



POWER OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN BUILDING BRANDS: A REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The brand management landscape has changed due to the digital media platforms which provide real-time interaction and high dynamism. Furthermore, the emergence of social media has left a profound impact on the procedure adopted by companies to maintain a relationship with the customers. However, the industries have not been able to explore the field of social media marketing to its full potential and their understanding of digital marketing strategies for the purpose of branding has been limited. It is crucial to gain a deep understanding of the transformation in the field of marketing as it exercises direct influence on the sustainability of the brand. However, the literature in the field of social media advertising and impact on the brand management is still in the nascent stage. Therefore, present study will aim at reviewing all the digital platforms, with special focus on the social media advertisement which are utilised for brand advertisement. The success of the social media advertisement will be measured by reviewing the behaviour of millennials towards the digital media and brands. The results will extend to the current knowledge in the field pertaining to the digital advertising tools, social media advertisement, and brand management. Moreover, the study will provide insight to the brand managers regarding the power of digital marketing and social media advertisement.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Building brands, Advertisement, Social Media and Millennials

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1. INTRODUCTION

The internet has transformed the way customers engage with the brands they use, along with the traditional marketing techniques in the economy. The existing ways of engaging with brands have become obsolete and are not sustainable anymore as today's consumer tries to establish a relationship and connection with the brand. Consumers look for a promise from the brand in terms of values offered. The touch-points have changed from investing lion's share with the aim to increase brand awareness and increase sales to places where actually invest their time and funds, that is, digital space (Edelman, 2010). Brands are intangible assets of the firm and firms aim at constructing a strong brand name which can create strong consumer's memory by providing clarity in the information (Gensler et al., 2013). Digital marketing has replaced traditional marketing strategies, and has been widely adopted by firms to promote their brand and reach the wider consumers. Digital marketing includes tools which do not require internet facility and therefore, extend beyond social media marketing. It incorporates mobile marketing, display advertisement, social media, search engine and other forms of digital marketing. With digital media, convenience is provided to consumers to gain access to information from any place and at any time. The reliability and validity of brands' claims is cross-checked from the media, associations, experts and peers. Digital marketing deploys a range of promotional activities which are transferred with the help of digital media. Companies are channelizing their efforts to bring brand and consumer closer (Yasmin, Tasneem & Fatema, 2015).

Digital media landscape has been redefined and reconfigured with the emergence of social media and transformed the way information is disseminated as it has helped in incorporation of innovation and creativity in information and increased sharing within the social network (Lipsman et al., 2012). Social media has achieved popularity in recent years, and almost half of the internet users are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram users are active on these platforms on a daily basis. Currently, Facebook is the most used social media platform with around 750 million users, who invest a significant amount of daily time on Facebook. Before Facebook, Google was the most visited site on the Web. The popularity of social media encouraged firms to shift towards social media and adopt novel strategies in order to reach the masses. At present, more than 7 million sites have integrated themselves with social media as a branding strategy (Trattner & Kappe, 2013). Brands are interested in engaging with the followers and modulating their experience and voice them to gain greater impact from marketing. As the field of social media advertisement unfolds itself, new potentials are discovered and the challenge is to exploit them to their full potential. Co-founder of Intuit, Scott Cook remarked that Brand is not dependent upon what company communicates to its consumers but is dependent upon what consumers talk among themselves. Company has only one power which is controlling the information (Lipsman et al., 2012).

Despite an increase in the scholarly attention towards social media and brand integration in a range of industries, studies were not efficient in presenting an understanding of different digital marketing tools on the brand management, even in the dynamic environment conditions. Therefore, present study aims at gaining understanding of digital tools, especially social media advertisement to create value from the brand. Since, the millennials exert tremendous pressure in the market movement (Newman, 2015), the study will examine the impact of social media in the behaviour of millennials and millennial changing perception towards brands with the introduction of social media advertisement. The study will be efficient in identifying

characteristics of social media advertisement and establishing a link with the essence of brand management.

2. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Digital marketing has transformed the way brands are marketed and become accessible to more eyes. The present review paper will aim at identifying the reason which attracts brands to utilize digital platforms to communicate with a wider audience and the role played by the social media platforms in advertising brands. The impact of the brand advertisement through social media platforms will be examined by reviewing the behavioral change of millennials. To achieve the aim, the following objectives will be taken care of:

- To evaluate digital platforms utilized for advertising brands.
- To assess the power of social media advertising in brand communication.
- To examine the change in behavior of millennials towards brands after utilization of social media advertisement.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Digital platforms utilised for brand advertisement

Digital marketing tools are considered as the best way to interact with the customers and sustain the reliability of the organisation as it matches the pace of dynamic needs of customers (Wymbs, 2011). Digital marketing is an umbrella term which includes all the digital techniques which are efficient in acquisition, relationship building, brand promotion and retention of customers and in effect boost the sales. The advantages of the online marketing have not been limited to the small companies but is utilised by the brands like Louis Vitton, Amazon to name a few. These companies use online marketing platforms to communicate about the history of the brand, employees and their upcoming events. The major role is to convince customers to be a part of the journey by the medium of storytelling (Greenhill, 2011).

Blogs has become the important communication medium and used by big corporates for brand advertisement as this tool has ease of use, knowledge sharing component and identifies a community (Ho et al., 2015). A study by Vrana and Zafiroopoulos (2010) suggested that instant messaging, blogs, recommendations and online reviews has replaced word-of-mouth. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) indicated that blogs are useful in sharing experiences and adding trustworthiness and are therefore, considered as the most efficacious marketing intelligence technique.

Hartemo (2016) documented in the study that e-mail marketing is a tool which allows personalised communication and empowers consumers by converting consumers into active consumers. However, the study indicated that currently markets are not updated and does not exploit e-mail marketing to its full potential. "Beyond the Rack" is an e-commerce retail company which drives its 16.2% of the traffic from the e-mail marketing campaign as the content is resonating enough to attract consumer's attention.

Consumer and brand relationships are important to reinforce participation of communities and embark their presence. Mobile marketing focuses on relationship building as it reciprocates communication among the brand and consumer. Furthermore, it is not affected by the location and time barriers. It is also referred to as wireless advertisement. It incorporates "opt-in" services and SMS alerts. The study highlighted that SMS has a positive impact on the brand personality and brand involvement. People who received SMS alerts of "pret a porter" clothing, created a perspective towards the brand and enhanced their experience with the brand (Bouhleb et al., 2011).

In context of luxury brands and digital media platforms, Jain and Schultz (2016) conducted a study which concluded that to increase the sales of a luxury brand, it is necessary to understand the consumer's behaviour and it can be only achieved through digital platforms. Furthermore, consumers use digital media extensively with the sole purpose of comparison among the brands and evaluating the alternative brands available.

Search engine is used widely for information search and online shopping. The display results of the search engine are categorised into keyword ads and organic ads. Many businesses are integrating keywords search ads into their business model to reach targeted audiences (Ghose & Yang, 2009). Yoo (2014) concluded in the study that keyword search ads are effective tools in creating brand recognition and also assimilates the brand image.

Another digital marketing tool which has gained considerable attention is viral marketing, which is used by brands to circulate information by creating buzz, network marketing and leveraging the media. By exploiting social media channels, awareness about the brand or business can be leveraged along with an increase in the brand visibility (Raja, 2012).

With the expansion of the social media channels, the influencers community is able to communicate more and holds significant power over creation of brand perception. The study of Booth and Matic (2011) contemplated that the influencer community is effective in targeting traditional audiences and its integration with social media is a marketing strategy adopted by companies to optimise brand equity. The study also suggested that just the companies do not control their brand as it belongs to customers. However, the brand presentation can be controlled by the companies, so a presence over Facebook or twitter would not produce optimum results, however complete control over these platforms is required. Internet-based activities which have high influence over the brand perceptions are banner advertising, viral marketing, SEO, widget development to name a few. The success of these platforms is dependent upon the quality of relationship maintained between the consumer and brand.

E-commerce has influenced the brand equity and justifies profit margins. The internet has transformed the way information is assessed and consecutively influences the buying behaviour. Mohapatra (2012) pointed out that companies which deal in computers such as IBM, Apple and Dell will have upper hand in e-commerce in comparison to Tesco and Big Bazaar. The success of e-commerce sites is dependent upon the reputation of the company or any creative strategy adopted. Moreover, the success of a brand is affected by the degree of the consumer's involvement, which highlights the success of Amazon. Com. Brand names like Hyundai and Maruti Suzuki have created a domain name and offer discounts if the purchase is made from online sites, with the aim to leverage brand equity.

3.2. Social media advertisement to communicate brand

Last decade, remarkable appearances had been made by the Web 2.0, especially in the field of social networks. The social network has a large number of users which attracted many industries to use it as a marketing tool. The benefits are extended in terms of the free services, and the revenue generation is dependent upon the content and the advertisement. Web 2.0 fulfills the purpose of information exchange between the website and the user and social platforms are attracting attention from many scholars as it defines the profile of an individual, social information about the consumer is available and information is useful in understanding their behaviour. Platforms are used for creation and dissemination of information to a larger consumer base. Moreover, social media creates numerous opportunities for brand promotion and transforming the consumer's perspective towards a particular brand (Mata & Quesada, 2014).

Chua and Parackal (2009) suggested in the study that blogs are majorly used for understanding the philosophy of the leaders, however in this era of cut-throat competition,

Facebook, twitter and Instagram have become crucial instruments of branding. Twitter and Facebook have helped brands in maintaining a robust connection with consumers and fosters a sense of belongingness among them. They fulfil the human desire of engagement, and associating themselves with the brand they are using presently (Yan, 2011).

Lipsman et al. (2012) investigated the power of social advertisement on branding and contemplated that social media can help in performing various functions from brand perspective such as content sharing, connections re-sharing the content and “sponsored stories”, which is an advertisement unit of Facebook (FB). The branded content is extensively consumed in the new feed’s category of FB. It majorly covers two type of audience, which is fans and connections of the fans. FB platform gives opportunity to brands to realise the benefits from untapped consumer segments.

Social media has altered the marketing in the marketplace, and especially the social network such as groups of users and blogs. Hutton & Fosdick (2011) projected in the study that brand’s official websites were losing their audience in 2009 due to emergence of social media marketing, which is seen as a pervasive marketing technique. Social media has improved the overall capability of a brand in context of sharing images and content. Blogs have taken special place and microblogging evolved as a fuel which flourishes the phenomenon of media meshing. Media meshing stands for the event, when the consumer utilises two platforms to generate required information. It helps in the enhancement of overall media experience. Due to extensive opportunities presented by the social media advertisement, brands were forced to join the wave. Brand communities are established by the brands and its users, which expresses the expression and needs of end consumers. The brands are advocated by the consumers and likely to increase the sales ultimately.

Brand narration has gained significant importance in the current market to create clear consumer memory by compelling stories or content. Brand narration helps in building awareness, empathy, brand-consumer relationship, recall and specific meaning to a brand. Illustration of firms which generated brand advertisement through brand story campaigns such as the ‘Real Beauty’ campaign by Dove and the website of Ben & Jerry’s stresses on the company’s origin (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). The study by Gensler et al. (2013) documented that control of the brand does not reside within the company, but within the hands of consumers. In this paradigm, it is necessary for the brands to protect their reputation and make the brand in line with the consumers expectations. Study had suggested three ways through which brands can be managed, firstly, listening to the customers, optimum understanding of online culture and lastly, creation of artefacts, icons and social rituals, which would let consumers play with the brand name.

Twitter is seen as a prominent tool which helps in brand awareness and affects the brand value (SyncForce, 2013). Twitter is also described as a micro-blogging platform and has over 300 million users (Weinberg, 2009). The customer engagement is ensured by the medium of comments, retweet and favourite function. Now-a-days it is also used to poll the opinions of users. Across all the industries, Twitter has taken the place of a valuable marketing tool (Hambrick et al., 2010 and Pegoraro, 2010). Popular brands like Apple and Starbucks have pages on Twitter with 7 million followers approximately.

Parganas et al. (2015) investigated the sports brand management through twitter. Athletes and clubs use Twitter with the aim to disseminate news and communicate with the fans. Professional teams of North America use Twitter to interact with their passionate fans which look for insider information. Sports brands make their place on twitter by the medium of winning teams and starting players. These players or teams endorse the brand, and it is used for product related advertisement. Moreover, team logos are promoted which is a non-product related item and ensures that teams get appropriate funding. The study revealed that product-

related tweets were higher in off season. Conclusion indicated that Twitter has efficiency for promotion of all types of brand attributes, and maintain communication with the fans in the context of the sports product category. Real-time facility is provided by twitter and helps companies and brands to protect their brand image.

Trattner and Kappe (2013) presented a case study in which the capabilities of Facebook marketing through exploiting a web-based medium called VirWOX. The ROI from the Google AdWords had reduced significantly over the few years, due to which scholars had conducted a collaboration between FB and VirWOX for undertaking -media advertisement. The results implied that the effectiveness of FB lies in the total friends, ads during streaming and activity level. If a brand is promoted through these users, then the brand success can be ensured. A study in the similar field indicated that adoption of instant messenger networks would be an efficient approach to advertise a product. The information spread about the product is leveraged with the presence of an influence in the network and peer-pressure.

3.3. Social media advertisement's impact on Millenials

In recent years, the influence of the millennial generation has grown tremendously which has urged the marketers to develop productive and unique methods and techniques in order to approach this demographic category (Newman, 2015).

Brown (2016) conducted a study to analyze the extent to which the brands can productively approach the millennials using conventional marketing techniques and further traverse the demand for digital marketing in the swiftly altering advertisement industry. For this purpose, a critical review of literature and interviews with the millennial customers and industry experts took place. The results of the study revealed that millennials as compared to other generations have a short span of attention. They are found to be tech-savvy and fickle-minded and thus seek answers to all of their questions at the click of a button. This has generated a need for modification of the advertisement practices. In order to target the millennials, the advertising must be intended to a unique objective and must provide the right information at the right time and place to the consumers.

The opinions regarding advertisement have changed immensely for the millennial females. This has forced various brands to take up innovative and new techniques of advertisement (Yusuf & Busalim, 2018). Baker (2018) tried to examine the impact of Social Media Advertisements in the Beauty Industry from the perspective of Irish women. The opinions of the target population were gathered regarding stealth marketing, photo editing and placement of potential products. An inductive and interpretivist approach was adopted. From the findings, it was observed that to ascertain relatability, brands should portray the lives of the influencers within the advertisements similar to that of the Millennial customers. Moreover, this practice of advertisement was acknowledged by the female millennials. Although most of the respondents were unsatisfied with the editing of the images published.

An enormous increase in information and communication technologies and Internet has been noticed in the previous ten years that have led to a prodigious usage and spread of social media sites (El-Haddadeh, Weerakkody, & Peng, 2012). This has also opened new avenues for marketers who have introduced more cost-effective advertising strategies that involve the use of blogs, social networking sites, websites advertisements, email marketing and more (Saxena & Khanna, 2013). Arora and Agarwal (2019) developed an extensive model of advertising that explored the influence of several factors like informativeness, entertainment, credibility, irritation, personalization and incentives on social media advertising value (SMAV) and additionally comprehend the influence of SMAV on the perceptions and attitudes of millennials concerning social media advertising (ATSMA). A deductive approach was adopted and quantitative data was collected through questionnaire surveys circulated to the users of Social

Media in India. This developed model was then subjected to exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to check its validity. Furthermore, SEM modeling was conducted to examine the relationships between different factors. The results revealed that there existed an interrelation between SMAV and the factors identified. Moreover, a positive correlation also existed between AT SMA and SMAV.

Jambulingam, et al., (2019) examined the factors that govern the involvement of 'Like Clicks' within the Facebook advertisements. Additionally, the researchers tried to understand the link between the product purchasing decision and the 'like clicks' among millennials. A quantitative study was undertaken and data was collected from 250 millennials using a survey questionnaire. From the results of the study, it was clear that information about economic value and quality of the product affected the 'Like clicks' on Facebook advertisements. In addition, the comments and the like clicks pertinent to a product to a great extent impacted the product buying decision among millennials.

Online communication and the interpersonal association has become a significant characteristic of social media, particularly among the individuals belonging to the millennial generation. According to Barenblatt (2015), although the continent of Africa is not on par with other countries concerning internet facilities, advancement in mobile technology has motivated the tremendous use of social media. Rodney and Wakeham (2016) investigated the attitudes of millennials in relation to social media advertisements. Surveys were conducted for this purpose to examine the impact of marketing communications using social media, especially Mxit and Facebook on the attitudes of South African millennials. From the results, it was confirmed that social media advertisements had a notable impact on the millennials. Moreover, various demographics and features of online usage affected this unique Information and Communication Technology conduit.

Pandey, Sahu, and Dash (2018) in their research tried to study the influence of Social Media Marketing on the intention of purchasing products and services among millennials. From the critical review of previous literature, three constructs viz electronic peer communication, electronic Word of Mouth and the attitudes toward social media advertising were recognized. All the variables identified were found to have a remarkable impact on millennial's purchase intention.

3.4. Millennial buying behaviours towards brand

The behavior of a customer is significant for all Customer Relationship Programs. The generation of Millennials is often considered as social, open-minded, energetic, innovative, confident, ambitious, smart and motivated. Shopping is recognized as the core characteristic of this generation, thus it is important to discern their shopping attitudes and motives and find whether these patterns of shopping are distinct from the other generations (Ordun, 2015).

Vaara and Zahiraldinni (2019) comprehended how online communication influences the attitudes of the millennials towards brands. The main objectives of the study were to find the ways in which one can describe the factors that affect the eWOM of millennials and the way in which eWOM affects the brand attitudes of millennials. Interviews were conducted with the millennials and the data was analyzed using the method of a case study. The findings revealed that eWOM played a critical role in influencing or developing attitudes of the millennials towards brands. Other than that, exposure to a digital advertisement, need of belonging and good content generated by the firm affect the buying decision drastically. Strategies of social interaction and personalization also lead to the development of positive eWOM that finally promotes brand loyalty.

Stewart and Carey (2020) investigated the relationship between luxury brands of perfume and Millennial consumers. Various aspects like Consumer Brand Relationship (CBR), brand

loyalty connections and symbolism of luxury brands were explored. The study concluded that lifestyle tribes including hedonic and emotional factors proved to be the key elements that influence the buying behavior of luxury perfume brands in millennial customers.

According to Keller (2013), brand equity can be considered as one of the most significant and popular concepts in the domain of marketing. Brand equity assists the consumers in distinguishing their desired brand from all the other brands. In this context, Muigai (2017) conducted research to test the effect of brand equity on millennials' buying behavior in the smartphone industry. From the results, it was observed that brand awareness enhanced the likelihood of millennial's brand choice. Additionally, in the case of millennials, the conventional belief that perceived quality may persuade consumers to buy one brand over the other was dismissed. It was also found that prior experience and purchase quality also influenced brand loyalty among customers.

Marketers have formulated yet another innovative technique to persuade millennial consumers to purchase a brand using celebrity endorsements. Various studies have revealed that a familiar celebrity-endorsed product/ brand has a positive impact on the millennial audience whereas an unfamiliar celebrity endorsement indicates a little intent to buy a product (McCormick, 2016).

Turley, (2014) examined the influence of social media brand interactions on the buying decision of Gen Y. This was done using a questionnaire survey with the millennials. Findings of the research revealed that social media brand engagement was popular among this generation. This interaction with the brands included using social media for communication of brand perception, brand information, and recommendation of brands to friends. Generation Y was crucially influenced by this engagement to buy the brands. Moreover, the key factor was positive recommendations from peers.

Another important aspect of marketing that is known to affect the buying decision of individuals is the concept of product placement. A similar study was taken up by Kit and P'ng (2014) to comprehend the effectiveness of product placement in the buying behavior of millennials. It was observed that beliefs regarding product placement of an individual can to a great extent impact his/her attitude. Moreover, a notable association was found between the subjective and normative norms. Both the subjective norms and attitudes directly influence the buying intention. This buying intention tends to affect the consumer behaviors of the millennials.

Arminen (2017) examined the factors that motivate the millennial generation or the generation of young consumers to purchase luxury brands. It was indicated that while developing attitudes regarding the luxury brands, ideal self-congruity affected the millennial consumers rather than the actual self-congruity. This effect is increased further when a customer points significance on status value and materialistic values.

It is important for marketers to comprehend the characteristics of the millennial generation while developing the guidelines of a brand. Capelo (2014) investigated the characteristics that affect the brand purchasing behaviors of the Portuguese millennials. A critical literature review regarding brand awareness and millennials assisted in identifying the core aspects that marketers should consider while targeting millennials. These were summarized as 3 Cs namely, Cause-related marketing, engagement of customers and content and creativity. From the results, it was validated that millennials pay more attention to the recommendations and the opinions of other buyers while making a purchase decision. Additionally, millennials were more encouraged to be related to a brand that was associated with a social cause. The aspects such as price, personalization, online content and process of co-creation were found to have an impact on the non-millennials.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

With the advent of the internet, corporates and individuals are experimenting to utilise it to further customer loyalty and sales. However, companies faced failure because consumers use these platforms as per their convenience and alter the buying decision accordingly. Now, companies are carefully examining the pattern of consumers and evolving their digital strategies accordingly. Louis Vitton and Amazon are few examples which have achieved success with the utilisation of online marketing. These brands are able to engage their customers and enhance their experience by sharing information and in effect, increasing trustworthiness. Personalised communication and empowerment is extended to the consumers by indulging in e-mail marketing. Mobile marketing has also proved efficient in reciprocating communication between consumer and brand by the medium of SMS. Digital marketing strategies as it helps in understanding the consumer's behaviour and modulate the product accordingly. To extract organic customers, keyword search ads have also shown immense potential, as they aid in the creation of brand recognition and assimilating brand image. Influencer community on digital platforms has power to create brand perception and maintain it. Profit margins and brand equity are significantly influenced by the e-commerce platforms, and brand names like Apple, IBM, Dell, Hyundai and Maruti Suzuki are exploiting these platforms to increase their sales. With the appearance of social media, the market has transformed tremendously and created enormous opportunities such as brand promotion, customer management, protecting brand reputation and benefits from network marketing. The previous literature suggests that brands are not controlled by the companies but by the consumers and their perception. Companies can only manage the information transmitted through various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Media meshing and Blogs.

With the tremendous growth of the millennials, big companies are focusing on the strategies which are targeted towards them. The analysis of the previous literature indicates that a positive relationship persists between the millennials buying and decision-making behaviour and the social media advertisement. Social media played a crucial role in entertaining, informing, personalisation incentives and irritation among the millennials of India. Product buying decision was seen positively associated with the FB advertisement. The communication function if social media advertisement was observed to be the most crucial factor which impacted millennials decision making. The popular marketing strategies to endorse brands among the millennials were e-WOM, celebrity endorsement, brand engagement, content, creativity and cause-related marketing leveraged the brand loyalty among Millennials. However, there are other factors also which influenced the behaviour of millennials such as experience with the brand, perception, peer recommendation, product placement, status values, to name a few.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at reviewing the reasons which attract brands to utilise digital marketing, especially social media advertisement. The effectiveness of new advertisement techniques was measured by evaluating change in the behaviour of millennials. With the introduction of social media, challenges have been presented to firms to manage their brands. The brands are shifting towards maintaining communication with the users and increasing the interaction within the network by the medium of storytelling as study indicated that these factors influence the brand image. Brands are not controlled by the firm but the branding lies in the hand of its consumers, which adds further complication and firms aim at protecting its reputation. Email marketing, mobile marketing, bogging, keyword search advertisement, e-commerce platforms, influencer marketing and social media advertisement are few digital tools utilised by organisations. Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and media-meshing are the platforms

exploited by firms to deliver information and boost customer engagement. The literature projected that social media advertisement is positively related to the millennial behaviour as it ensures personalisation of content, empowerment, engagement, entertainment, expert opinion, and informative content about the brand. Moreover, there are several other behavioural factors which are not incorporated in the present study such as values, norms, experience, peer recommendation and status. Therefore, this limitation can be addressed in the future studies.

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