

Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Trends

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Abstract- *Social media marketing is the marketing strategies that smart businesses are employing in order to be a part of a network of people online. Just as friends gather in public pubs, coffee shops, or barber shops, groups of people are gathered and connected through various online tools and websites. These people rely on their online network of friends for advice, sharing, and socializing. Many different styles of online communities have surfaced over the years. However within the last few years, newly created communities are offering more rich interaction. Social Media marketing strategies allow conversation, connection, and a sense of community among its members.*

Keywords- *Community, Business, Media, Market.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Media communications have changed. Traditionally, the term “media” has been expressed in the context of how one communicates to another. Today, as applied online, new forms of media have emerged that not only allow one to communicate to others, but allow the recipient of the message to interact with the author. In traditional forms of media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and billboards, the author sends their message to many people and is often disengaged from any reaction about the message. New social forms of media such as blogs, wikis, and online communities allow the receiver of the message to interact in real time with not just the author, but also with a community of individuals. It’s as if the media author is standing at the intended audience’s office water cooler engaged in the thoughts, excitement, and even complaints about a topic. The oldest and most reliable form of marketing has always been one friend referring another friend to a product or service. With the proliferation of so many online, social websites, people are connected to each other in new, agile, and quite public ways. The marketing practices of any business who wants to be successful today and tomorrow will be involved in online social media marketing. So, today there is needed to know about Social media & its contribution in marketing as well as social business.

II. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. By applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure),[7]with six different types of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life). Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and voice over IP, to name a few. Many of these social media services can be integrated via social network aggregation platforms. Social media network websites include sites like Facebook, Twitter, Bebo and MySpace.

2.1. Mobile social media

Social media applications used on mobile devices are called mobile social media. In comparison to traditional social media running on computers, mobile social media display a higher location- and time-sensitivity. One can differentiate between four types of mobile social media applications, depending on whether the message takes account of the specific location of the user (location-sensitivity) and whether it is received and processed by the user instantaneously or with a time delay (time-sensitivity)[7].

2.1.1. Space-timers (location and time sensitive): Exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location at one specific point-in time (e.g. Facebook)

2.1.2 Space-locators (only location sensitive): Exchange of messages, with relevance for one specific location, which are tagged to a certain place and read later by others (e.g., Yelp)

2.1.3 Quick-timers (only time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices to increase immediacy (e.g., posting Twitter messages)

2.1.4 Slow-timers (neither location, nor time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices (e.g. watching a YouTube video)

Mobile social media can also be used on the go when one is not near a personal computer, laptop...etc. With all the new devices that are arriving at our finger tips, gadgets such as tablets, iPods, phones, and many other new products, there is no use for sitting at home using ones PC; mobile social media has made other sources of internet browsing obsolete, and allows users to write, respond, and browse in real-time. New mediums of social networking such as “Instagram” allow the world to interconnect and make space and time much smaller. Instagram allows individuals to snap a photo wherever they may be and share it with the rest of the world instantly, delivering a social media site full of foreign accomplishments and strange scenarios. This feature was introduced by Facebook and other existing social media sites, instagram are a recent addition to the social media scene, and has made picture sharing much easier. Mobile social media is a relatively new platform since it is contingent on mobile devices ability to access the Internet.

2.2. Commonly used social media tools

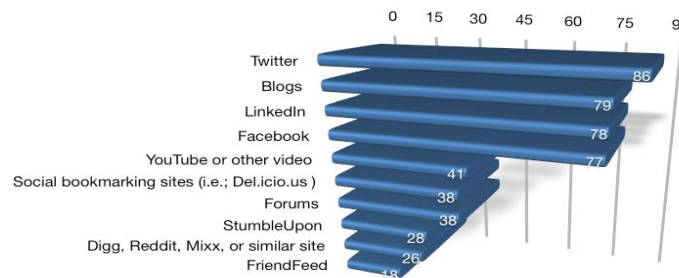


Fig.1 Social media tools

By a long shot, Fig. 1 shown, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn and Facebook were the top four social media tools used by marketers, with Twitter leading the pack. All the other social media tools paled in comparison to these top four. Owners of small businesses were more likely to use LinkedIn than employees working for a corporation. Another interesting finding was that men were significantly more likely to use YouTube or other video marketing than women (52.4% of all men compared to only 31.7% of women) [3].

III. SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS

The social metrics used to determine success are the ones that make sense for your business and that you can tie back to your marketing bottom line. Some social media metrics are as follows:

3.1. Return on Investment

ROI, or return on investment, is a measurement of efficiency. Social media ROI is defined as a measure of the efficiency of a social media marketing campaign [5]. It is calculated using the following equation (1)

$$\text{Social Media ROI} = \frac{\text{Social Media return} - \text{Social Media investment}}{\text{Social Media investment}} \times 100\%$$

The difficulty emerges however in attempting to determine the value of "SM return", as indeed it is for any intangible asset.

3.2. Engagement Rate

ER, or engagement rate, measures how well your fans/followers interact with your social media content [6]. The Facebook Post ER formula takes into account Likes, Comments and Shares of the post to the total number of fans at the time it has been posted. (2)

$$\text{Post Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{No. of likes} + \text{Comments} + \text{Shares on given day}}{\text{Total no. of fans on a given day}} \times 100$$

In addition, there is a variation that applies to Twitter called the Tweet Engagement Rate takes into account the Replies and Retweets of the Tweet to the total number of Followers to date. (3)

$$\text{Tweet Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{\#of replies} + \text{Retweets}}{\text{\#of followers}} \times 100$$

IV. WHY BE INVOLVED IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING?

Knowing that these resources are available can simply be an education for those not in the know. However, understand the importance of being involved in these social networks for your marketing purposes. These sites begin to serve as hubs on the web where large groups of people, usually with similar niche interests, are gathered together [1]. Showing up serves you in several ways:

- 4.1. Exposure to your target audience
- 4.2. Interact with your target audience
- 4.3. Share your business personality

This social marketing strategy speaks to the need for proper branding and customer service strategies in place. Another reason it is good to be involved in social media is that your content can be sent to those interested in receiving updates. Subscribers are often offered several methods to be updated. They can sign up and can unsubscribe with ease. Therefore the ones connected to you are the ones who are most interested in who you are and what you offer. It is also important for you to participate in the online conversation about your brand. These user-generated social media tools are where the conversations take place. Since it is easy for people to publish content, they can and will talk about your brand – for good or for bad. Being a part of that conversation is valuable and important. Your fans who write about you are influential. Your enemies can be won over by showing up, listening, and interacting. When a content-publishing enemy becomes a fan, their voice becomes quite valuable.



Fig.2 Benefits of Social Media Marketing

Fig.2 shows the number-one benefit of social media marketing is gaining the all-important eyeball. A significant 81% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated exposure for their businesses. Improving traffic and growing lists was the second major benefit, followed by building new partnerships. An unexpected benefit was a rise in search engine rankings reported by more than half of participants. As the search engine rankings improve, so will business exposure, lead generation efforts and a reduction in overall marketing expenses. About one in two marketers found social media generated qualified leads. However, only slightly more than one in three said social media marketing helped close business [3].

V. SOCIAL BUSINESS

Social business—the application of social technologies as a formal component of business processes—revolves around understanding how your customers or stakeholders connect to your business and how you reshape your business to understand, accept, and innovate based on their involvement. Social business is about integrating all of your business functions: customer support, marketing, the executive team, and more.[1] It means doing this for the purpose of creating collaborative innovation and engagement at meaningful, measurable levels tied clearly and directly to your company’s business objectives. Fig.3 shows the traditional business model: You make it, you tell your customers about it, and they (hopefully) buy it. This works well enough provided your product or service delivers as promised with little or no need for further dialog. It helps too if it is marketed in a context where traditional media is useful and covers the majority of your market. Traditional media has wide reach, and it is interruptible: This provides a ready pathway to attentive customers and potential markets. The downside is that traditional media is also getting more and more expensive—TV advertising costs have increased over 250 percent in the past decade—and it’s harder to reach your entire audience: What took three spots to achieve in 1965 now takes, by current estimates and measures, in excess of 100. Figure is largely representative of this basic approach that has defined business for the past fifty years [2].

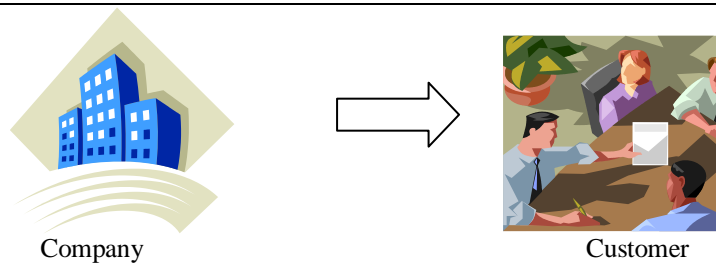


Fig.3 Traditional Business

Fig.4 shows an evolved view of business and the beginning of a move away from a purely transactional view of the customer: The customer receives (or consumes) marketing messages, for example, buys the product or service, or enrolls in your organization, but then also goes on to provide feedback, whether directly through a survey card, via CRM or similar or through a listening program that collects and analyzes conversations. The difference is that there is a feedback mechanism: As such, compliments can flow your way, and concerns, because they can be expressed, don't turn into frustrated rants provided of course that something is done about them. Recall that this opportunity to listen and understand, and thereby craft a response, is a direct benefit of participation with customers, whether through traditional methods or as now, on the Social Web.

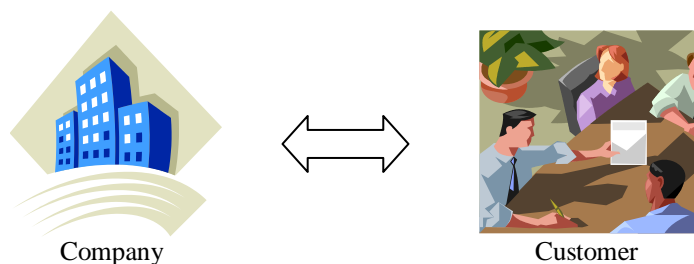


Fig.4 Evolved Business.

Finally, Fig.5 shows the business-customer relationship when the idea of a higher calling is introduced. The higher calling forms a common bonding point for both the business or organization and customers and stakeholders and in particular in the context of social participation with a business. This created a very powerful linkage that transcended the basic brand-consumer relationship. This same type of appeal to a common purpose or value that is larger than the brand itself can be applied in an analogous manner on the Social Web. Social media takes this practice to the next level. Social media inherently revolves around passions, lifestyles, and causes—the higher calling that defines larger social objects to which participants relate [4]. The social media programs that are intended to link customers to communities and shared social activities around the business and thereby around the brand, product, or service must themselves be anchored in this same larger ideal. Compare Fig.5 with Fig.3 and Fig.4: Simple in concept, getting this larger social object identified and in place is critical to the successful realization of a social business.

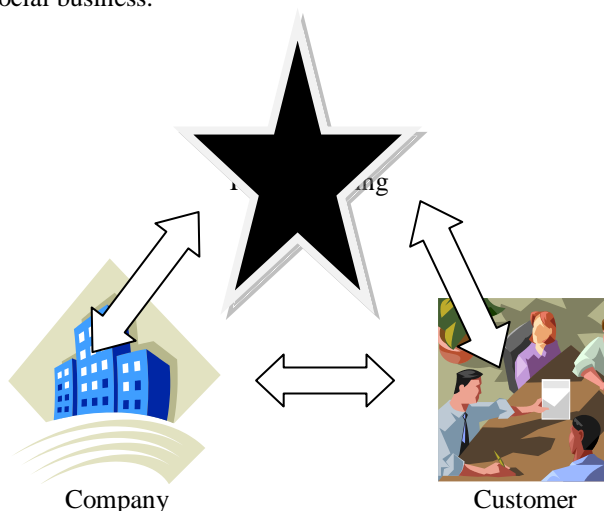


Fig.5: The Higher Calling

In Fig.6, the fundamental relationship between experiences that are talked about (word of mouth), community participation, and the function of the brand outpost is shown. Unlike social media marketing, the application of the Social Web to the business itself views the participants as an integral component of the business, rather than simply participants in a campaign. In this context, the naturally occurring (nonpaid) activities of participants are the most valuable. The design of the social business components is powered by the activities that are sustained through participant-driven interest.

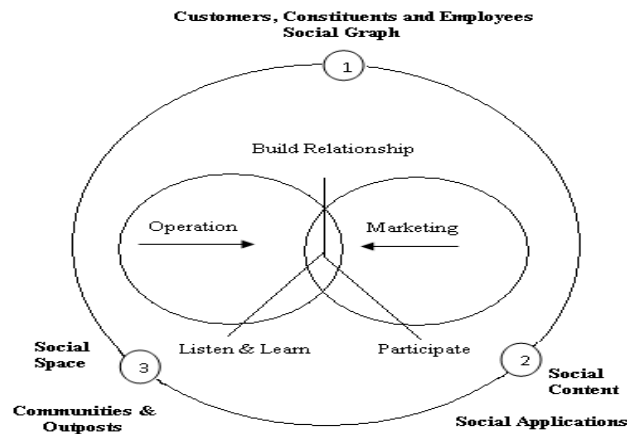


Fig.6: The Social Business

VI. CONCLUSION

Social media is rapidly becoming a new force in organizations around the world, allowing them to reach out to and understand consumers as never before. In many companies, it will move from a 'one-off initiative' to be an important, integrated tool in marketing and communications strategies. Use of social media will clearly expand in the coming years. Two-thirds of the companies in the survey predicted their use of social media would grow significantly over the next few years, as the awareness of the power of social media has grown in their companies. Among organizations that already have a budget for social media, spending was expected to increase by 30% or more over the next 12 months, even as overall dollars for marketing and advertising have dropped for many companies during the recession. But as social media creates new opportunity, it also demands a shift in thinking about marketing and the measures of success. Those companies who are most effective in social media now are not only experimenting with multiple channels, but also creating metrics to measure impact and using new tools to understand how to enter into a new conversation with their customers. In the future, effective use of social media will be led by these organizations that are able to enter into this new relationship with customers, employees, and partners.

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