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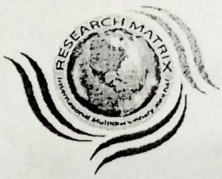
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**EMERGING SCENARIO OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES****DR. ASHOK GAUR**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, B.J. VANIJYA MAHAVIDYALAYA (BJVM) VALLABH VIDYANAGAR

**SUBJECT:****ABSTRACT**

This is the age of Information Technology and Communication. Marketing strategies and policies are constantly changing in this digital and social global scenario. In order to survive in this competitive world now business enterprises are using social marketing strategies to acquire, maintain and satisfy customers.

Use of social media has significantly changed traditional one-way, marketing-controlled communications. Customers are now using social networking sites, blogs and forums to obtain extensive brand and product information. This has forced business enterprises to adopt changes by using social media marketing strategies to increase sales, increase market share and satisfy consumer. This paper is about emerging scenario in social media marketing strategies adopted by business enterprises. It also highlights various aspects related to social media influence on buying behavior of consumer and their purchasing decision process.

**Keyword:** Marketing strategies, communication strategies, social media, community, online marketing

**INTRODUCTION**

According to the World Bank and the International Communications Union, there are nowadays more than 3,822,260 billion internet users in the world (Worldometers, January 13 2018 at 10:33: PM). There are now 3.74 billion Internet users in the world as at March 2017. This is compared to 3.26 billion Internet users in 2016. The internet influenced sales to the tune of \$2.1 trillion in 2016. Over 2 million blog posts are published on the Internet every day. Over 5.5 billion Google searches are made every day. As at August 2017, there are 1.24 billion websites in the world. Google is the world's most visited website, followed by Youtube and Facebook. Chinese search engine Baidu is the world's fourth most visited website. (<https://hostingfacts.com/internet-facts-stats-2016/>)

**Internet Users by Country (2016)**

S.N O	Country	Internet Users (2016)	Penetration (% of Pop)	Population (2016)	Non-Users (internet less)	Users 1 Year Change (%)	Internet Users 1 Year Change	Population 1 Y Change
1	China	721,434,547	52.2 %	1,382,323,332	660,888,785	2.2 %	15,520,515	0.46 %
2	India	462,124,989	34.8 %	1,326,801,576	864,676,587	30.5 %	108,010,242	1.2 %

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S.N O	Countr y	Internet Users (2016)	Penetratio n (% of Pop)	Population (2016)	Non-Users (internet less)	Users 1 Year Chang e (%)	Internet Users 1 Year Change	Populatio n 1 Y Change
3	<u>U.S.</u>	286,942,362	88.5 %	324,118,787	37,176,425	1.1 %	3,229,955	0.73 %

(<http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country>)

This data furnished by Internet World Stats show us how important internet has become in our everyday life.

Internet is a medium to interact between each professionally or personally removing the geographical and physical boundaries. It is the open gate of an incredibly huge amount of information and entertainments and enables people to share their beliefs, opinions, passions, etc. People are able to directly communicate with companies or other people and to negotiate according to their needs and desires. In parallel, companies are able to reach a greater market and to be more visible about their products and services. This is a new feed for creating value and to get well-known from people, internationally. Clearly, Internet has affected the businesses marketing strategies, enabling big companies as smaller ones to provide information on a global scale. Now it possible for small companies to reach targeted markets at a minimized cost and are able to compete with bigger companies.

Social media networking appeared few years ago, after businesses started creating online web pages as a "double-page advertising spread", and since then, it has considerably gained importance as it is bringing many benefits to businesses. It is a shift in the way businesses do marketing as the consumers changed the way they engage with brands, driving some of the traditional marketing strategies and structures obsolete (anonymous, 2012).

## Social Media Statistics 2017

- There are 2.79 billion active social media users in the world. This is an increase of 21 percent from 2016.
- Facebook now has over 2.01 billion monthly active users.
- Instagram has 700 million monthly active users.
- Twitter has 328 million monthly active users.
- LinkedIn has 112.5 million monthly active users.
- 28 percent of adult internet users use Instagram.
- Over 85 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram daily.
- Visual content is 40 times more likely to be shared on social media than any other type of content.
- Facebook status updates with images get 2.3 times more engagement than Facebook status updates without images.
- People are 80 percent more likely to read content that has colored visuals.
- Infographics are 3 times more likely to be liked and shared compared to any other type of content on social media.
- 4 out of every 10 mobile user uses Facebook messenger.
- Mobile is responsible for 87 percent of Facebook's ad revenue.
- Social media influences the shopping activities of 23 percent of online shoppers.

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- 30 percent of online shoppers are willing to purchase a product on social media sites.
- Social media ad spend is expected to overtake newspaper ad spend by 2019.

(<https://hostingfacts.com/internet-facts-stats-2016/>)

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

During a long time, the mass communications techniques such as advertising, sales promotion, publicity and sponsorship, were favored by marketers. In this era of digitalization marketing strategies are changing and new technologies are used for promotional element. Direct communications techniques such as direct mail, telemarketing, door-to-door leafleting and digital marketing have become more popular than traditional one. New technology-based means as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and digital marketing has become marketing strategies of business enterprises. Digital marketing has completely changed marketing communications. There are several types of digital marketing. Among them, internet marketing (website ad, online studies...), search advertising (Search Engine Optimization), email marketing (direct mail), viral marketing (word of mouth on internet), mobile marketing (communication on mobile devices through apps and text messages that contain ads) and social media marketing. This is among the fastest growing components of the internet. Social media are used to communicate and to engage customers. It is becoming an exponentially popular way to advertise as it gives good opportunities for targeting an audience. Social media marketing is, once again, co-created; consumers are able to talk about their experiences, to comment brands, to share videos and so on. Consumers kind of impose their terms, making the brand promotion trickier for companies as they have to give up the monologue and adopt the dialogue in terms of advertising. As John Fahy and David Jobber explain it in their book (2012), companies must stay up to date and go find new generation of customers on the media they use, hence, the growing importance of social media marketing. The two authors defined three components of social media marketing which are social networks, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+; image sharing websites such as Flickr; blogs and microblogs like Twitter (p.265-267).

Consumers' behavior has been changing in the past years especially because of socio-cultural conditions moves involving that people have less time for themselves. The value of time has become really important in a consumer life and this can be explained by the fact that jobs demand more hours of work and also that there are more and more women are working. These conditions lead people to reduce the time spent in some activities such as shopping and communication to spend more of this time saved on activities like leisure. Hence, the use of internet has incredibly changed the way people purchase and communicate, favoring fast and efficient communication and access to a broad range of quality information. In consequence to that, many aspects in marketing strategies have evaluated to adapt the consequent change in consumers' buying behavior (S. Zappalà and C. Gray, 2006b).

In their book, Impact of e-commerce on consumers and small firms (2006), S. Zappalà and C. Gray illustrate some differences between the traditional marketing strategies and the new, internet marketing strategies, through six different areas.

1. **Information:** Now an incredible amount of information and better quality of information from businesses are available on internet allowing the consumers to get

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many details on products, services, companies' events, special offers and so on. This is one difference with the traditional marketing way, delivering really few information details and being less approachable from consumers. The new thing with the internet marketing is that the information not only comes from companies but also from partners called "infomediaries", which are people that compare products and services and who rate companies, as well as from customers. Finally, internet offers an important potential of data collection for companies which allows them to target their audience more easily and to adapt their offers to not masses anymore but individuals.

2. **Customer relationship:** in traditional marketing there was pretty much no relationship between the Consumers and the companies, or when there was one, it was not direct but it was made through intermediaries. Nowadays, the marketing strategies require that companies have a one-to-one and interactive relationship with the customers and directly engage and talk to them. Another thing is that businesses are able to create partnerships more easily in order to deliver specific offers to the customers. What has risen with the internet is the importance of virtual communities, demonstrating a critical potential for companies to get leads. People, through this, exchange information on the products and the services, and they also share their interests with other members, enabling businesses to, once again, target their audience in an easier way.

3. **Target market:** The way businesses target, although internet is a very helpful tool for them to reach more consumers, is more complex than in the traditional marketing. The targeting process is done on the basis of behavioral patterns such as websites search and transactions made, whereas in traditional marketing, businesses target according to demographical factors and also according to the product rather than the consumer.

4. **Communication:** The biggest change is that businesses using internet marketing strategies implement a personalized and interactive communication whereas the traditional marketing strategies require mass communication and push advertisement. The "rules of the game" are not the same for businesses as the consumers are the ones who decide what to do with the load of information available to them; they are the ones to decide to enter a website and to receive more detailed information about specific products and services. Now consumers control the information they want from businesses and companies have to adapt to their buying behavior by having more interactive advertisement.

5. **Accessibility:** before the development of internet, companies were facing some barriers. Indeed, they were geographically restricted, in terms of selling, dealing hours and delivery, to their locations. Now, internet marketing strategies enable the access to a website 24/24 on a global scale. Imagining a website is a virtual shop window, consumers can have a look to a business's products and services whenever they want and wherever they want. Delivery is not much of a problem anymore as it can be arranged by the customer.

6. **Consumer:** The consumer and its purchasing decision process has changed. In traditional marketing strategies, the consumer was characterized as someone passive, that we can see like driven by the advertisements in its decision making. Nowadays, thanks to the internet and all the possibilities it offers, the consumer has become active, well informed but also more demanding as well as more complaining, as internet clearly offers more freedom of expression. Businesses enterprises have to adapt to the new offers more freedom of expression. Businesses enterprises have to adapt to the new communication tools that are "offered" to them. Important opportunities can be taken by customizing the communication, by delivering new types of content, by gathering and



making good use of data collected about customers through databases and by adapting to the increasing power of internet users

## SOCIAL MEDIUMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

In the era of information technology business model are changing. The Internet has forced the newspapers and magazines to rethink their business models. There is direct affect of social media on business model. Traditional business models are no longer suitable to current marketing situation.. Social media is revolutionizing the businesses' recruiting process as well. Traditional recruiting mediums such as job boards, job fairs and job search firms still exist but their influence is decreasing in consequence of this shift in the recruiting process. Social media tools like LinkedIn or Craigslist are a good way to get more direct and useful connections between the employers and job seekers. Social media marketing strategies can be implemented with help of following through several different social mediums.

<b>Facebook</b>	Social network - Young people oriented - sharing of random content: images, videos, opinions, articles
<b>LinkedIn</b>	Social network - Business oriented - sharing of specialized and professional content: resume, professional tips, job offers.
<b>Tumblr</b>	Social network/blog - People and business oriented - sharing of random content: photos, videos, quotes, music.
<b>Twitter</b>	Micro blog- People and business oriented- sharing of short content: text, articles, links.
<b>YouTube</b>	Video sharing website - People oriented - sharing of random video content: music, ads, comedy, movies trailers, any kind of tips...
<b>Flickr</b>	Image sharing website - People oriented - Sharing of random content: photos about any kind of topic.
<b>StumbleUpon</b>	Bookmarking website- People oriented - sharing of random content: websites according to interests.
<b>Pinterest</b>	Bookmarking website - People and business oriented - Sharing of random content : websites, photos and videos.

1. **Facebook** It was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Since December 2012, it counts more than 1 billion monthly active users and an average of 618 million daily active users. Basically, the role of Facebook is to get people connected and to make them open to others, to share their interests and to express themselves about anything. (Facebook,2013) K.S. Coulter and A. Roggeveen (2012a) illustrate another facet of Facebook that can be really beneficial to businesses: the perceived credibility. You become "member" of a Facebook page by liking the page. The more members a brand page gets, the more "likes" it gets too. The fact that a brand page has a big amount of "likes" can influence other users to join and become a members or fans as well. This is a way to assess how many people follow your brand, contrarily to Twitter where you can follow superstars, companies, agencies, politicians and so on, but these people are able not to follow you in return and it is often the case. On Facebook, the "likes" system makes it more appropriate to evaluate your product network. Hence, the number of members of a page can influence other users to think there is information of value for them and a product or service of quality.



2. **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn was founded in 2002 by the Reid Hoffman, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly, Jean-Luc Vaillant and Allen Blue and the site was launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2003. It is the largest professional network in the world and is counting more than 200 million members over 200 countries since December 31 2012. LinkedIn counts among its members, executives from all the 2012 Fortune 500 companies and more than 2.7 million companies have a LinkedIn company page. Also, the website is composed of more than 1.5 million groups (LinkedIn, 2013a). LinkedIn offers very useful tools for companies in order to "hire market and sell". Indeed, LinkedIn enables companies to reach a big bunch of professionals who can be potential future partners, employees or clients and it gives the opportunity to engage them and to share valuable content, actions that can lead to actions offline. Some LinkedIn features are used by the users to reach their goal, such as the Talent Solutions, making the recruiting process way easier for businesses; the Marketing Solutions, consisting in delivering valuable content to the most relevant prospects for a business; the Premium Subscription, providing effective tools to any kind of user to reach and manage people corresponding to their needs, the best and easiest way possible (LinkedIn, 2013b).
3. **Blog :** Susan Gunelius, president and CEO of KeySplash Creative, Inc., a marketing communication company, and also author of several books talking about the blogosphere and other social mediums, defines a blog as "a website consisting of entries (also called posts) appearing in reverse chronological order with the most recent entry appearing first". It is also called a "weblog" or "web log". She also defines three other main terms linked to the blog medium that are "blogging", "blogger" and "blogosphere". Blogging is "the act of writing a post for a blog". A blogger is "a person who writes content for a blog". Finally, the blogosphere is "the online community of blogs and bloggers". (About.com, 2013). Between 2006 and 2011, the amount of blogs has exponentially increased, from 36 million to 181 million (E. Qualman, 2012c, p.217) and this number is for sure still increasing day after day.
4. **Tumblr.** it was founded in February 2007 by David Karp, in New York City, USA. The website hosts more than 104 million blogs. The site enables its users to post any kind of content, like music, quotes, photos and to edit and it gives them a lot of freedom in the sense that they can edit any aspect of their blog, until the HTML codes, for the specialists (Tumblr, 2013). According to Amy Gahrn, an independent writer and mobile technology enthusiast, Tumblr is both a blog platform and a social network. Indeed, it is quite close to Facebook but it presents some other features that this latter doesn't have. For instance, the Tumblr content is indexed by search engines, which can definitely increase a user's visibility, hence a business visibility. It is also a very mobile-friendly platform, which means that its viewership is quite important. One of the latest feature launched by Tumblr and that definitely increase posts sharing, is the integration of posts on Facebook Timeline.
5. **Micro blog:** According to M. Coeckelbergh (2011), micro blogging is "the publication of short text messages (it can also be a photo, a video, an audio fragment) to update status, share information, ask questions and to communicate between two or more people". Micro blogging has an impact on the way businesses and, more generally, people think. Indeed, micro blogging allows no time and no space for complex thoughts. This is all about quick and very short communication, which increases the communication activity.
6. **Twitter:** It was founded in March 21, 2006 and was launched in July 2006 by Jack Dorsey, in San Fransisco, California, USA. The social and micro blogging platform counts



over 500 million registered users and 200 million active users, worldwide (Wikipedia, May 2013). The site enables to share real-time information as well as participating in conversations according to what interest people, under the form of messages with a limited amount of characters (140 characters) called tweets. This platform is also ideal for businesses as it enables them to engage their audience in real time and to build or strengthen their relationship with their customers, by instantly responding to feedbacks and sharing information (Twitter, 2013). K. S. Coulter and A. Roggeveen (2012b) demonstrate that marketers use Twitter in order to develop closer relationships with their customers by, for instance, "following their followers" instead of just running a monologue.

7. **YouTube:** It was founded in February 2005 by Jawed Karim, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley (YouTube, 2013a) and the platform counts more than 1 billion monthly unique users worldwide. YouTube has a Partner feature that was created in 2007, enabling video creators to earn money from it. Also, businesses, mainly small ones, have the possibility to use an ads platform via Google to promote them on YouTube, which is a way of monetization for the social website (YouTube, 2013b). S. Pace (2008) supports that YouTube is also a platform to create communities, but in a more original and attractive way than blogs. Indeed, a video is more attractive than text or images; a thing that businesses should not ignore.

8. **Flickr :** Flickr is an image hosting and sharing website founded by Ludicorp in 2004 and acquired by Yahoo! In 2005 (Wikipedia) The website counts 51 million registered members and approximately 80 million unique visitors worldwide (Yahoo!, 2011). According to Marcus Burnette, a website designer and developer, Flickr is very helpful for a business as it can link its Flickr account to its website, which is good to be better indexed by the search engines and to get more visibility. It is also possible to display the Flickr albums on a business website, which allow the website visitors to have more interesting views of the products, without having to go to another website.

9. **Tumble Upon:** tumbleUpon was founded by Garrett Camp and Geoff Smith in November 2001 in Calgary, Canada (StumbleUpon, 2013). The platform counts more than 25 million registered users since April 2012 and this number is for sure still increasing (Wikipedia, 2013) Indeed, a webpage is suggested by the social bookmarking website and people click to visit it. If they liked it, they mark it via the "thumbsUp" button and the webpage is then sent to more people that could possibly like it too, and so on. The sharing of a business webpage via StumbleUpon can provide a huge amount of traffic, which is taken into account by search engines that will rank a business website even better. Also, the writer explains that this traffic generated by StumbleUpon is done on the long term as the platform keeps on re-sharing it to other users.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES**

Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are essential for maintaining a competitive edge. Companies that do not have active social media accounts risk missing out on numerous marketing opportunities.

1. **Interaction with Target Market:** One of the key advantages of social media for businesses is that it enables you to interact with your customers. Going through the tweets and Facebook updates that are posted by your customer base gives you insight into what they need. This is useful for helping your company formulate marketing strategies that address their needs.



2. **Improve Responsiveness:** Social media eases the process of providing and receiving feedback. If your customers have concerns or problems with what your business offers, they can let you know in a timely manner. Social media gives customers a convenient and accessible way to express what they feel and gives companies a chance to respond. With such platforms, businesses are able to view complaints and assure their customers that their problems will be dealt with.
3. **Competition:** If your competitors are already using social media accounts for marketing and engaging their customers, you need to ensure that you are keeping up with the digital marketing strategies that are being implemented. In the competitive world of business, more and more companies are capitalizing on the benefits of social media. In order for you to be able to boost online traffic to your site and increase sales, you need to stay ahead of the competition while providing your customers with the best products and services.
4. **Effective Marketing:** The social networking nature of platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter generates interest among followers who are more responsive to them than a blatant marketing approach. You can use social media creatively to advertise your products and services without making your customers feel like they are overwhelmed by your marketing campaigns.
5. Advertisements strategically placed within informative posts are an effective way to spread the word about your business. Social media spreads awareness about your business while giving you the chance to constantly remind them about the products and services that you offer.
6. **Find Customers:** Hashtags and keywords are useful for helping you identify potential customers who are interested in what you are selling. After finding prospective customers, you can simply direct them to your account where they fill out more about your business.
7. **Affordability:** Managing your social media accounts is a cost effective way to promote your business by using affordable social media marketing campaigns that strengthen your company's online visibility. Social media does not require an extensive budget, which makes it fair for small businesses that are competing with well known brands.
8. **Database:** DBA services provide service delivery solutions that are flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of different companies. Emphasis is placed on the management and support of databases from remote locations while catering to the specified needs of various customers. Services are available for different database environments to provide a dependable, secure and expert approach to database management.
9. **Social Environment:** A social networking forum efficiently creates a social environment for you and your customers. Such a forum enables you to acquire important feedback regarding your business. Social media serves the purpose of making it easier for consumers to find out and distribute information about different brands, products and services.
10. A significant percentage of customers that relies on the internet to search for products have discovered specific companies through social media. If the opinions and reactions of your consumers matter to you, going social is necessary.
11. **Informative:** Social media is informative and gives you access to what your competition is up to as well as what customers are posting online about products and



services. This gives you better insight into the market and various factors that affect your industry.

12. **Online Presence:** Social media has gradually evolved into an integral aspect of people's daily lives. From sharing details about lunch to ranting about bad service, people discuss virtually everything about their lives. Several people visit social networking sites each day and businesses need to maximize on their online presence. Statistics indicate that the way people utilize social media and interact online influences their purchasing decisions. With more consumers choosing to make their purchases online, their approach to shopping has drastically changed. This makes it necessary for retailers to incorporate social media and adapt to the changes that have affected advertising and marketing in general.

13. **Communication and Branding :** Communication is vital for the success of any business and engaging your customers regularly helps to enhance your image. Social networks allow you to interact and deal with your customers on a personal level. When your brand gets involved in conversations, customers view it as approachable, responsive and accessible. This type of exposure positively influences how you are perceived and makes customers more receptive to the information that you share. Both social profiles and websites can help improve your branding efforts. Your existing and prospective customer base will be able to identify your brands' characteristics based on how you interact on social media.

## CONCLUSION

Social media has shifted and is still shifting the way people communicate and the way they select the information, which has consequences on how they decide to buy some product or service. The value of time has also changed, making communication a process that has to be instant and simplified. Hence, businesses have to join social media platforms and to deliver the content people are looking for. People are owning the information and businesses have to look transparent to consumers, by interacting with them and taking into account their feedbacks and complaints as well as by delivering information about products and services in real time. Businesses' performance is definitely affected this way and they have no chance to face their competitors if they don't adopt social media marketing strategies. Every social medium has many benefits that businesses can take advantage from. Indeed, each of these social mediums is a way to benefit a business in a different way, in a different process. Hence, not all the social mediums are useful or relevant according to business objectives and it is important to define clear objectives and to analyze the most efficient tools to use to complete them.

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