

Employing Social Media In Public Relations For Marketing For Small Projects

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Abstract:

In the present era, social media has become a mass weapon for Public Relations marketing in the competitive business world. There is a lack of investment towards social media from Small Projects organizations. Those organizations which have not adopted social media have gone outdated. There are ways through which these challenges can be overcome. This paper paints the picture of the challenges and offers solutions. Thereby, Small Projects organizations will also be able to make use of the opportunity to utilize social media.

Keywords: Social Media , Public Relations of Small Projects, Social Media Trend, Impact of social media, Social Media Investment.

I. Introduction

“A small-scale business is a business set up in which the financial commitment towards infrastructure such as building & equipment, whether made as an owner or on rental or purchase basis, does not surpass DHR 1 Dirham.” – The business Portal of UAE “. The role of social media has increased in the present-day small projects organizations. Since these organizations have expanded due to globalization, they connect via the internet with their customers (Shabbir et al., 2016). The internet is a robust platform for these organizations, because they help create brand awareness and sales. Even though small organizations own websites, they need social media in order to get a wider customer reach. The cost of using social media is comparatively cheaper and effective when compared to other forms of mass media communication (Schein et al., 2011). A large portion of advertisements of these small business organizations take place through the social media. These advertisements showcase the following aspect of product or service- descriptions, usage, quality, and color. The engagement and the likeness of the customer can be measured. This helps small projects organizations to decide if their products or services are attractive or not.

The following are the differences between small and large projects organisations when it comes to utilisation of social media. The large projects organisations are armed with- budget, time, tools and analytics. A larger budget allows them to own resources. The dedicated social media staff includes- social media manager, community manager, graphic designer and face book developer. These

employees play a vital role in large companies. On the other hand, small projects organisations do not have sufficient budget to appoint any dedicated staff. The person who is in charge of social media executes several other functions apart from social media marketing. With regard to time, large business organisations have more staff members. The work will be divided. This helps the company to save time and finish the work within a fixed time period. On the other hand, in small projects organisations it has limited staff members and the work is looked after by only one person which consumes more time. When it comes to analytics, in large projects organisations, they completely depend on middlemen services such as managers, graphic designers and community managers but small projects organizations rarely use the social media for marketing services to the customers. In large firms there is maintenance of special analytics department where a research on the product quality, design and packing will be done depending on the customer taste. So analytics wing plays an important role whereas in small projects the product quality, packing and designing will be done by owner (sole proprietor) therefore there is no scope for having an analytics wing in small projects organizations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Benea (2014) analyzed that social media creates an association with the customer and also intensifies sales. In Europe, social media was used by customers to book hotels. The reviews and ratings provided in the social media platforms helped prospective customers to select the right hotel. Organizations must have a clear goal before entering the social media arena. A mere periodical communication is not going to help. The organizations must be responsive to the comments and ready to engage customers (Adegbuyet et al., 2015)

The marketing aspects of small business organizations are so intertwined with social media. Future prospective customers are presently found more through the social media. Hence, they must have a social media strategy in place. Small business organizations need to facilitate online discussions on its products and services. These interactions can produce criticisms. It's up to the firms to manage these criticisms and thereby create

a positive brand image (Abuhashesh, 2014) Devereux et al. (2019) examined the characteristics of Tasmania's social media posts. This paper demonstrated as to how small businesses used the social media marketing. In Tasmania, Facebook posts were playing a significantly higher level of engagement compared to Instagram and Twitter. He et al. (2014) described the about the usage of social media by small pizzerias in the United States. They revealed that creatively engaging customers with social media brought forth increases sales. Sanders et al. (2014) examined the connection between the social networks of rural small businesses and their strategies for market diversification in the context of the Internet. Scottish rural firms extended their social media network into urban areas. Such a move highly correlated with their sales.

Henninger (2017) found that small businesses had a limited understanding of integrating marketing communication. Since various channels of social media had been used, there had been a disconnect in reaching the audience. External factors also had an impact on the various channels of communication that led to the further disintegration of the sent messages. Hopkins (2012) discussed about Facebook and observed that whether it can be employed by small business. There was direct and indirect value derived out of it. Direct value in the sense of quantity due to increase in sales turnover

through new customers and indirect value in the form of word-of-mouth. Jones et al. (2014) looked at the challenges of small business in social media marketing. Maintaining social media presence required more knowledge and time. Finally, they needed to improve the use of social media both collaboratively and individually. Bocconcelli (2017) addressed the way in which social media increased small business visibility and helped to enter new markets, which otherwise would be very hard to reach. Social media also provided a variety of tools at different stages of the sales process.

According to Kujbus and Gati (2014), an Public Relations through social media strategy can increase business value. An effective social media strategy must have three components viz., community building, mindful adoption and absorption capacity. The cost of social media usage was set to decrease and the brand value was seen to be increasing in the long-run for organizations (Verma and Verma, 2017). Gulbahar (2015) compared the social media usage between local hotels and international hotels in Istanbul. It was found that the social media usage of local hotels were poor and less professional. The reason was due to lack of staff and the absence of a proper social media strategy. On the other hand, international hotels were found to invest heavily and thereby reaped more gains out of it.

III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- [1] To highlight the advantages and disadvantages of PR use of social media functions usage in small projects organizations.
- [2] To provide solutions that would solve PR use of social media functions problems in small projects organizations.

IV. FOCUS OF THE PAPER

The Impact of PR through Social Media in Small projects Organizations:

The usage of social media by the small organizations can provide a competitive advantage over the larger organizations. Such an advantage is due to the cheaper advertisement opportunity that social media offers. Moreover, the wider customer outreach in a social media gives the opportunity for these small firms to provide better products and services. It is a platform that helps to reflect on -the firm's operational issues as well as the product mix which was used. Thus, it is imperative for small business organizations to shift from traditional marketing strategies to the newer social media platforms.

Fig. 1: Social Media projects Model: impact on the marketing aspects of Small projects Organizations

Social Media Business Model: impact on the marketing aspects of Small projects

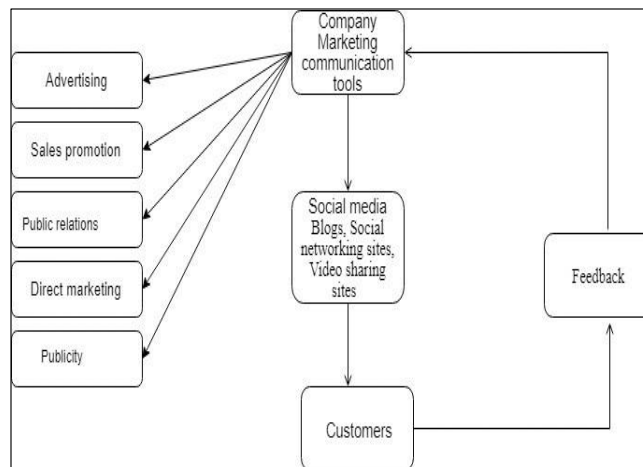
Organizations:

The Figure 1. shows that traditional marketing consisted of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and publicity. Social media has emerged as a modern marketing tool with different platforms like blogs, social networking sites and video sharing sites. Social media has provided a means for customers to conduct a two-way communication. The right interact for customers is not restricted by any means. This can produce a transparent marketing system, unlike the traditional marketing methods.

Social Media: A Platform for Marketing:

Social media usage has a sense of immediacy in the aspects of sending and replying to messages. Additionally, these messages are multidirectional. It is because they are further decoded by third party endorsers using blogs or tweets elsewhere. Hence, communication happens not only between the organization and the social media user, but even evades traditional boundaries. These third-party endorsers are capable to influence the prospective customers indirectly. Organizations are reaching out to such type of third-party endorsers in order to promote their brand (Gluck's man, 2017). Traditional marketing believes

companies which need to the customers. In known as push social media, 'pull into being. It's the opinions and ratings the company sales. ones who were seen more when taking a (Singh and Singh, investing heavily on



that it is the to market the product other words, it's strategy. But, due to strategy' has come customers review, that are shaping up Teenagers are the using social media purchase decision 2018). Companies are social media

technology because customers are the ones who are creating company's marketing decisions through their social media responses.

Innovative Social Media Integration for Public Relations Initiatives:

The absent of social media has created a direct inroad for the company into the lives of its customers. Since any communication carries with it an immediate public response, the company must be ready to take on any negative criticisms that can arise out of such responses.

Social Media- a Real Saviour of the Masses:

With regard to the communication devices, the usage of smartphone by the public has enabled communication mobility. This has led the customer to access the information on the go. There is no communication delay happening these days, when compared to the olden days of laptop and desktop usage.

Social Media: The Company's Own Data

Analyst:

Social media has even enabled companies to segment their customer on the basis of demographic factors. It has also given a space to check the purchase frequency of its customers, their likeness towards a particular product or service, the area from which more demands come from and the maximum amount of time spent by a particular customer. Such information is fed into the data mining software which gives small business organizations a precise information for managing its customer base efficiently. This poses a doubt whether companies are manipulating the social media. The answer is they are not. They are in fact adding in value to the customers who had keyed in the pertinent data fields.

V. DISCUSSION

Issues in Social Media Integration for Small projects Organizations: The common issue with regard to social media usage by Small projects Organizations is the absence of a social media policy. Such an absence causes errors in the strategies adopted. Though such policies, companies must be clear about their marketing goals. This makes it easier to bring the apt marketing communication to the customers. The policy must also state about the tool that they intend to use and the benefit that they intend to gain from it. Finally, the policy must align the organization's social media investment with the long-term goals of the firm.

Another issue is the dearth for social media investment by the small projects organizations. Since the scale of business operation is small, they can't afford to spend highly on the social media. Moreover, technology may become obsolete rendering these small business organizations helpless in front of tough competition from its bigger counterparts. Hiring freelancers in the initial phase or outsourcing the social media work to the experts is a cheaper way to get expertise and wider reach for small business organizations.

Small projects organizations have a hard time convincing the investors about social media usage. The metrics that are available require additional investment. In such a case, it is best to turn these social media sites into direct sales points. Thus, middle men can be avoided and customers can easily purchase goods or services via these social media sites. This would justify the need for having a social media presence.

Social media might seem easier since everyone is using it. But there is more than meets the eye. Especially for small business organizations, it is not only necessary to know how to create marketing content but there is a need to own analytical skills. Such a skill gap was agreed upon by 55% of the firms in the 2019 report of the Capital Research Institute. This is because marketing must be tailored as per the traffic flow into the site. The absence of analytical skills leads small business organizations to exit the social media space very soon.

Content creation is a major challenge for small business organizations. This is because these organizations are not intended to create content. But content is everything in the modern world. Content comes in various forms like- videos, photos, polls, contests, trivia and campaigns. Employees can be engaged to become the brand ambassadors if the firm. Another option is to hire interns to build up the content.

All business proprietors had been posting their advertisements in the social media for attracting customers. These firms lacked adequate regulatory compliances with regard to posting contents. Advertisement regulatory and conforming body had to be set up for creating sustainable environment. They also lacked adequate strategies. For example,

„The best times of post on social media was an effective marketing strategy“. The small projects organizations had limited resources and hence were forced to take a decision about which type of marketing platforms was best for their business (Devereux et al., 2019 and Ndiege, 2018). They needed knowledge and innovation on social media marketing. Social media was found to be significantly positive with both knowledge and innovation. Social media also facilitated the use of social communities by firms, helped gather relevant information and translated data into new information thereby stimulating the way for innovation (Papa, 2018). When information was made accessible via social media, new opportunities for interaction, monitoring and commodification were developed (Humphreys and Wilken, 2015).

Usage of social media in small projects will promote the brand and build customer relationship which would ultimately increase sales. Creative usage of social media will engage the customers and would help achieve competitive advantage (He et al., 2014). However, small businesses need to keep pace with their technology advancements since it created an electronic word-of-mouth advertisement (Henninger et al., 2107).

Small projects faced challenges in getting customers involved in their business. They needed active engagement, which meant that more time were spent with their customers. Most customers are accustomed to social media technologies, and hence post their comments on either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product or service. In response, small businesses must constantly monitor and respond to such posts in a timely manner and ensure that these comments do not cause harm to their reputation. The biggest advantage of small businesses is the cost-free feedback of customers compared to conventional media. The specific advantage is that when customers are

dissatisfied with products and services, business immediately can raise customer awareness, improve customer relationships and increase sales and business reputation (Jones et al., 2014).

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concluded by noting that customers are virtually present in the social media. Unless small projects organizations reach out to them via social media, there are chances to lose them. It's a tool that can be used to study the consumer in an effective manner. When large organizations spend more for social media presence, small projects organizations can navigate the challenges by having a proper social media strategy, skills and manpower in place.

VII. REFERENCES

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