Chapter 13
Effects of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Consumers Behavior

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ABSTRACT

In the information age, social media is growing rapidly and at a faster pace. Social media is playing an important role in the day-to-day life of individuals. Using social media has become the everyday routine. Many social media sites display different types of advertisements by which the decision-making process is generally getting affected. Social media is much more than just a medium of sharing information. The present study is an attempt to understand how social media affects the decision-making process of consumers and the impacts of various marketing strategies used by firms on social media. The study employs the survey method to collect primary data from 200 customers who have been regularly using social media. Factor analysis and ANOVA has been used to gain insights in the study. The selected respondents are assumed to represent the population in the urban areas of Delhi.

INTRODUCTION

What is the similarity between Ex US President Barack Obama, Indian super star Amitabh Bachchan, Indian Minister Narender Modi, present US President Donald Trump and Chinese seasoning and processed food maker Chings Secret? All these celebrity are using social networking for their brand promotion. Narender Modi has 40 million follower on face book followed by Donald Trump with 20 million, (Quartz India, 2017) Obama has a fan following of over a million, Bachchan of over three lakhs, Chings Secret has built over one lakh followers through social media. Today everyone is using some social networking site or the other. If they are a professional they use LinkedIn. If they have a flair for

writing, they are either a regular blogger or use micro blogging sites like Twitter. If they are interested in connecting with their old friends or finding new ones they are likely to use Facebook, Orkut and many others. And there are several other social networking sites which cater to varied tastes, like Flickr for photography and YouTube for videos, music and movies. Invariably, more often than not, users on these sites are discussing a brand / product / service. These individuals are using social media to share views, and news about brands. Consequently, from the point of a brand promotion and management, social media becomes a significant tool.

Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses web-based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogues. Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Social media is the medium to socialize. They use web-based technology to quickly disseminate knowledge and information to a huge number of users. They allow creation and exchange of user-generated content. Facebook, Twitter, Hi5, Orkut and other social networking sites are collectively referred to as social media. Social media represents low-cost tools that are used to combine technology and social interaction with the use of words. These tools are typically internet or mobile based like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace and YouTube.

Social Media, today, is among the 'best opportunities available' to a brand for connecting with prospective consumers. Social Media Marketing is the new mantra for several brands since early last year. Significantly different from conventional marketing strategies, Social Media Marketing (SMM) offers three distinct advantages.

- It provides a window to marketers to not only present products / services to customers but also to listen to customers' grievances and suggestions.
- It makes it easy for marketers to identify various peer groups or influencers among various groups, who in turn can become brand evangelist and help in organic growth of a brand.
- All this is done at nearly zero cost (as compared to conventional customer outreach programmes) as most of the social networking sites are free.

Social media marketing helps in generating exposure to businesses, increasing traffic /subscribers, building new business partnerships, rise in search engine rankings, generating qualified leads due to better lead generation efforts, selling more products and services and reduction in overall marketing expenses. The use of social media sites as part of a company's marketing strategy has increased significantly in the past couple years. As Swedowsky (2009) stated, businesses can not afford to ignore the benefits of using social media. In the past, consumers often just had the opinions of a few friends before making a significant purchase. The use of social media can increase number of opinions from just a few to hundreds or even thousands. Swedowsky reiterated that social media continues to abound for both businesses and the consumer.

Online access is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. Businesses have also realized that consumers use social media because it is fun. They can easily share their ideas, photos, videos, likes and dislikes with each other. Businesses realize that importance of having increased interaction with consumers and retailers, and the use of social media gives them the opportunity to more efficiently meet the demand of their customers.

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