Chapter 11
Social Media as a Marketing Tool

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ABSTRACT

This chapter talks about how social media can be used as a marketing tool. Right from describing the various forms of social media, it touches upon the different methods by which social media are engaged with by a marketer. The tasks of creating awareness, generating interest, encouraging action, resulting in purchase, and doing brand advocacy are all covered. There is also a section on how the marketer can evaluate the effectiveness of these social media options both in comparison with traditional media as well as in isolation.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter looks at using social media in the context of it being a marketing technique. In the process, the advantages and disadvantages of this medium versus the traditional media has been discussed. Customer engagement tools for measuring effectiveness (including Return on Investment) along with evaluation methodologies for social media have been highlighted. There is a detailed example of a social medium- mobile application- its uses and challenges. Finally the chapter closes with outlining what maybe the barriers for social media adoption by organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is used to refer to those media that use web based and mobile technology to use communication into an interactive dialogue. (Dewing, 2012) Also called 'consumer generated media' the objective here is to combine technology in a social forum to make it user friendly for the public. The biggest advantage here is to offer a two way interactive medium unlike the traditional media which is one way.

The exponential growth of social media in the last few years is indisputable. The medium has altered the way in which people communicate with one another and even do business with each other. Its true value is still being explored and it is growing by leaps and bounds. The mainstream way of doing marketing is undergoing a discontinuous change thanks to this social medium.

The above figure describes the various aspects of social media. Starting from 'Know your customer'- which talks about understanding who is your target profile, moving onto Setting a target for the social media such as reaching so many customers or call to action, then executing a plan that takes into account different platforms and formats and finally monitoring if the results are as per expectations, 'social media' has come a long way.

Compared to this, traditional medium like television or print no longer have the same impact. For decades marketers have been struggling to increase the 'interactivity' factor in communication with the audience i.e. conventional media like Television or Radio talk to consumers in a single direction without taking inputs from them or seeking to even understand if there is adequate comprehension from the other

Figure 1. Social media aspects
Source: (Wasserman, n.d.)
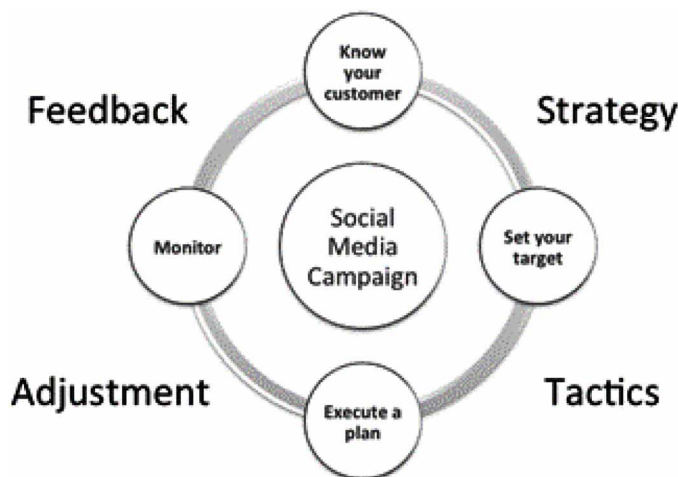
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