stand on its own legs so it can essentially market itself. Remarkable content speaks for itself and creates peer-to-peer endorsements. Make our message something meaningful so people feel the

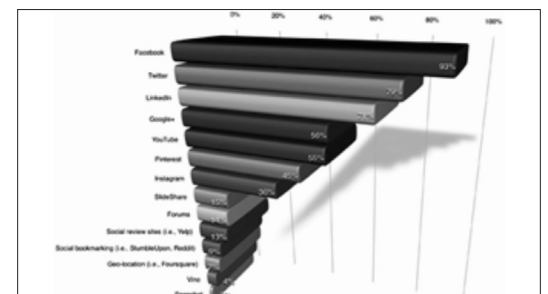
urge to spread it. From there, sit back and watch as the digital marketing ecosystem works itself.

Get Into Info Fast- Right Now by Implementing Digital Marketing Strategies

We want our information fast: a picture is worth a thousand words, a video could very well be worth a thousand sales. When a user is looking at the new websites or marketing, 90% of what they see is endless noise. We fall into a habit of throwing so many words at the audience, and very little of which make a genuine impact. Poorly marketed information nets minimal attention. Marketers must get to the point as soon as humanly possible through highly relevant and deliberate diction. Spread through the right channels, the right content is the difference maker and can create an astounding impact, even with just a few words.

Another Smart Digital Marketing Strategy – Mobile....and Just Mobile

Mobile dominates, but that line is so utterly cliché, Digital Marketing states it differently. The importance of mobile search, mobile optimization, mobile conversions, and mobile ubiquity cannot be overstated. Mobile devices and our collective addiction to them are fixtures of the modern marketing era. Digital Marketing Strategies is about Social Conversion That Is Taking A Leap. Enough has been said about the power of social networks. Not quite enough as been said about the importance of social conversions. For e-commerce and lead generation sites, social provides a growing opportunity to improve conversion rates and gain new conversion channels.



This figure clearly depicts the recent scenario of usage of platforms by people.

Understanding the Relevance of Social Media/digital in Marketing:

The role of social media in marketing is to use it as a communication tool that makes the companies accessible to those interested in their product and makes them visible to those that don't know their product. It should be used as a tool that creates a personality behind their brand and creates relationships that they otherwise may never gain. This creates not only repeat-buyers, but customer loyalty. Fact is social media is so diversified that it can be used in whatever way best suits the interest and the needs of the business. In the present context, it is increasingly becoming pertinent for companies to (1) build a favorable base of consumers, and (2) involve them in decision making. Social media gives marketers a voice and a way to communicate with peers, customers and potential consumers. It personalizes the "brand" and helps you to spread the message in a relaxed and conversational way. beverage companies, exotic automobile manufacturers, pastry shops have been using social media tool. Pepsi Coke, Nokia and many of the top brands have effectively used social media for achieving their business objectives.

Few companies that have become involved in social media are:

1) Facebook Promotions Case Study

Website URL: www.wonderchef.in

Facebook URL : www.facebook.com/SanjeevKapoorWonderchef

Client: Wonderchef is an online home appliances store promoted by celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor. Client wanted to increase the brand awareness, enhance the brand-consumer bond, boost the web traffic and generate leads through social media campaign.

Target: Indian women between the age group 25-55.

Challenge: Generating leads through social media platforms was the biggest challenge.

Solutions: They focused mainly on one of the social networking sites where the target audience is active. 'Emotion,' 'nostalgia' and 'comfort' were the three factors that the TBS team addressed while creating content for the campaign. With out of the box strategies and enticing content tailor made to attract Indian women, the team was able to overcome the challenge.

Result: The number of followers drastically increased, generated leads that exceeded the client's expectations. The posts went viral, resulting in an increased number of Facebook page likes and thus, brand awareness.

2) Viral Video Case Study

Why climb the career ladder when you can fly! - 'Corporate Chamcha' Goes Viral in a Big Way...

Campaign: 'Corporate Chamcha' Video Campaign

Client : Red Bull India Pvt. Ltd
Duration: 2 week

Summary: Energy drink Red Bull has launched a campaign to appeal to the ambitious streak of people who want to climb the corporate ladder through performance. It poses Red Bull as a drink that helps them to reach this goal, as the active ingredients in it enable one to give peak performance and thus rise to the top. The essence of the entire campaign is captured in the line: 'Why climb the career ladder when you can fly!' The campaign, which has a strong focus on the digital

medium, is a tongue-in-cheek take on the Indian corporate culture, where a corporate 'chamcha' is ready to do anything to climb the career ladder. As part of the campaign, Red Bull has launched a viral video on YouTube. Titled 'Corporate Chamcha', the film shows how ridiculous it is to be a 'chamcha' and presents an alternate way to reach the top. The insight of the idea is that drinking Red Bull keeps one sharp and enhances performance, so one need not be a 'chamcha' to be professionally successful.

Video Details: Shit Corporate Chamchas Say At Work

Video Seeding & Outreach

Video gained momentum in just couple of days; it spread like anything on internet. Result : "The target which looked most unrealistic was achieved easily and the Video received 2.9 Million hits in just 12 days."

3) Indian hyper-local delivery service Grofer's used Instagram photo and carousel ads to raise brand awareness and drive installs of its mobile app.

The challenge

Grofers is a consumer goods hyper-local delivery service available in 17 cities across India. Users can simply order through the app to receive everything from groceries and hand picked fruit and vegetables, to cosmetics, electronics and bakery items from their neighborhood stores.

The solution

Over six weeks, Grofers shared Instagram photo and carousel ads with its target audience. Simple yet effective, the imagery profiled its fresh fruit and vegetable offering

and highlighted its commitment to food quality and safety. The thumb stopping imagery and narrative invited users to flick through the selection of photos to learn more about the Grofers offering.

The results

By using Instagram to raise awareness of the brand among new users, Grofers saw an 8% incremental reach to its core target audience and significant improvements in cost efficiency, with a 50% lower cost-per-install of the app compared to other marketing.

CONCLUSION

Social platforms each have an ecosystem of their own. Creating a basic social media presence is easy enough, getting your community to actually do something is more difficult. Make sure our site is included in local business directories in order to help ensure that consumers find you when they need you. Customizing messages across sites help the message spread but it keeps users from receiving multiple identical communications. By giving exclusive coupons to our social community, we are rewarding and reminding them that you are not only a brand to engage with, but also to buy from. Taking advantage of these strategies can help build our community, make our marketing more effective, and incentivize buying. Digital marketing is a new compared to traditional marketing channels but if it's implemented strategically we can get better ROI for your campaigns since internet penetration and digital media usage is increasing in India digital marketing is an excellent way to influence your target audience into paying customers. There is no escaping social media these days, either for individuals or for businesses. Today, it is impossible to separate social media from the online world. The social media conversation is no longer considered a Web 2.0 fad -- it is taking place in homes, small businesses and corporate boardrooms, and extending its reach into the

nonprofit, education and health sectors. From feeling excitement, novelty, bewilderment, and overwhelmed, a growing number of people now speak of social media as simply another channel or tactic. Blogging can have a very positive effect on your Company's branding & growth. As per the report, Customers with blogs gathered 68% more leads than customers without blogs. It is imperative to understand that today, social media have exponential potential. They are part of an ever-growing online network of people who discuss, comment, participate, share and create. Whether you are an individual, a startup, small business or a large corporation, an online presence and an ongoing conversation with your constituents is a baseline requirement -- and will take time and expertise. Companies are diverting resources and rethinking their traditional outreach strategies. And as the social media wave dissipates into the vast ocean of connected experiences, the term itself will become an entry in dictionaries and encyclopedias and we will embark on a new era of knowledge, accessibility and experiences unbound by distance, time or physical walls. It is high time that every business adopts social media and takes it seriously.

To successfully implement one's SMM (social media marketing) strategy the following points must be kept in mind: The company shouldn't just jump on to the bandwagon just because others are jumping into it. The market should be analyzed first to understand whether their brand would should try and find out whether SMM strategies fit its brand. The company shouldn't expect results overnight. SMM is a long term strategy. It will not happen overnight. The results might become visible anywhere from three to six months. SMM is not a standalone tool for marketing. It has to be used along with all the other conventional marketing strategies.

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