



Social media marketing: Customer engagement

NR Vsihrudh¹, Nivesh S², Nithin G³, Antony Vincent D'cruz⁴

¹⁻⁴ Department of Business Studies and Social Science, Christ Deemed to be University-Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Abstract

In today's world people are involved in their own busy schedules and do not have time for interactions with others. But the only way a huge number of people interact or are connected mostly be it business or personal work it's through social media platforms like twitter, Instagram, Facebook and many other emerging social media platforms. Any company be it a small or a big company they all have a social media page through which they connect with the huge population. People also connect with them and are influenced based on their personal interest. The social media also helps business advertise their product or service to people by collecting their daily activity and analysing their interests based on the search results from other apps on the user's phone which is also called social media analytics. But it is more important how brands will use the data from analytics and use them to engage with their customers and also adapt fast with the changing features on social Medias.

Keywords: social media platforms, social media analytics, social media marketing or advertising, customer engagement

Introduction

Social media is a huge platform in today's world used by 2.46 billion people in 2017 and which is said to increase to 2.77 billion people in 2019 worldwide. Social media is an easy mode of interaction and to gain knowledge about the present world's happenings and changing trends. It helps connect people all over the world. It can be called as a game changer for companies because it helps them understand individuals and masses at a lesser cost.

Business in today's world is more controlled by customers demand and interests. People use internet and social Medias for online information and reviews about products and services before using it. So, it is very important for companies to stay with the flow and learn what people talk about them. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook etc. are one big platform where they can reach the mass and a wider range of customers and advertise their product and services and develop products by interacting and studying the interest of the masses.

Companies can use social media as a major marketing tool and build their brand recognition, build conversions, improve communication and interaction with key audience, increasing website traffic. Companies make use of social media analytical tools to monitor the interests, search results etc. of people which companies later use it for coming up with strategies and designing their advertisements. Social media is one of the easiest tools for companies to advertise, build their brand and understand the changing trend.

Social Media Marketing and Engaging with Customers

Social media can be called as a number of platform's where people share their thoughts, communicate with people, form new communities, develop knowledge etc. in today's world majority of the people are influenced by these platforms. Today social media has turned to a marketing channel for the small firms till the big companies, the main objective of social media in the business world is to connect and understand people. It is the level to which they want the people to connect with their brand. Companies use

communication, education, collaboration and entertainment as their basic foundation to build their strategies.

Advantages of social media marketing

- Helps to increase brand awareness.
- Linking the brand website with social media can help increase business traffic.
- Product and service promotion (the main motive)
- Helps generate a conversation and a talk about the brand.
- Helps gather data for research and further improvement
- Form up a customer loyalty
- Most cost-effective way of advertising

Disadvantages of social media marketing

- Competitors will get to know about your business methods.
- Requires qualified personnel to manage.
- Return on investments are slow
- Might be time consuming

Advantages of social media analytics

- Helps understand the target audience
- Helps increase customer engagement
- Helps the brand get aware of the problems and weakness
- Helps learn from competitors (understand what is working and not working for them)
- Helps stay organised with marketing related tags

Disadvantages of social media analytics

- Hard to measure impact made from videos
- Limited data provided by social Medias to protect their user privacy.
- Having more followers does not mean equal success on social media

Is social media the best marketing platform?

The number of social media users worldwide in the year 2017 were 2.46 billion and by the end of 2019 it is said to increase to 2.77 billion which is a huge population for any business.

According to Data & Marketing Association, 77% of the marketers use at least one social media platform to connect their brand with the people. But only 38% of them agreed that they can measure their social activities. 48% of them said they are getting a good return on investment from social media platforms. So, I would say it is the best platform only when used with proper measures and a when updated on daily basis.

Mobile phones have also become a huge benefit for social media marketing. People use their mobile phones which is the most popular and easiest way to use social media through which they get know every information that's happening related to their interests. Companies are now also using QR codes on their social media pages along with the products making it easy for the people to buy.

Companies host campaigns on social media platforms which also attracts a lot of people to engage in the campaign and support it. They collect details from people through these campaigns which is useful for them in updating their brand.

These social media also sell user data base to companies which helps companies to know about their customer's interest. Users receive advertisements even if they don't follow that particular brand on their social media feed. Which if clicked on takes them to the main website of the company. Customers develop a brand attitude through this and marketers also keep working on increasing customer brand attitude through developing consumer brand relationship

Motivation factor is very important to attract customers. Motivation factors can be like sending Brand invitations or advertising. Taking personal research can also help the brand. Social media will be effective in connecting with people for marketing purpose when organisations that have their presence on social media platforms provide dependable and timely information to the customers about the brand. Buying decision plays a very important role in motivating customers to brand following on social media platform. Even the brand loyalty is important to get more customers and followers. Customers do their own research on Google and the brands home page to know more about the brand and their product of interest. But their still comes a gap between actual delivery and customers' expectations at social networking websites. Sometimes the brands do not give timely information and the customers questions are not being answered etc.

Social media for building your business?

Yes, as I already mentioned it is useful but only when used correctly with proper measures. Customer service, building brand image and sales are the three areas that is helped the most with social media. According to few researches 67% of customers have interacted with brands through social media for customer service. Questions asked by customers can be answered quickly through social media which helps brands develop a better customer relationship. Also, questions answered according to a research shows that 49% of customers are prompted to purchase more from that brand. Sharing your brands personality through photos and a positive message can increase your brand image.

Difference between simple engagement with customers and analytics. The inquiries that companies or brands receive every day and how they respond is customer engagement. But analytics is looking into where those inquiries came from, how the customers respond to answers and posts and how much they are engaged with the brands posts on social media. Analytics also includes data from competitors. These help

brands to make better brand related content on social media and helps to determine how the content needs to be delivered to their customers. Using this data to maximum advantage helps to know if the investment made by the brand is worth the time and price and it is all about the size of data collected for analysis.

How do you improvise and boost customer engagement?

We all know that social media controls the way customers interact with business and it is not just about posting pictures anymore but a huge platform for companies to interact with users as a marketing tool. But companies face problems sometimes with interacting with customers when there is a change in the algorithms and features on social media.

To avoid such problems or to overcome them easily and quick companies will have to:

- Keep making studies and research about the interest of their audience and how they might change in future, will it help them or not, what topics or areas they need to concentrate more on as to keep a continuous understanding with the customers.
- Language is another very important aspect for customer engagement. Communicating with your customers with their local language, replying to young audience in a informal language, using GIFs and emojis will so help.
- Ask your audience or customers questions and advices. Using features on Instagram like "ask me a question" or "poll" can help get customer feedback easily which will help to understand and measure customer interaction with that brand.
- Make contests, making social media campaigns in form of contests have boosted the customer engagement and followers with brands by 34%. This is one of the strategies that is being used by many brands in today's world. Give your audience or customers some fun related tasks and offer some gifts like free tickets, or product coupons, etc...

Which will attract more customers. Give those contests a short deadline. If the contest is for a long-time people might lose interest.

Conclusion

Business in today's world has transformed into the social relationship and it is very important for business to take up proper engagement marketing principle to connect and understand their customers. Marketers have to provide enough information to their customers for high quality engagement. Brands have to use the online technological features given on social media plat forms completely and form strategies to attract a larger number of the users to their advertisements and try to become more innovative. Social media listening, analytics they give brands opportunity to increase their customer engagement. The building up of customer engagement on social media is a processed method including: connecting with the people, making interactions, giving customers satisfaction, staying committed to the customers' requests and service. Mass communication or mass marketing is where social media is the most useful and using all the tools provided by social media the most in a proper and planned way will help any company or brand make their investment in social media worth. Engaging and interacting with more customers on social media is not a very easy task it requires a well-planned research and execution. Brands need to appreciate their customers and make them feel

good so their inputs have a good chance of success. Always be active on social media a starts early conversations. Customer engagement is a two-way communication and understanding of ideas so never ignore any questions or your customers.

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