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PRABANDHAN MANTRA

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Editor's Desk

As an institution which believes in academic pursuits which have practical implications, B.I.T Durg has always been a forerunner in academic endeavors setting benchmarks in education and industry.

This newsletter aims at empowering professionals everywhere to lead more productive work lives by disseminating knowledge processed here at our campus.

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A Shift in Social Media Marketing

A brand can no longer cross-post generic content across all of their social media channels and expect it to produce results. Furthermore, social media content cannot be blatant advertisements – consumers are immune to this type of marketing.

You need to stand out and be memorable on social media. Today, a results-driven social media marketing strategy must include the following:

- Campaigns on the platforms where your target consumers' attention is present
- Highly creative content specifically created for each platform
- Unique ways to encourage UGC (user-generated content)

Let's dive into a half-dozen ways that new-age social media is changing and what you need to focus on to drive the best results for your business or brand.

Video content is providing the best brand engagement opportunities

Video content is preferred by social media users. As a brand, you have to create content in the format your audience prefers.

While you might think traditional Instagram image posts are more fit for your business, you have to go where the engagement opportunity is. Currently, that is established social media channels that have specific functionality for video content (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube), as well as video-focused social networks like TikTok and Triller, which are newer. E-commerce in-app opportunities continue to evolve

In 2021 look for e-commerce to become even more prevalent on social media, and more in-app purchase

options becoming available. Instagram's latest app update placed its "Shop" feature icon where users previously accessed their notifications.

While it was a move that many considered a bit sneaky, it's a clear sign that Instagram is full steam ahead when it comes to expanding its Shops feature. Watch for TikTok to also roll out in-app e-commerce shortly as well.

Earlier in the year, TikTok announced a partnership with Shopify, the world's largest e-commerce platform, to allow its merchants to seamlessly advertise on TikTok. The most interesting piece of information from that announcement was the mention of the two companies working to release new in-app features down the line.

Influencer marketing must now be on-brand and authentic

In the early days of influencer marketing, before it was even referred to as "influencer marketing," you could drive insanely high volume simply by having an account with a large following promote your product or service in a post.

Social media audiences had never been exposed to this type of marketing, so it converted at high rates. So high that it quickly became the preferred marketing channel for many brands. Several direct-to-consumer brands launched and scaled wildly only using influencer marketing. Fashion Nova is a great example — a now half a billion-dollar brand that quickly went from obscurity a few years ago, to now having nearly 20 million Instagram followers. They achieved this massive growth by simply outspending any other brand on influencer marketing.

Times have changed, though, and follower count alone is irrelevant. Micro influencers who have a highly



engaged following perfectly matched to your target audience is the way to go. The way they promote your brand needs to be natural and authentic – holding a product and smiling simply doesn't cut it any longer.

Long-term brand partnerships with creators who value your brand are by far the most valuable form of influencer marketing. It allows the relationship to evolve, and for the influencer's audience to be introduced to your brand naturally.

No longer can you simply force your brand down the throat of consumers through any influencer with a big following. Authentic content featuring your brand, promoted by specific influencers who value product or service, is by far the most effective method for results.

User-generated content is outperforming traditional advertisements

According to Jon Simpson in this article, digital marketing experts estimate that most Americans are exposed to around 4,000 to 10,000 ads each day. If you take a minute to scroll through all of your social media feeds, you will undoubtedly come in contact with advertisements, several of them on each platform.

Multiply this by the number of times you open these apps, and you can see how that estimate is spot-on. Consumers are becoming more immune to traditional advertising every day. They can smell a hard sell from a mile away, and if you are running campaigns that are too salesy, the results are going to be dismal at best.

UGC, or user-generated content, is a great way to attract brand awareness while also giving you highly effective social proof. A marketing message that features an actual user of a product or service sells better than a creative ad consisting of professional photography and high production-value video.

Incentivize your customers to create UGC for your brand. Create a campaign utilizing a brand-specific hashtag that awards customers with free products, discounts or other special offers. Document the standouts on your social media accounts– it's a quick way to create a UGC snowball effect.

Social media is now a customer service branch

Don't think of your social media accounts as just a selling platform; they have evolved into much more than that. Now, social media is a customer service channel as much as it is a marketing channel.

When a consumer has a question or a complaint, where do they turn? Social media. From Instagram and Twitter DMs to Facebook messages, a large percentage of customer service inquiries originate on social media.

Your commitment to customer service on social media plays a huge role in your brand's success. Consumers love to voice their opinion of brands, both positive and negative, on social media.

Taking the time to make sure all of your inbound customer service requests are handled quickly and satisfactorily can create an army of loyal supporters who will shout you out, tag your profiles and refer business your way. Most CRM platforms have social integrations, making it easy for your customer service team to monitor messages sent in via your social media accounts. There is now more legalities and regulatory control

Social media isn't the free-for-all it once was. Now, there is increased regulatory control, and brands need to also be well aware of legalities regarding influencer and partnership disclosures. Simply put, you have to be extremely transparent when marketing on social media.



The Federal Trade Commission has specific disclosures for social media influencers. If you are hiring influencers, you need to make sure they follow them, as their failure to do so can come back to bite you. Also, as the FTC probes into the collection and use of consumer data, it is likely to change how many data points you can use in the future for targeting paid ads.

The reach and effectiveness of paid ads in terms of the ability to laser-target audiences could be changing very soon. Facebook has already addressed how Apple's iOS 14 update may impact its advertisers. If paid ads on Facebook and Instagram are a major piece of your marketing pie, I highly recommend that you spend time testing and perfecting different organic strategies

Manish MBA 4th Semester

Multi-Level Marketing

Some consider being Salesmanship to be an inborn trait as is Leadership. Some consider Salesmanship to be an Art. Then there are those who believe that anyone and everyone can be a Salesman with some training. Traditional concept of channel sales and retain sales as concepts are studied by every marketing and sales student. From the humble beginnings of mom-and-pop shops to super markets, selling has come a long way. Apart from these sales channels we have also seen the concept of direct selling and referral selling having developed over the last forty to fifty years.

In the last thirty years or so we have seen another new trend in sales known as Multi-Level Marketing and this has spread across the globe stealthily but silently and engaged millions of people in selling products and earning decent income for themselves.

It is not rear to find your friends inviting you home for a tea party over the weekend and you find yourself buying the irresistible Tupperware products for your home. Similarly, thousands of people are buying home products, Personal Care products as well as Food supplements and other lifestyle products through their friends who happen to be a part of Amway Network. If you have been exposed to these types of transactions you have been introduced to what is known as Multi-Level Marketing or Network marketing.

Network marketing is a fairly new concept that has developed since early 1980s and has spread all across the globe. Today it involves housewives, corporate executives, retired persons, students as well as people from all walks of life engaged in selling through network and early decent incomes while they continue to pursue their vocations.

Network Marketing is a new phenomenon that has gained ground in the last three decades and hence there isn't much of research, study and literature that is available as in the other traditional theories and practice of Marketing. The WFDSA - World Federation of Direct Selling Agents have defined Network selling as "Marketing and Selling of Products and Services directly to the Consumers in a face to face and in places like home, workplace and other offices other than retail sales locations." On the face of it this definition describes the Network Marketing in the right way. However, you will see that this definition can hold good even for Direct Selling which is not the same as Multi Level or Network selling. There are several characteristic differences in the modalities that these two sales methods follow though there are similarities too.

In both cases of Direct Selling as well as Network marketing, the selling happens on 'One to One Basis' where the sales person comes in face-to-face contact



with the user or customer. Therefore, both the methods involved the End User or End customer on one end and the Sales person on the other. In both cases the Salesman involved plays the role of influencing the decision maker. The main different between the two methods is to do with the organizational setup of the sales teams as well as the method of compensation and income generation. However theoretically Network marketing is considered to be a part of Direct Selling methods.

Multi-Level Marketing is an activity that anyone can take up at any point of time in life and generate income. There are thousands who take up MLM along with their main careers and then there are so many who have become millionaires by taking up MLM on full time basis and making it their prime vocation. This form of marketing does not require any qualification or any investments. Besides generating income, the individual gets to build social contacts and relationships as well which is seen as an added benefit.

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