

Marketing Over Social Media Networks

Ghayth Ali Jarad

M.Sc Candidate, Department of International Marketing, Peoples Friendship University of Russia
Moscow, Russia

Email: write2ghayth@gmail.com

Abstract

Online social media is now the greatest interaction platform all over the world, connecting millions of people. A report in 2010 shows that on a daily basis, about 65 million tweets were recorded which translate to 750 tweets sent in a second. These large volumes of online traffic now present a new opportunity for marketers to reach consumers. To take good advantage of the opportunity, advertisers must make effort to understand customers' attitude online and place adverts that are exciting and impactful. There are however some challenges with online advertisement. Some companies have made some regrets, so prospective online advertiser must be circumspective with what information is placed online in their official capacity or private capacity for notable stake holders.

Keywords: social media, marketing, customers, interaction, companies

Introduction

Social media is the online web page platform interaction of people in which they share ideas, and exchange information. (Kaplan et al, 2010)¹ defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Social media can make small business aim to get across to larger network of customers. Customers interact with brands through social media which implies that a good social media presence can command their interest². Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining websites traffic or attention through social media sites (Trattner et al, 2013)³. The aim of social media marketing is to reach out to millions of people all over the world that are constantly interacting on the social media websites, securing peoples attentions through such media is more impactful in advertisement than the traditional system of TV or print media advertisement. The methodology is to bring about a content that catches attention and could also move viewers to share with the social networks. The message being spread resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company it originated from (Schivinski et al 2013)⁴. Consumers are better convinced about a product by words of mouth or recommendations by trusted friends; social media gives this leverage to companies. Unlike the traditional system of advertisement, where every advert placement has to be paid, with social media, an advert exposure can circulate through the media for months producing multiple effects yet at no extral cost to advertiser. Online advertising also gives opportunities for business to have their products exposed to clients or customers of other business clients or customers of other business, some of which may be competitors. Online marketing also allows firms to test their popularity and relative acceptance by customers. Online community like Glass door enable employees to place evaluations of their companies (Deis, et al 2010)⁵.

Top Social Media Network

The following are top social media networks that can be used for advertising:

Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg with the assistance of college roommates founded facebook on 4th Feb., 2004 at Harvard University. It started as online communication among few American universities to a site that is now open to anyone above 13 years of age. The input that can be made on facebook is more comprehensive than twitter. There is no limit to the length of words that can be accommodated pictures, music and videos can also be uploaded. Like twitter, friend requests can be sent to other registered members. Member are allowed to form groups which can be open that is communication of groups members can be viewed by any one on the platform

¹ Kaplan A.M & Haenlein Michael (2010). "Users of the World Unite! The challenges and Opportunities of Social Media". *Business Horizons* 53 (1). P.61

² WORD STREAM. www.worldstream/social-media-marketing

³ Trattner, C & Kappe, F (2013). *Socail Stream Marketing on Facebook: A case study*. *Internal Jobs of Social and Humanistic Computing (IJSHC)* 2 (1/2).

⁴ Schivinski, Bruno & pabouiski D (2013). *The Impact of Brand Communications on Brand Equity Dimensions and Brand Purchase Intention Through Facebook*. Working Paper, Gdale University of Technology, Faculty of Management and Economics 4(4): 2-23

⁵ Deis, M.H & Kyle Hensel (2010). *Using Social Media to Increase Advertising and Improve marketing*.

or closed groups which restrict viewing and comments on postings to group members only.

The vision of the founder is to connect the world. September 2012 analysis shows that facebook has over one billion active users¹. Facebook and twitter are on ban in China since 2000², but the Chinese government promised to allow its usage in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone. There are however social media sites in China that functions like facebook. A study from 2011 shows 84% of “engagement” or clicks to likes that link back facebook advertising.

Twitter

Twitter connects friends all over the world. Official website is twitter.com. It allows companies and organizations to have account and therefore share information with members of the online communities. Members of the online community are allowed to send and read text messages not exceeding 140 character described as “tweets”, only registered users are allowed to write tweets but unregistered users can only read them³. Access is through sms website interface or mobile device application. The company’s headquarters is at San Francisco, it has over 70,000 registered applications⁴. 2010 report shows that on a daily basis, about 65 million tweets were recorded which translate to 750 tweets sent in a second (Garrett,2010)⁵.

Google plus

Goggle plus (goggle +) is described as goggle as a “social layer”. It has the advantage of linking web contents directly with authors, this gives genuineness to online information and gives room for a feedback process. Google plus is the second largest social network after Facebook. In October 2013, goggle accounted 540 million active users who would at least one goggle + service, of which 300 million users is active in “the stream”⁶. Google plus is widely used with mobile phone users. A 2013 survey shows that 30% of smart phones users that were surveyed uses google plus app at least once in a month⁷. February 2012 survey shows that people who have have account on Facebook spend average of 7.5 hours on the site in a month this high statistic is closely followed by goggle plus users who average 3.3 minute monthly on goggle plus⁸.

Google plus is dominated by the male sex at a statistics of 60% for men and 25% for women⁹. This statistics shows how marketers choose the segmentation target of their customers. Google plus enables advertisement to be targeted to certain groups, it also allows navigation services, marketing and promotion based on location.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn was founded in 2002 but was not launched until 2003. It’s primarily designed for professional networking. Registered members are encouraged to document their professional work experience history, training and expertise. Friends on the network are allowed to validate these experiences. The rate of validation gives a form of professional rating competence to some viewers. Members are allowed to generate sales lead and form business partners. Company pages can also be created for promotion of company products and services and online interaction with customers. The site is also used for recruitment purpose. Over 259 million users of LinkedIn was recorded in 2013 across 200 countries/territories (Hempel, et l 2013)¹⁰. It’s available in 20 languages with over 180 million global visitors.

The LinkedIn influences program launched in October 2012 brings together over 300 of the world’s top thought leaders to share their professional insights with LinkedIn 259 million members. Influence is an invite-only program that features notable leaders from vast range of industries including Richard Branson, Raham Emmanet, Arianna Huffington, Deepac Chopra, Martha Stewart, Bill Gates and Jack Welch (Kaufman, 2013)¹¹.

You Tube

This is a video sharing social interactive media created in 2005 by three people who were formally working for PayPal, Google took ownership in 2006. The social web site allows download of videos from registered members. Length of video download is usually maintained for 15 minutes but users who have good track record of video down load can be given opportunity for 12 hours length¹². The social website allows download of videos from registered members. The video viewers could write comments below the video. Video adverts are placed are before the start of downloaded videos or in the course of playing it online. There are also adverts at the side lines. The procedure of advertisement placement is such that target audiences are matched as reflected in

¹ “Facebook Tops Billion-user Mark”. The Wall Street Journal (New-York). October eth, 2012.

² www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/twitter

³ www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/twitter

⁴ “Twitter Registered 1500 per cnet Growth in Users” New Stations 2011.

⁵ Garrett, Sea (2010). :Big Goals, Big Gave, big Records”. Twitter Blog.

⁶ Goggle’s social network sees 58% Jump in users. USA Today, October 29th 2013.

⁷ “Google smartphone App Popularity”. Sept. 5th 2013.

⁸ www.en.wikipedia.com

⁹ “Circle Count Google Statt” Nov., 2013

¹⁰ Hempel, Jessi (2013). “LinkedIn: How It’s Changing Business”. Fortune PP 69-74.

¹¹ Kaufman, Leslie (2013). “Linkein Builds its Publishing Presence”. New York Times.

¹² www.en.wikipedia.org

the style of placement and language used.

Advertisement presented on videos are usually in alignment with video messages, this serves as a very good advantage for advertiser as viewers could take time to watch their advertisement and assimilate the message. Companies are also allowed to sponsor videos. YouTube sometimes go into partnership with companies especially broadcast companies or entertainment companies like NBC, MGM, Lions Gate Entertainment etc. YouTube remain a desired site for a lot of youths all over the world who are enthusiastic about new initiatives, recorded programs like football matches, movies and documentaries. People are generally more at ease in listening to videos either for entertainment or education than reading text. YouTube provides these opportunities giving room for big companies and firms to reach different classes of consumers at ease.

Blogs

Blogs can be expressed as web log, it mostly used by individual, displace information or discussion site on the website with entries arranged in reverse chronological orders with latest entering at the top. Multi-author blogs now exist. Writers usually invite members of the public to visit their blogs and they are given room to write, comments on posts there by creating social interactions. A blog could be an online brand advertisement of a product or company. There are over 156 million public blogs in existence¹. Companies that recognize the need for information originality and accessibility and ultimately reach out to consumers are privy to social media (Chiang, et al 2011)².

Prospects of Marketing Over Social Media Network

For business to take advantage of the relationship between business and consumer relationship, the following must be taken as assets which should be at finger tips. Information, involvement, community and control³. Consumers need information, they want to have detail information on what they are buying as regards the composition of the product either in terms of nutritive value for edible goods, or materials composition for household goods etc. They want to know what benefit can be derived from the product based on composition, the risk involved in the consumption or use of it and also to know price information. This can be compared with the perceived value of the product as seen in its composition and usage, they also need price information to make comparison with substitute products. Historical price information enables consumer to make informed forecast on future prices.

By involvement patronage is key. Interest shown by consumer online by clicking on 'like', 'follow stories' on products, use advertisement and souvenirs goes a long way to show clients involvement. Market segmentation is an indication that clients exist in communities, the conviction of a few members of the community sets up a boomerang effect that gets the attention and consequently the interest of other members of the community in a product. Members of community talk in groups, share ideas discuss products based on information they have. A good corporate image and well package product information expressed online will most likely turn in favour of the product. Consumers are in control of their assets, they also form the units of the market and so work together to control products market share. Thus online marketing shouldn't be viewed in terms of immediate gain of making sales but the impact it could have in the long run on the collective attitude of people towards a product which can determine market trend.

To sustain your impact on social media, ensure you post new updates regularly, this can be done daily, weekly or monthly. The posting should not just be business like all the time. Make it interesting and funny. Let the attraction be captivating, beside the message create exciting pictures, animations or sound that could first be the major source of attraction while the customers are attracted toward that, then they can see the message. If facebook page is created specifically for business, get the people engaged by making them to participate in an interesting discussion, allow them to ask questions. While some advert placement can be stationary, main adverts should be inserted intermittently. It's also the duty of the advertiser to keep conversation going by responding to comments and also ask questions. The more traffic there is on the page, the more effective it will be for advertisement.

New innovations in technological productions like 3D printing also give room for online advertisement. 3D printing can be used to print household items like toys, tools, purpose made metals and even sophisticated productions like pharmaceutical drugs. 3D printing will make it easier for firms to rethink their business practices (Meseko, 2014). Since most of the people that will be engaged in 3D printing business will be operating from their homes, online advertisement may be the only opportunity that can use to advertise their products to the public.

¹ "Blog Pulse". The Nielsen Company. Feb., 16th 2011.

² Chiang, I & Chung-Hsien H (2011). "Exploring The Impact of Blog Marketing on Consumer". Social Behavior and Personality.

³ Kerr Gayle (2012). Buy, Boycott or Blog. Europe Journal of Marketing 46(314): 387-405

Challenges with Social Media Marketing

Every organization especially manufacturers have few secrets or confidential strategies which makes their products unique. Some of this confidential information is what actually make them to have an edge over rivals. Effort must be made that such confidential information are not leaked on the social media as competitors can use it against them or entrepreneur who are always searching the internet for business idea can lay hold on such information, make similar products and reduce their command of market share. A poll done on 122 IT executives from 33 countries revealed that social mishaps caused organizations a combined \$4.3 million in damages in 2010¹. Social media mishap can be inform of employees sharing too much company's information to the public, unintentional disclosure of confidential information and increasing tendencies of litigation².

A good example of social mishap is the face book page opened by REIT in which the company tries to sell its product by promoting and recommending old-style restaurants. The idea must have made positive impact on the company in terms of patronage but there were a lot of comments on the social media criticizing REIT for the closure of lots of restaurant and stores. The criticizing caused a lot of damage to the corporate image of the company and so it has to stop the advertisement campaign to stop further deterioration of its image.

Conclusion

Social Media online advertising is highly effective. Conscious effort should be made by marketers to make room for it. You can begin with options where you do not have to pay like opening a face book page or creating a group on face book likewise twitter and blogs. Adverts can be subtly presented along side conversation exchanges created. As time goes on you can now venture into a more aggressive online ad campaign by promoting certain discussions, pictures, and briefs that carries advertisement messages. The most effective form of online advertisement is to pay for banner pages on popular sites with high traffic on spaces offered for advertisement by the social media operators. Facebook and twitter create many of these opportunities daily. In the same sense video or animated pictorial advert can also be place on you tube.

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