

Usage of the Basic Facebook Features as Befitting Marketing Tools


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INTRODUCTION

The vital role of social media in modern business arena can hardly be overemphasized for both businesses and customers. During the last one decade or so, online shopping has become very popular among customers, especially buying from Facebook pages is pretty common. Facebook is the most preferred platform to the entrepreneurs for starting their business, out of all kinds of existing social media sites. They prefer to conduct many traditional marketing activities through online sites, preferably Facebook, to supplement the usual marketing activities of their offline businesses. Active existence of the businesses on both online & offline platforms is spurred mainly by the astonishing behavior of modern-day customers to use online channels to shop around and then actually buy from the offline stores ultimately.

In this technological world, customers are no longer in dark, rather they can get any kind of information, product reviews, recommendations etc. from social media sites at any time. This trend has created a scenario which empowers the customers with lots of options for taking their purchase decisions. On the other hand, businesses can grab this trend as an opportunity for expanding current customer base and flourishing profit line.

Today, most of the marketers in Bangladesh too, extensively use social media to remain well connected with the customers, and competitive in their respective business field. Strategically, businesses are using Facebook for branding their products and services as it will help increase the awareness level of customers resulting into reaching and creating more and more customer bases. However, the growing popularity of social media, particularly Facebook, is also bringing up the issues of trustworthiness and effectiveness of these sites.

Customers verify the quality of products or services based on various factors as they do not always feel safe to purchase online randomly because of some negative incidents take place every now and then. Businesses use certain tools and policies for promoting and branding products and services which have significant effects on customers' purchase decisions.

This chapter intends & aims to focus on identifying and analyzing the effective and befitting Facebook marketing tools and features used by marketers. It also examines how these Facebook marketing strategies influence or affect customers' purchase decisions. The very technological, visual, and universally

accepted content design of Facebook provides many befitting marketing tools which have beneficial scopes for conducting business operations.

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BACKGROUND

Facebook has become the most effective platform for promoting different brands of almost all kinds of products and services because of its enviable popularity as the most widely reached medium for selling and buying activities in Bangladesh during the recent few years. Facebook applications and features are designed in such a way which can be used to attract consumers' attention and address the issues of customization as per their specific individual needs.

Another beneficial thing about using Facebook to promote and sell products and services is the opportunity to remain connected 24/7 with all the relevant parties in a cost-effective way. Most importantly, this 24/7 connectivity at a low cost is a highly favorable feature for the small businesses who are basically doing business only on Facebook. Facebook, one of the most profitable medium, is way more superior to, and influential over the traditional marketing strategies.

People can get reviews and feedbacks from other users about products and services by joining in a group or just from a page. They can observe the friends' activities as well as the advertisements pop up on the screen while scrolling their home pages on Facebook. User experiences and promotional materials affect the perception level of customers regarding a brand. Strategically, customers check their familiar persons' Facebook profile or the profile of the celebrities for getting the idea of the products and brands they are using or planning to use sometime in future.

Undoubtedly, pages with more likes and shares are considered to be the more authentic ones by the customers in general. More updated information and posts with wide engagement with various sources can increase the level of acceptance of a business to customers. Companies and service providers have begun to research and investigate the usage and efficiency of Facebook advertising, the applications, and the various ways customers are using to judge a brand in order to improve their brand position.

It is necessary for the companies and brands to find out the factors, definitely the most influential ones, for building up their strategies to boost their business performance. Customers' shared posts and check-ins are the most influential tools for a business. While consumers steadily choose brand groups on Facebook as trusted sources of information, new opportunities arise to build unique brand awareness and viral advertising platforms. This study is attempting to have a better understanding the influence and impact of the Facebook features, or Facebook marketing in a word, on the ultimate buying / purchase intention or behavior of the consumers.

The authors basically attempt to measure the utilities and effects of the Facebook features to be used as befitting marketing tools to influence consumers to make their purchases or demonstrate their responses on Facebook. The survey was designed to collect data to find whether Facebook marketing had ever affected them and generated their intention to purchase a particular product on or from Facebook shops, and if it had, to what extent. Though Facebook marketing is a rapidly growing concept in Bangladesh, not much of notable research has yet been done in this area so far.

In this context, this study / paper would definitely enrich the understanding level of the people engaged in Facebook marketing or just in any business as such, regarding the customers' perception of the Facebook features as the effectively used marketing tools. These results can be used in global context as well.

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