

Chapter 14

Social Media Marketing Challenges and New Directions Post COVID–19

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic brought a new phenomenon in the marketing field and practice. Marketers adopted a new information communication technology system for them to be able to survive the harsh and unstable environment. The study used systematic literature review to understanding the strategic social media marketing and sustainability challenges and post COVID-19 directions. The study explored deep insight from peer-reviewed journals, industry experts articles, and relevant literature to understand the phenomenon. This chapter takes a reconceptualization approach on social media marketing through delving into social media marketing and sustainability challenges that emnanted from the Covid-19 pandemic and the post Covid-19 strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic brought a new phenomenon in the marketing field and practice. Sustainable survival strategies post the Covid-19 era marketers, adopted new Information Communication Technology systems and applications digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing. Virtual retail activities were developed to cater for the increased demand for online sales and market demand and any other supply chain channels that might be functional. However, sustainability issues of which

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this modern marketing trend was a challenge as customers continue to shun online retailing. Major issues that have affected the sustainability of the new phenomenon were issues such as privacy, ease of use, usefulness and trustworthiness. These factors have continued to have a significant impact on how customers leave brick-and-mortar shops for the digital platform. Customers still need to visit the rational shops and choose their products in-store especially for fresh food items and fashion wear which cannot fully be assigned to the taste of online marketers. Digital retailers's competitiveness has accordingly remained low amid limited growth. Innovation and integration of digital marketing strategies emerge as an alternative way to boost confidence and remove the phobia associated with digital marketing platforms in the new normal. In this chapter sustainable social media marketing is reconceptualised in the context of the challenges occasioned by the Covid-19 environment. It gives an insight into how social media evolved, the social media marketing challenges and the new directions post Covid-19. Strategies of dealing with opportunities and threats in social media marketing strategy, strategies recovering from social media marketing brand attacks post-Covid 19 and social media infodemics are suggested.

BACKGROUND TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AS A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY

Sustainable marketing is calling for the use of survival marketing and supply chain strategies that bring longterm benefits to the organization and among these social media has been identified as one platform ideal for sustainable marketing. The use of social media as a sustainable marketing strategy involves connecting with the target audience through social media platforms by building brand awareness and promoting the organisation's products and services. Before the pandemic Covid-19, social media was awash with content that typified oversaturation of information. This put of the target audience disengaging them from business advertisements a term that was coined advertisement fatigue. In addition, the was the issue to do with data privacy that saw such big companies as Google pulling of and isolating themselves from common platforms. This development also resulted in the birth of data protection laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The pandemic Covid-19 shifted the behaviour of consumer given measures that were imposed by authorities in order to curb the spread of the virus. These measures included lockdowns, restrictions on movement of people, and social distancing. The cycles of the pandemic itself was unpredictable rendering planning and the execution of marketing plans by businesses ineffective and difficult. To remain sustainable, marketers had to strike a balance between product and/or service promotion and being empathetic and showing support towards the global crisis. This meant some supply chain distribution channels had to be cut, reduced, removed from the traditional distribution channels that were rendered unsustainable by the pandemic.

The post Covid-19 era has shown that sustainable business environments are characterized by sustainable and ethical practices that favour consumer preferences. To retain and engage consumers, it is important to understand customer services and personalize experiences. Advertisements must be synonymous with rich content that does not ward of the taste of consumers. Companies must comply with regulations and build supply chains that are resilient and able to withstand any internal and external pressure. This chapter therefore sought to satiate the following objectives,

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