

Social Media Marketing in India: A Paradigm Shift in Marketing Innovation**Leny Michael****(Research Scholar, Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore)****Institution's Name: Caarmel Engineering College****Address for communication: Assistant professor****Caarmel engineering college, Koonamkara post, Perunad ranni-689711****Abstract:**

Social media has risen to a great level in India since last few years. Marketers in the west have already taken advantage of Social Media. Marketers are taking note of many different social media opportunities and beginning to implement new social initiatives at a higher rate than ever before. Social media helps in connecting themselves with social networking sites through which now people can stay far and yet remain connected. Apart from this media like Facebook create a loyal connection between product and individual which leads to large advertising opportunities. Similarly, other social media like Blogs create a platform to post comment on any event which needs to be publicized also can be utilized as a promotional technique for customer's adoption as well as for promotions. Now users are acquiring followers & subscribers and directing them to your social networking page. This paper discusses about role of social media marketing in India as an innovative strategy.

Key Words: social media, marketing strategy, social media marketing in India, Effectiveness

Social Media Marketing in India: A paradigm Shift in Marketing Innovation**Introduction:**

Social media is a media for social interaction as a superset beyond social communication. There are pros and cons to the use of social media. One most important advantage is the online sharing of knowledge and information among the different groups of people. This online sharing of information also promotes the increase in the communication skills among the people especially among the learners/students of educational institutions. There is also a flip side to the use of social media tools. Sometimes, such tools are misused by people which leads to interference into one's privacy. Such instances can lead to dangerous proportions keeping in view the ethical aspect of the use of such media. The social media tools have virtually brought people close to one another specially those living in far off places. Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile.

Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more. Lazer and Kelly's (1973) define social marketing as "concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts, and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with the analysis of the social consequences of marketing policies, decisions and activities." Social media marketing is not merely about hitting the frontpage of Digg or any other social news website. It is a strategic and methodical process to establish the company's influence, reputation and brand within communities of potential customers, readers or supporters. It is quickly becoming one of the most important parts of marketing strategy. Businesses all over the world are discovering the ways social media can contribute to the success and growth in all areas of their company. According to Hubspot 92% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses, while 80% of marketers indicated that their social media efforts increased traffic. With these types of statistics, the benefits of social media marketing can no longer be ignored.

Benefits of Social Media Marketing:

Significantly different from conventional marketing strategies, Social Media Marketing (SMM) Offers the following benefits;

1. Generating exposure to businesses
2. Increasing traffic/subscribers.
3. Building new business partnerships.

4. Rise in search engine rankings.
5. Generating qualified leads due to better lead generation efforts.
6. Selling more products and services.
7. Reduction in overall marketing expenses.

Role of social media in marketing:

1. Social media is now increasingly becoming an ingrained aspect of political campaigns, national defense strategies, public policy, public relations, brand management and even intra company communication.
2. Since the major task of marketing as tool used to inform consumers about the company's products, who they are and what they offer, social marketing plays an important role in marketing.
3. Social media can be used to provide an identity about the companies and the products or services that they offer.
4. Social media helps in creating relationships with people who might not otherwise know about the products or service or what the companies represent.
5. Social media makes companies "real" to consumers. If they want people to follow them they need not just talk about the latest product news, but share their personality with them.
6. Social media can be used to associate themselves with their peers that may be serving the same target market.
7. Social media can be used to communicate and provide the interaction that consumers look for.

Nine reasons for social media marketing is important for any business

1. **You get to see your target market, up close and personal.** Part of what makes marketing with Facebook and Twitter so cool is the interaction you get to have with your customer base – you can read their tweets and status updates to get insights into their daily lives (and maybe adjust your marketing strategy as a result).

2. **You can respond to problems immediately.** If there's a problem with your product or service, you want to know about it immediately. With the feedback you get in the process of social media marketing, you'll be the first to know when there are issues – and you can take steps to resolve them right away.

Study after study has shown that consumers appreciate companies that respond to customer complaints (and don't hesitate to rant online to anyone who will listen when companies don't take the time to make things right).

3. Your competition is Tweeting and Facebooking like crazy. The early bird gets the worm, and the sooner you start up Facebook and Twitter pages, the sooner you can start amassing a ton of fans and followers. This isn't something you want to fall behind the competition on, because it's much harder (and more expensive) to play catch up than it is to get in on the game early. Truth be told, your competition is probably already marketing with Facebook, and maybe even Twitter and LinkedIn, too.

4. People are receptive to your messages. People view Twitter and Facebook as social networks, not marketing machines. As a result, they're less likely to see what you post as an advertisement and will be more likely to hear what you have to say.

5. It will get you more sales. Not surprisingly, when you stay in front of your customer base, they're more likely to buy from you when they need the products you sell. Social media marketing doesn't just keep your company's name in front of potential buyers, but it also gives you the opportunity to constantly give them incentives to buy. Try Tweeting or posting coupon codes, good only to those who are your Facebook fans or Twitter followers (around The Content Factory, we call them "Tweeps"). You'll be surprised at how many people make purchases using the code!

6. You will find customers you didn't know existed. If you follow specific keywords in Twitter, you can find people who are looking for the products you sell (and then direct them to your site). Using Twitter for marketing is great that way – telling people who want your products how to get them from your company is just an @ sign away.

7. Customers you didn't know existed will find (and buy from) you. In the process of marketing with Facebook, you'll probably join a ton of groups related to your products, industry and customer base. By posting links in these groups, you'll help influence customers to check out your site. Post a link today, and two weeks later you might see a sale from it.

8. **It's free.** How can you argue with that? If you handle your own social media management, running a social networking campaign is as cheap as it gets. If you hire a social media management or online PR agency, it will cost around \$3,000-\$7,000 per month, but it'll be an investment that you'll be likely to see a return on. If you're intimidated by interacting with people online or your writing skills leave something to be desired, hiring an online PR agency is definitely the way to go. Posting poorly written content or conveying the wrong kind of messages on social networking sites can seriously affect your digital PR presence.

9. **The social media marketing arena is a (fairly) level playing field.** Unlike the brick and mortar world where you need to have millions of dollars to run traditional ad campaigns, all companies start off on pretty equal footing when it comes to social media marketing. The people who thrive and go viral in cyberspace are the people with the most clever, attention grabbing tactics and the most useful, link worthy content. If you want to get lots of traffic and really increase your sales online, you're going to have to outwit, outnetwork and outwrite your competition while offering superior products and customer service.

Social media marketing in India-An Overview

According to media reports, Indian organizations use social media much more than the global average and their counterparts in emerging economies. the following are the top social media marketing trends;

1. Social Media Marketing to be an integral part of Digital Strategy: In 2014, marketers took social media more seriously with focus on quality content, engagement and conversations, making it excessively important like never before. According to Hub Spot, 83 per cent of marketers say social media marketing is important for the business and 56 per cent of them are using social networks for more than 6 hours a week.

In India, many SEOs, use Social Media Marketing, because social signal such as likes, follows, fans, shares etc. are strategic for higher ranks. In 2014, with the realization of significance of social media for business, marketers in India used social networks actively and develop more intricate social media marketing strategies.

2. Spotlight on Engagement and Building Community: More than 95 per cent social media savvy organizations in India agreed that now their social media marketing objective is to engage, build

community and turn their audience brand advocates. In 2013, content driven social media marketing emerged, which dominated strategies in India. Now, in 2014, again, this stress over content strategy and marketing will continue and it will be more far-reaching, complex and deeper. In 2013, the dominant topics and concept revolved around politics, current issues, Alok Nath, Arvind Kejriwal, memes, music, celebrities, movies etc. Moreover, content type was varied ranging from text, image, audio and video.

3. Focus on Content Strategy, Content Development and Content Marketing for Social Media: In 2013, content driven social media marketing emerged, which dominated strategies in India. Now, in 2014, again, this stress over content strategy and marketing will continue and it will be more far-reaching, complex and deeper. Blogging For Social Media Marketing- In India, businesses/brands are understanding the importance of blogging therefore we've many large players such as Myntra, Snapdeal, Infosys, MakeMyTrip etc. blogging to build brand loyalist.

4. Meaningful Engagement Vs. Return on Investment: In 2013, marketers changed their focal point from technical aspect to artistic part of social media marketing. Now, social media marketing is not just a secondary contrivance in hands of marketers instead a primary one, where they're focusing on meaningful engagement.

5. Blogging For Social Media Marketing: In India, blogging was very limited to bloggers but in 2013, we witnessed many businesses/brands used blogging to engage their audience. Most importantly, marketers made the blogging their content publishing platform. Today in content and SEO strategy, blogging is playing strategic role by helping to engage audience and increase rank on Google. Now, Google's algorithm takes in to account of social signals such as likes, shares, tweets etc. while listing the blog on Google search. In addition, marketers are using blog to redirect audience from social networks to their blog on their website. On blog, marketers are trying to generate leads out of the traffic by using opt-ins, subscriptions, engagement, sharing and other conversion tactics.

In India, businesses/brands are understanding the importance of blogging therefore we've many large players such as Myntra, Snapdeal, Infosys, MakeMyTrip etc. blogging to build brand loyalist. Myntra has video blog to engage their audience on topics related to fashion and style.

6. LinkedIn and Slide share : LinkedIn with Slideshare, marketers have started to use to reach top searches without any efforts. As a marketer, you might have noticed that increasingly in B2B marketing many marketers have started heavily using LinkedIn and Slideshare to reach their audience both on the respective platforms and on search engines. Top B2B Marketing Channels - In India, LinkedIn has picked up in a big way not just flux from professionals have had taken but also many Indian B2B companies

have joined. Today, LinkedIn has 20 million users only from India, which is 9 percent of its total membership.

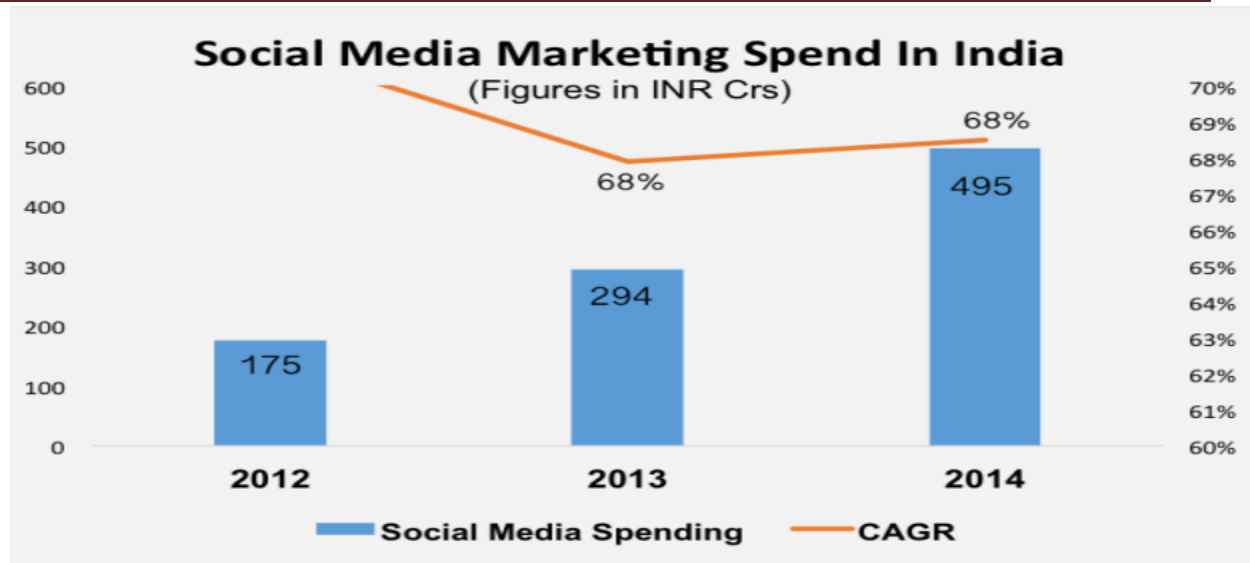
7. Image-Centric Social Networks to Emerge in India: According to HubSpot, Pinterest pins drive 25 per cent more sales a year ago. In India, Pinterest and Tumblr are the fastest growing social networks in India at 589% and 130% per year, according to ComScore India digital report 2013. Moreover, gauging this popularity, e-commerce websites and small to large businesses in India are entering these networks to market.

8. Micro-Video, GIFs and Video Blogging: In India, with increase in smartphones and engagement on Internet, video especially micro-videos, GIFs and video blogging will play a strategic role in reducing bounce rate and enhancing engagement. 70 per cent of Indian Internet users watch video, and with smartphone owners reaching to 104 million in India, the video will get the much-needed boost.

9. Viral Video Marketing in India: In India people have huge appetite for video – according to ComScore, in India, video consumption has doubled in two years to 3.7 billion videos per month. However, viral video marketing in India is at nascent stage therefore still unproven for its effectiveness and ROI in India. Nevertheless, any brand/business esp. B2C businesses who would want to reach millions of people in short span without spending moolah, will definitely opt for viral video marketing in India.

10. Social Customer Relationship Management in India: In 2013, social CRM in India was extensively used not just by big brands but also by small brands, businesses, organizations, governmental bodies etc. The prominent social platform for social CRM was Facebook, where you can find brands directly interacting with their customers/fans on their page itself solving their queries and issues.

11. Mobile Driven Social Media Marketing Strategies: With 104 million smartphone users reaching in 2014 in India and at present 110 million users in India are mobile based. Interestingly, out of 110 million users, 25 million users are rural and these 25 million rural users constitute 70 per cent of total rural Internet users in India.



10 Laws of Social Media Marketing

Leveraging the power of content and social media marketing can help elevate your audience and customer base in a dramatic way. From maximizing quality to increasing your online entry points, abiding by these 10 laws will help build a foundation that will serve your customers, your brand and -- perhaps most importantly -- your bottom line.

1. The Law of Listening: Success with social media and content marketing requires more listening and less talking. Read your target audience's online content and join discussions to learn what's important to them. Only then can you create content and spark conversations that add value rather than clutter to their lives.

2. The Law of Focus: It's better to specialize than to be a jack-of-all-trades. A highly-focused social media and content marketing strategy intended to build a strong brand has a better chance for success than a broad strategy that attempts to be all things to all people.

3. The Law of Quality: Quality trumps quantity. It's better to have 1,000 online connections who read, share and talk about your content with their own audiences than 10,000 connections who disappear after connecting with you the first time.

4. The Law of Patience: Social media and content marketing success doesn't happen overnight. While it's possible to catch lightning in a bottle, it's far more likely that you'll need to commit to the long haul to achieve results.

5. The Law of Compounding: If you publish amazing, quality content and work to build your online audience of quality followers, they'll share it with their own audiences on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, their own blogs and more. This sharing and discussing of your content opens new entry points for search engines like Google to find it in keyword searches. Those entry points could grow to hundreds or thousands of more potential ways for people to find you online.

6. The Law of Influence: Spend time finding the online influencers in your market who have quality audiences and are likely to be interested in your products, services and business. Connect with those people and work to build relationships with them.

If you get on their radar as an authoritative, interesting source of useful information, they might share your content with their own followers, which could put you and your business in front of a huge new audience.

7. The Law of Value: If you spend all your time on the social Web directly promoting your products and services, people will stop listening. You must add value to the conversation. Focus less on conversions and more on creating amazing content and developing relationships with online influencers. In time, those people will become a powerful catalyst for word-of-mouth marketing for your business.

8. The Law of Acknowledgment: You wouldn't ignore someone who reaches out to you in person so don't ignore them online. Building relationships is one of the most important parts of social media marketing success, so always acknowledge every person who reaches out to you.

9. The Law of Accessibility: Don't publish your content and then disappear. Be available to your audience. That means you need to consistently publish content and participate in conversations. Followers online can be fickle and they won't hesitate to replace you if you disappear for weeks or months.

10. The Law of Reciprocity: You can't expect others to share your content and talk about you if you don't do the same for them. So, a portion of the time you spend on social media should be focused on sharing and talking about content published by others.

Conclusion

Now days many businesses enter into social media because it's 'the done thing' - they feel they should have a presence purely because their competitors do. There are a number of real benefits to getting involved with social media, provided it is properly planned and executed. Marketers took social media more seriously with focus on quality content, engagement and conversations, making it excessively important like never before. With the realization of significance of social media for business, marketers in India will use social networks actively and develop more intricate social media marketing strategies. Now, wherever the marketers are marketing for their businesses/brands they are focusing on content strategy across different platforms. Most importantly, they are developing content strategy separately for each platform – Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube etc. The marketers changed their focal point from technical aspect to artistic part of social media marketing. Now, social media marketing is not just a secondary contrivance in hands of marketers instead a primary one, where they're focusing on meaningful engagement.

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