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Holytrinity of Body Mind and Soul

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ABSTRACT: Social media has occupied an important position as a communication tool. People across the globe use social media to connect to other people or organizations.

Globally, people have started to use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to share their experiences. As customers, people share product reviews, information about a service, advice on food or health, warnings about products, tips on using certain products, and much more.

When 102 CX experts were interviewed to understand the top customer experience challenges brands face in their industries and what actions they need to overcome from that, Pedro Pablo Castro Benítez, Proximity Channel, Procter & Gamble, talked about it - "How to get customer attention in a world where he has so many interactions? Full focus on Social Media with something similar to "call centers" but dedicated to IG, TikTok, Facebook, and other platforms where the young people spend more time than on TV, radio or even going for a walkout from home."

People have a lot of 'connections' on social media, therefore information is consumed by many people. This information becomes a source of influence on consumers and their buying behavior.

Research studies have shown that many people rely on the information and reviews on social media as a guide for planning their future purchases.

Social media has grown in terms of its reach and impact. Here is a statistic to prove that.

54% of social browsers use social media to research products (GlobalWebIndex, 2018).

KEYWORDS: Social, Media, Marketing, Consumer, Behavior, Purchases, Awareness, Brand, Information, Reviews

I. INTRODUCTION

More buyers are now on social media networks than ever before. Consumers are looking for reviews and recommendations. Therefore, it's essential to have a prominent online presence on various social media platforms.

The latest trend in marketing is the introduction of social media. Social media has the power to influence potential customers from the start until the stage of the purchase and beyond as well.

To start off, consumers need awareness of your brand and its offering. At a later stage, when they start to narrow down their choices, you need a social media influencer to convince their choice. A constant dialogue between the customer and the brand is essential to keep the relationship strong. Attractive and informative content can glue the customers to your brand. [1,2,3]

The functions of social media;-

1. Builds product awareness

Social media is a huge influence on consumers when they are attempting to build awareness about a particular product. When people face a problem, they start searching for a solution. But most of the times people do not know which product or service will solve their problems.

How do people get to know about your product? A large section of the audience gets to know your brand through the content that is distributed on social media.

The aim of every business is to influence and understand consumer behavior. Using customer experience analytics will help to know your customers and their needs from social media conversations.

If you do not have a brand presence on social media, you are missing out on an important opportunity to influence your consumer buying behavior.



2. Social Proof as a greater force of buying decisions

Social media has resulted in the evolution of social proof as a greater force for buying decisions. Social proof has emerged due to the tendency of people to imitate the behavior of people around them or people imitate people who have influence over them.

Happy customers tend to go about praising the products with likes, shares, reviews, and comments on social media. Marketers are making the social space more transparent by sharing reviews, comments, likes, tweets, and pins of their happy customers to generate brand trust and increase conversion rate. The beauty and cosmetics industry is one of the top industries that successfully utilize this customer presence in social media.[4,5,6]

Sharing testimonials, case studies, pictures, comments, and videos of happy customers will build greater trust and will work well on your landing, page, consulting page and sign-up page as well.

The power of social proof cannot be undermined when social media has become an integral part of buyers and sellers. Social marketers looking to sell their products should have solid social proof in form of case studies, images, videos, podcast interviews, and influencers as part of their selling strategy. All this will eventually increase the conversion rate.

3. Promotions, Discounts and Deals on Social Media

Many social media users have signed up for social media groups/forums that they are interested in. When consumers see promotions, discounts, and deals on social media, it influences their buying behavior.

64% of online consumers wait to buy things until they go for sale,

Social media is an inexpensive platform that gives brands instant reach to billions of active social media users. Brands should ensure that the target audience sees your products, likes them, and shares them on social media, which helps to influence consumer behavior.

4. Social Media Influencers

Consumers are more likely to buy when they get recommendations from a person they trust. Celebrities and popular people inspire their audience and influence their buying behavior.

It is true that 49% of consumers seek guidance from social media influencers before making a buying decision.

For example, an influential gamer would endorse gaming and tech products. Consumers on social media look up to these influencers for recommendations and advice on products. A positive influence will encourage the consumer to buy the product.

Influencer marketing can work wonders for your brand by attracting more customers. Many marketers are replacing celebrities with YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat influencers. These online stars are providing unfiltered feedback on products, and consumers love it.

Social media, which includes the content, visuals, promotions, discounts, and influencers, has the ability to influence the buying behavior of consumers.

The effects of social media on consumer behavior cannot be ignored by brands and businesses.

A Deloitte report highlighted that consumers who are influenced by social media are 4 times more likely to spend more on purchases. Moreover, the influence can be so high that 29% of consumers are more likely to make a purchase on the same day of using social media.[7,8,9]

II.DISCUSSION

Consumer buying behavior refers to the choices and actions made by users when they buy and use a product. Consumer buying habits are those of the final consumer. Businesses must assess their projected future purchase trends and make the necessary adjustments.

This marketing concept emphasizes the need for businesses to create a marketing mix (MM) that will appeal to (use) their customers in order to facilitate consumer purchases of what, where, when, and how. A company's product and success are significantly impacted by how customers respond to its marketing approach.

Marketers can more easily predict how consumers will react to marketing campaigns, so you need to assess what you're doing.

Stages of the Consumer Buying Process

These are the six stages:



1. Problem Recognition/Need Awareness – During this first stage of the process, the consumers sincerely try to establish the distinction between the intended state and the actual condition. They ponder whether there is indeed a need for the products.
2. Informational Research – After a problem is found, the consumer search process begins. They are aware that there is an issue, which is why they are looking for a solution.[10,11,12]
 - Internal reflection – They consider their earlier interactions.
 - External search – If further information is needed, they consult their friends and relatives. Internet-based sources, public forums, comparison shopping, etc. that are heavily marketed.After a successful information search, a buyer is shown potential alternatives, or the evoked set.
3. Searching for Alternatives – Customers want to compare products, thus they search for alternatives to help them. This enables kids to experience and learn what they want and don't want, as well as to know what to expect. As a search stimulus, price and rank/weight alternatives are used. Through the commercial promotion of alternatives and consumer research, businesses can influence this.
4. Making a purchasing decision after carefully analysing all relevant elements, such as quality, price, packing, service, etc.
5. Purchase – Although it might seem like this is the last stage, a sudden change in circumstances, like the availability of a better alternative or outside pressure, may still cause the decision to be changed at that same moment.
6. Post-Purchase Evaluation/Cognitive Dissonance – Due to the subpar service, clients may experience depression and begin to regret their purchase. This is a bad situation for businesses, but it may be lessened by providing support through warranties, programmes, and first-rate customer service.[13,14,15]

Social Media:

Social media refers to websites and programmes that prioritise cooperation, content sharing, engagement, and community-based feedback.

Types of Social Media

Social media. Consider Facebook and LinkedIn.

Website bookmarking.

Media exchange.

Microblogging.

Forums and comments on blogs.

Sites for social reviews.

Public blog.

Network for the Sharing Economy.

How Social Media Impact On Consumer Behavior:

1. Customers increasingly make direct purchases on social media platforms.

Social media is almost as widespread for learning about brands as TV or radio advertisements and word-of-mouth marketing. Three out of ten consumers said they would prefer to learn about brands in the future in this manner. But more and more, consumers are turning to social media to find brands and make purchases from them.

2. Social media reviews have a significant impact on consumer behavior.

Social media is a dynamic source of social proof, which is an important consideration when making purchases. In order to assess a product or service before making a purchase, more than half (51%) of consumers read reviews on forums or social media. A potential consumer can be turned away with just one or two negative reviews.

3. Customers anticipate two-way communication with brands.

The relationship between a business and its customers now has a new facet thanks to social media. A brand is no longer a distant, nameless thing we only learn about in books or on Google. Analysing a brand's network enables you to evaluate its principles, current news and products, and relationship with its target market.

4. For customer assistance, consumers use social media.

How would you anticipate communicating with a brand's customer service division before social media? You can get in touch with them by calling, writing, visiting, standing in line to see them in person, etc. Consumers now prefer to communicate with brands via social media when they have a complaint or a concern about their service.[16,17,18]



III.RESULTS

The powerful effects of social media on businesses and brands have been proven. Over the past decade, the adoption of social media as an awareness, selling and customer relationship management tool has moved from large brands to Main Street mom-and-pop stores.

As marketers, we know that we need to be where our target audience is online, but do you truly understand how social media usage plays a role in the consumer buying process? With seven in 10 Americans using social media, it is very likely that the vast majority of your customers (or potential customers) are already online. It is important to take into consideration how that affects your current and potential customers so that you can craft social strategies that align with both consumer expectations of the brand and, of course, sales for your business.

While some people create an account on these mediums to simply connect with friends or loved ones, social media is now more intertwined with business than ever. Popular social media platforms have integrated a wide variety of options for consumers to conjugate with brands and companies alike, even offering the ability to make purchases of goods or services directly on an app.

For example, Facebook first implemented a “buy” call-to-action button on ads and page posts back in 2014. Adopting this feature gives users the opportunity to make a purchase of a product without interrupting their scrolling. Many other mediums have followed suit, and other marketplaces, like Instagram Shopping, are more popular than ever. Listing products in the dedicated “Shop” tab gives your items exposure to a wide breadth of audiences that were previously inaccessible if you were a brick-and-mortar location that required consumer foot traffic to make a purchase.

Setting the focus of your social selling strategy toward advertising your products or services on these apps is one of the ways to bridge the gap between future customers and the long-standing issue of “how do I share what my business offers to fresh eyes?” Consider social selling as part of your overall sales strategy.

The algorithms of social platforms with buying options help to expose your brand’s services or items to relevant audiences dictated by triggers such as demographics, geographics and interest, all with the help of paid promotion. Set aside a monthly budget for promoted posts or product ads to increase sales, and utilize costless tactics such as including relevant and popular hashtags on posts to drive up organic reach.

It’s also important to recognize the effect of social media on consumer buying choices when considering the power of recommendations. Most modern consumers carry their purchasing power in their pockets, and when they’re not buying, they utilize social networks for reviews about a product and where to (or not to) shop from. With 80% of consumers making buying decisions based on a friend’s social media post, the era of virtual word-of-mouth recommendations is in full effect.

Consumers gravitate to brands that are hospitable, humanized and relatable, and expect companies to interact with them in a meaningful way that goes beyond an advertisement or product listing. Taking steps, such as answering Facebook or Instagram inquiries, or even something as simple as responding to a tweet showing excitement about your product or service, can boost your brand’s reputation and increase the likelihood of a consumer recommending you to others. Build a relationship with followers and customers to increase consumer satisfaction and bolster the likelihood of those coveted positive social media recommendations to peers.

On the other hand, a negative recommendation of any kind can be detrimental to your brand. Thankfully, consumers have entered a new dimension of two-way engagement with brands on social media. The days of latency on the phone while seeking a customer service representative have passed, and an era of contactless, voiceless assistance has entered. Social listening, active community management and, well, being social on social media, can help keep that negativity at bay.



Consumers seek honesty and rely on other sources such as influencers when it comes to making buying decisions. Hiring a popular influencer in your brand's niche to put a spotlight on your product or service can make a difference if handled correctly. Just one positive review conducted by a recognizable influencer has the capability of causing an influx in popularity and, more importantly, sales. Many larger influencers, like the mega- and macro-influencers can be hired through an agency, while smaller influencers, like nanos, can be reached by sending a direct message or email to create a line of communication and begin the process of getting your brand in front of their audiences. The benefits of a positive recommendation to a large audience typically will greatly outweigh the monetary value of an item, so don't be hesitant to give out a promotional product at no cost.[19,20,21]

Social media has created a level playing ground for brands and consumers, unlocking a never-before-seen type of relationship between the two. Social platforms are modern era storefronts and serve as the liaison between customers and your products.

IV.CONCLUSIONS

Social media is no longer just about conversations; it's about commerce. Social factors have always played a part in consumer buying habits, but the ubiquity of smartphones and social networks have taken word-of-mouth to new heights.

Most consumers around the world now carry posting and purchasing power around in their pockets with them every day. Forget going into stores to discover new products, now consumers can just scroll through their social feeds for inspiration. They no longer have to call their friends for a recommendation, they post to their social networks and crowdsource unfettered responses from family, friends and perfect strangers. This is particularly true for the most coveted brand demographic: millennials.[22,23,24]

Whether you're aiming to inspire and engage social audiences or propel purchases online and in-stores, these are 14 stats your brand shouldn't ignore. Here's how social media influences consumer behaviour:

1. 81% of consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their friends' social media posts. (Forbes)
2. 66% of consumers have been inspired to purchase from a new brand after seeing social media images from other consumers (Stackla)
3. Consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals. (Hubspot)
4. Facebook accounts for 50% of total social referrals and 64% of total social revenue. (Business Insider)
5. 31% of consumers say they are using social media channels to browse for new items to purchase. (Aimia)
6. Millennials are 1.6x more likely to use digital channels to learn about new products. (Facebook Insights)
7. 84% of millennials say user-generated content from strangers has at least some influence on what they buy. (Gartner)
8. 53% of consumers recommend companies or products in tweets, with 48% following through to purchase those products or services. (SproutSocial)
9. 78% of consumers say companies' social media posts impact their purchases. (Forbes)
10. Customers are 6x more likely to purchase a product if the page includes pictures from social media. (AdWeek)
11. Conversions increase 133% when mobile shoppers see positive reviews before buying. (Bazaarvoice)[25,26,27]
12. In 2015, Facebook influenced 52% of consumers' online and offline purchases. (DigitasLBi Commerce)
13. Global social commerce revenue reached \$30 billion in 2015 (Statista)
14. 56% of consumers say they're more influenced by social media images and videos when online shopping now than they were before the pandemic (Stackla)[27]

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