

# Recent Trends in Social Media Marketing

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**Abstract:** Recently the social media usage has increased drastically; this phenomenon has not only impacted first world countries but also developing and third world countries too. Developing countries and successful industrialized nations can both benefit economically and socially from the Internet. With minimization of digital divide, the social media works as a gateway that links millions of people. The social media has created a worldwide forum for dialogue and has generated a revolution of innovation and entrepreneurship through E-commerce. In this digital era social media marketing has become necessity. Social media marketing uses social networking sites to raise visibility on the internet to promote products and services. Social media platforms are useful for building social and business networks and for exchanging ideas and knowledge. The present research mainly emphasises current trends & future prospects of social media marketing.

**Keywords:** social media, marketing, digital marketing, social media marketing, AI, chatbox

In digital era social media has profound impact on human interactions, society and business organization. It has transformed and revolutionised the ways of communication on the whole. It is considered as new means of self-expressions. Social media marketing is part of digital marketing that leverage the power of popular social media channels to achieve marketing and branding goals. Over recent years, social media has grown to gain recognition as a pronounced and paramount marketing factor guiding the success of a product/service/business (Hawkins and Vel, 2013). Durkin (2013) claims that people in the early 1990s had begun forming opinions that the internet would become the next futuristic tool of relationship marketing. When referring to social media, three aspects often come to mind, the web 2.0, websites that facilitate networking and marketing (Gurney et al., 2004; Vila & Kuster, 2004), and the huge load of information propagation (Willi et al., 2013). Social media marketing has evolved over a period of time, to include social commerce -the ability to sell products or services directly from social channel.

Social media

Social networking can be defined as the use of web sites or other online technologies to communicate with people and share information, resources, etc. People are using forms of technology for social networking purposes. Social media is a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos) is called social media.

As social media continues to evolve and its uses change and expand, so does the definition of social media. In part, this is attributable to the fact that social media relates to the technology and platforms that enable the interactive web's content creation, collaboration and exchange by participants and the public. McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2017) defines "social media are web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modifies, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible.

Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). There have long been indications of the potential for social networks to build economic growth (Birley, 1985) and more recently the potential has grown with recognition they can increase social capital in communities in a broader sense (Stringfellow & Shaw, 2009).

Today's business proprietors face an entirely new landscape in marketing and advertising. Gone are the days when they could use a "set and forget" advertising campaign like they used to do with yellow pages, magazines, television or radio. Their prospects and customers are creating new neighborhoods online, spending hundreds of hours in places like Facebook. But the number one risk that businesses face has not

changed: insufficient sales. A change in the landscape requires them to learn about new methods to reach prospective customers. Lisa Making, Head of Strategic Initiatives at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Alberta, Canada and Real Decoy digital media strategist, Eric Hagborg, noted that the key advantage with Facebook is the ability to truly target one's audience. Not only does Facebook collect demographic information such as age, location, sex, relationship status and religion. It also collects favorite movies, books, interests, and much, much, more. It allows business entity to use that information to target their advertising. Thus, there is no wasted advertising effort; they can specify a very exact target audience for a particular advertisement. (Gallaher, 2009)

Social media has rebuilt the models of how consumers relate to brands. Brand advocates and brand vandals can share their beliefs effortlessly on a massive scale, changing perceptions and influencing culture. In social networks the brand is only one guest among millions, and while the rewards can be great, the risks can be greater. Social media marketing requires a shift in thinking for marketing teams and the firms who understand this landscape can transform the way they communicate. When marketing budgets are tight, social media can provide the perfect solution.

Social media marketing is a new trend and rapidly growing way in which businesses are reaching out to targeted customers easily. Social media marketing can be simply defined as the use of social media channels to promote a company and its products. This kind of marketing can be thought of as a subset of online marketing activities that complete traditional Web-based promotion strategies, such as e-mail newsletters and online advertising campaigns (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010).

By encouraging users to spread messages to personal contacts, social media marketing has injected a new term of exponential dissemination and trust to mass-communication and mass marketing by this new approach of outreach and marketing, new tools are being developed and increased in turn for businesses. Social media marketers are now going better and more effective insight through the introduction of analytic applications by official social network site platforms (Hafele, 2011).

#### Social Media and Marketing

This research indicates that social media can be used to build brand, improve loyalty and get maximum exposure .it is capable of building brand equity with prospects. The study reveals that social media is also used to humanize brand and a company's personality. SNS eases the process by sharing free valuable content and earns trust over time. social media has recently earned the status of stigma breaker for faceless corporations that are consider to be greedy profit-making entity.

Social recruiting has become new trend. social media is also used for employee engagement purposes. It is also used for employee advocacy program.in this way the companies are converting their employees into their advocates. many employees post, share messages, images and videos on social media about their employers and companies. Social media is also used by the companies' promotional activities and as medium for distributing promotional contents. Customers also now a day advocate certain brands on social media which is called as user generated contents. Instagram and regram posts of people showing off products from their favourite brands. social media is used for damage control during the time of crisis management. Social media 's main advantage is Speedy communication. Companies dealing with large volume of customer service issues can make of social media for redressal of grievances as it has the ability to chat back and forth in real time which is very convenient.

#### Role of social media in marketing

Social media marketing educates audiences about their product, services and offers. Social media helps in promotion activities thus this increases sales rate too. Social media builds a brand by interacting with people and sharing interesting facts about the company. sharing content on social media help a company to gain followers.it also helps build trust between the viewer and content creators of social media platform such as Twitter and Facebook.

The following are the advantages of social media in respect to marketing and advertising

1. The cost reduction on part of companies by decreasing staff time.
2. Increase of probability of revenue generation
3. Social media enables companies to share their expertise and knowledge.

4. Tap into the wisdom of their consumers.
5. Enables customers helping customers.
6. Engages prospects through customer evangelism.
7. It expands the brand's reach and awareness.
8. Boost consumer interaction through transactions, referrals and reputation management
9. Targeting audience based on their interest is possible in social media marketing.
10. Social media builds the brand by sharing relevant information to a large audience.

#### Social media and advertising

Social media can help increase brand awareness and popularity in a less expensive and faster way than traditional advertising (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). Paid social media advertising can benefit a business immensely. Social media (for e.g Face book, Twitter) contains lots of information about the users. Due to this reason advertising platforms can go in for in-depth audience targeting and segmentation. Facebook allows advertisers to target users based on interests, employers and other criteria. The ad messages are tailor made in accordance to specific needs for the exact type of customers. Retargeting on social media can lead to productive results. Through retargeting the company can place a line of code on their respective sites which would track the visitors. Then the company can opt for creation of a custom audience of those people in face book or Instagram and directly screen in their ad to them.

According to Watson et al. (2002) cited by Sheth and Sharma (2005) with the popularity of digital marketing on the rise, many businesses are investigating how social media can help them promote their products and services to potential and existing customers. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter have transformed the way some businesses think about advertising. Some businesses direct customers toward their social network pages more than they direct them to their own websites. There are certain advantages to market via social media, but there are also related drawbacks as well. The primary advantages of social media marketing are reducing costs and enhancing reach. The cost of a social media platform is typically lower than other marketing platforms such as face-to-face salespeople or middlemen or distributors. In addition, social media marketing allows firms to reach customers that may not be accessible due to temporal and locational limitations of existing distribution

channels. Social media platforms increase reach and reduce costs by providing three areas of advantage for customers (Watson et al. 2002; Sheth & Sharma 2005).

#### The advantage of Targeted market

Social media helps not only to reach out indiscriminately but also to target audience who are interested in the marketing messages. There is a possibility of them becoming potential buyers.

Social media provide marketers with the ability to target audiences and consumers based on site users' personal interests and what their friends like. With such "smart" marketing, and advertising, marketers effectively reach the people who are most interested in what they have to offer. Furthermore, social networking enables word of mouth to promote products beyond what advertising alone does (Hill, Provost & Volinsky, 2006)

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According to Gurau (2008), The online marketing environment raises a series of opportunities and also challenges for social media marketing practitioners. The audiences become more fragmented and proactive, but, on the other hand the company has the possibility to combine various modes and categories of information in a complex message. Social media also permit the enterprises to collect, register, analyse and use customer data and feedback for better targeting online audiences and customizing its messages (Gurau, 2008).

In fact, the specific characteristics of the Internet and social media applications are making the implementation of integrated online marketing both inevitable and efficient for an online approach. The cost-related factors, social interactions, interactivity, targeted market opportunities, and customer services are excellent features for organizations to adopt a proactive-reactive attitude and to succeed in social

media marketing. On the other hand, downside of social media marketing such as time intensive, trademark and copyright issues, trust, privacy and security issues, user-generated content (UGC) and negative feedbacks from customers are major barriers facing by social media marketers (Gurau, 2008). According to Designing and implementing a specific model of integrated social media marketing can integrate these characteristics. The message communicated online should be first infused with the core corporate values, then adapted to the online strategy and tactics of the organization, and finally customized for a specific combination of targeted audience and online channel. The selection of the appropriate communication-mix needs to take into account the characteristics of social media marketing (Gurau, 2008).

Interactivity is one of the major characteristics of new media technologies, giving greater access to information as well as supporting increased user control of and engagement with social media content (Fiore et al. 2005) cited by (Hill & Moran, 2011). Interactivity depends on the context. In an online social networking context, interactivity refers to a user-centred interaction with machines, messages, or other users, focusing on the experiential aspect of networking process (Liu & Shrum 2002) cited by Hill & Moran, (2011)

User interactivity enables consumers to participate in personal social networking by selecting the content, timing, and communication act Specific applications of social media empower consumers, such that they can take active control and perform two-way communications. Active control takes place in a social networking context and requires attention and participation from all participating parties, including individual users, groups of networked people or communities, and brands (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca 2002)

Marketing communications are shifting from one to too many to that of one to one, as customers are changing from being passive observers to being proactive collaborators, enabled by social media with connectedness and interactions, regardless of time or location (Hewett et al., 2016). Moreover, the ubiquitous access to information, the low cost of search engines, and the speed of information

dissemination are challenging firms with new capabilities to manage their marketing and branding strategies (Swaminathan et al., 2020). Furthermore, empowered customers are now taking control and becoming pseudo-marketers, actively contributing to the firm's marketing efforts, such as promoting and even selling its products (Harmeling et al., 2017; Malthouse et al., 2013)

Social media content has been a key research area in social media marketing studies, mainly because social media facilitates brand awareness and is better than traditional advertising. Content characteristics that positively affect customer referral behaviours include: emotional rather than informational appeals (Akpınar & Berger, 2017); emphasis on specific emotions (e.g., awe, anger, anxiety) (Berger & Milkman, 2012); vividness (e.g., presenting colourful pictures) (Colicev et al., 2019) and interactivity (e.g., raising challenging questions) (De Vries et al., 2012); persuasiveness, demonstrated by argument quality, post popularity, and post attractiveness (Chang et al., 2015); and demand-based scarcity and personalization (Koch & Benlian, 2015). One concern regarding firms' effectiveness in social media content marketing is the potential misfit between produced content and social media users, indicating that firms should produce appealing content that conforms to the preferences of their target audience (Zhang et al., 2017)

People are using social media to communicate with one other and popular brands use them to market their products. Social activities have been brought from the real world to the virtual world courtesy of social networking sites. Messages are sent in real time which now enable people to interact and share information.as a result companies consider social media platform as vital tools for succeeding in the online marketplace (Ebrahim,2020)

The use social media to commercially promote processes or events to attract potential consumers online is referred to as social media marketing. With the immense rise in community websites, a lot of organization have started to find the best ways to utilise these sites in crating strong relationship and communication with users to enable friendly and close relationship to create online brands communities. (Ibrahim and Aljarah,2018)

Social media facilities content sharing, collaborations and interactions. These social media platforms and applications exists in various forms such as social

bookmarking, rating, video, pictures podcasts, wikis microblogging, social blogs and weblogs. Social networker, governmental organization, business firms are using social media to communicate, with its use increasing tremendously (Cheung et al.,2021).

Government organization and business firms use social media for marketing and advertising, integrated marketing activities can be performed with less cost and efforts due to the seamless interactions and communication among consumer partners, events media digital services and retailers via social media (Tafesse and Wien,2018)

Social media maximises profits and competitive advantage. Social media helps to expand geographic reach compared to other medias. social media facilitate social interactions (e.g., sharing information between customers) for branding cocreation. this media provides to develop a social media community to encourage crowdsourcing and value creation. Social media also unlocks customer feedback and collaboration behaviours on the brand's social media page. This media helps marketing people to Invite opinion leaders in social media to involve in the product/service design process.

This study highlighted the critical role of social monitoring capabilities in real-time information acquisition, analysis, and responsiveness to customer needs, which underlines the firm's need to adopt specialized social information processes and/or social responding systems. This will allow for better exploiting information collected from social media, deriving valuable insights for target marketing, and detecting market changes ahead of competitors. The development of a sound social monitoring strategy, accompanied by a clear plan for responding to customer complaints, firestorm warning systems, and social information processes, is therefore of paramount importance.

#### User-Generated Content (UGC)

In recent times social media users spend quality time on sharing more information, thoughts and opinions online. Also, new forms of content generation, communication, and collaboration have come out on the Internet. Oftentimes marketing strategies involving social networking sites or other social media incorporate user-generated content (UGC) into the field. For example, UGC allows Internet users to make comments in various forms, such as photos, videos,

podcasts, ratings, reviews, articles, and blogs (Filho & Tan 2009). “While social media provides never ending avenues for communicating, it is the individuals who serve as the influencers not the technology” (Gonzalez 2010). User generated content produces social currency for marketers because it helps define a brand. User generated content describes “the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media, usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users” (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Therefore, social currency is when individuals share a brand or information about a brand (Zinnbauer and Honer, 2011).

Whether it's a video or photo shared on a site or messages that site users disseminate to members of the network, UGC holds much promise as a marketing tool. In addition, user-generated content comes with a relatively high degree of credibility in the eyes of consumers, particularly if someone created the content for example or a tweet between friends. Soliciting user-generated content in connection with a marketing strategy comes with some risk of incurring legal liability for content created by an individual participating in the campaign Marketers can, however, take certain steps to minimize legal risks associated with marketing campaigns that involve the dissemination of user-generated content through social media (Gommans et al. 2001)

#### Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing Trends

From marketing perspective, the omni-social nature of the present environment suggests that virtually every part of a consumers decision making process is prone to social media influence. Social media marketers view that consumers will buy products more often on social apps than on brands' websites or third-party websites like Amazon. Social media marketers have also noticed an uptick in social shopping. However, the omnipresence of social media has tremendously increased the accessibility and appeal of this approach.

DMs becoming consumers' preferred customer service channel: Direct message on social media is becoming consumers' preferred customer service channel. Majority of companies are currently offering customer service via social and providing customer service through DMs is a primary responsibility social

media marketing. Companies providing customer service through DMs have a customer service representative responding to customers. Due to its potentiality companies and their marketing departments develop a plan for channelling customer service requests via social through the proper channels.

Social media marketers contemplate that consumers search for brands on social media more often than through search engines: this trend was even confirmed in 2022 by Google's senior vice president of Knowledge & Information, Prabhakar Raghavan. He said that social platforms were eating up Google's core products: Search and Maps. This trend is due to the preference and inclination of younger generation for visual-rich result and are steering away from search engines.

The trend of short-form content: there has been considerable growth in content consumption during and aftermath of pandemic. Nowadays, consumers search and demand quality content. They expect information to be short and crisp. A business must focus on short-form content if it plans to expand and reach out to its potential customers. The evolution of reels and shorts are the new trends in digital and social media.

The emergence of chatbots: the business

Any business's key objective is constantly communicating with its customers. The presence of chatbots has not only made it easier for customers to reach out to a company with their queries at any time, but it has also benefitted businesses by helping with instant communication.

Rise of audio marketing: While video marketing will always be in the limelight, audio marketing is also gearing up. People enjoy audio as it can be heard on the go or does not hinder the activity. There has been significant growth in Podcasts and audio shows. Companies are also making use of these audio shows in carrying out the company's message.

The dawn of user-generated content: User-generated content has become one of the most efficient ways to engage more audiences as it also helps in enhancing brand presence and awareness. Brands organize various promotional activities for their customers to participate

in different events and curate content. this direct communication is exceedingly beneficial for maintaining customer-business relationships.

The provision of customization: Personalized social media engagement practices lead to positive customer experiences. Social media allows real-time interactions, with this unique feature customer starts to develop emotional attachment towards the brand. The initiatives such as gamification and social tags are really helpful in social marketing. Social media also promote experiential marketing. Social media marketing can also hire customers as brand ambassadors. With efficient digital marketing tools, brands can recommend the right product to the potential customers, helps them in decision making process and also save time.

The advent of social listening: social media can also be helpful to promote product innovation by capturing and understanding conversations among different group of customers. Social listening is integral to social media marketing. It is a practice of monitoring social media channels and online conversation related to brand, competitor brands, industry and other keywords. With this proactive tool, brands can directly communicate with their customers. It also helps to collect feedback and in redressal of grievances. It is easy to keep a track on contents of consumers comments and views about the new product or campaign the brand has launched on social media in real-time. This practice gives valuable insight about consumers feeling and preference about product or service. Through social media listening tools, it is easy to track competing brands, trending content, and sentiment analysis on topics related to business. Social listening in turn is a holistic approach which provides valuable insights to make strategic decisions about marketing and social media strategy. Social listening strategy has become important facet for successful social media strategy. Social monitoring also called as brand monitoring, it send alters whenever a brand is mentioned online. It comes handy for immediately responding to negative sentiments or complaints.

The development of influencer marketing: the idea of using celebrities (in consumer markets) or well-known opinion leaders (in business markets), who have a high social value, to influence others is a well-known

marketing strategy (Knoll and Matthes ,2017). the rise of influencer marketing has undoubtedly been the most successful digital and social media marketing trend. Through this, brands can reach out to their potential customers quickly, and with the help of influencers, brands can send the right message to their audience. The audience also get a sense of validity and awareness when they hear it from their preferred influencers. Influencer marketing is shifting towards more transparent collaborations. Greater emphasis is being given to genuine storytelling. In recent times influencers are moving away from overt product promotion and focusing more on storytelling aspect. Brands are shifting towards long-term partnerships with influencers rather than one-off campaigns. Currently engagement metrics is accentuated a lot. Instead of solely relying on follower count, brands are placing greater importance on engagement metrics.

The instigation of social commerce: Through social commerce, brands can allow their customers to purchase products directly from the post. Each brand is leveraging this trend, as people can check out the products and buy them instantly. It is an easy and time-saving process for both brands and customers.

The advent of augmented reality: AR allows brands to create an interactive experience for their audience where they get a real-life feeling sitting in the comfort of their homes. In this virtual environment, through enhanced images and videos, brands can represent their products better. This leads to, building a new customer experience.

AI driven marketing

AI-driven Marketing enhances personalisation of messaging. This allows brands to tailor their messaging to individual consumers preferences. It also lets delivering content that is relevant and resonates with their specific interests, preferences, and behaviours.AI-driven marketing tools help in customer segmentation. With the help of predictive analytics AI algorithms can analyse vast amounts of data to predict consumer behaviour and preferences. Brands can influence these perceptions to make informed decisions and optimise marketing strategies, guaranteeing the right message is distributed to the right person at the right time. AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants can provide instant and personalised

customer support. Real-time Campaign Optimisation: AI algorithms can monitor and analyse campaign performance in real-time. Brands can make data-driven decisions and optimise their campaigns on the fly, adjusting targeting, messaging, and creative elements for better results.

Augmented Reality (AR) experiences offer an advanced and interactive way for brands to engage with their audience. AR creates immersive and appealing experiences that blend the physical and digital realms. AR allows customers to visualise products in their real-world context. Brands can showcase how their products look and fit in a customer's environment, providing a more accurate and realistic representation that enhances the purchase decision-making process.

Interactive Marketing Campaigns: Brands can leverage AR to create interactive marketing campaigns that boost user participation on social media platform. From AR scavenger hunts to AR filters and lenses on social media platforms, these campaigns generate buzz, encourage sharing, and boost brand awareness. Virtual Try-On and Sampling: Overall, AR experiences offer brands an opportunity to create immersive and interactive connections with their audience. By leveraging this technology, brands can enhance engagement, boost brand awareness, facilitate product visualisation, and deliver memorable experiences that leave a lasting impact on customers.

The facility of voice search: In recent years voice search has gained immense popularity. It is an easy and hassle-free process where people do not have to type. This leads to speedy search. Voice search features help with better user experiences. Besides, it has a constructive influence on the brand's SEO efforts as well. Social listening helps companies to become a part of relevant communities organically.it helps in finding natural brand advocates. reaching out and looking opportunity to collaborate in meaningful ways.

Social media is being used as a customer service platform: As per Global Digital Report 2019, over the period social media is being used as a customer service platform where current and prospective customers want answers quickly and in real-time. Social network analysis is the one of the main techniques used for

finding the key factors which influences viral marketing campaigns on Twitter, Facebook or other social media platforms. This method is used to detect subcommunities which can be involved in a discussion forum for better precision in customizing the products as well as marketing materials.

Instagram is the highest ROI Platform and will see the most growth of any social application. Instagram is leading and ranks first for ROI, engagement, and quality leads. Instagram has the most accurate algorithm, which is essential for brand awareness and reach. Majority of social media marketers using Instagram plan to increase their investment in near future.

Social media can get new visitor to website. Social media has the potentiality to increase visitors to companies' website and gain a lot of conversions. With high engagement and a large audience involvement can results in promotion of sales.

#### Economic impact

This research studied how social media enable economic system that stimulates the economy. The study favors social media as a facilitator to advertise. It is in agreement that social media acts as a platform to connect with consumer and build brand values. Social media generates revenue to business entity. The business and advertising supported social media help to foster the economy.

The uprising trend of social media has brought fundamental market change. With emergence of social media, new selling opportunities have developed. Social media has synergistic effect which makes it even more interesting medium for marketing. Social media as a promotional and selling outlets has increased consumer power. There has been change of communication pattern from one to many to one to one. Social media as communication and branding channel is more effective due to its speedy dissimilation of information. Social media proved to be an intelligent source in providing abundant information to the marketers for planning marketing strategies. Social media marketing drives more traffic, strong signal and improved SEO facilitate consumer interaction. It increases ROI and heightens brand awareness. In generating an up-to-date social media marketing strategy, keeping the finger on the pulse of

the future of social media marketing will help companies to target the right people and customize their brand experiences, bolstering and maintaining a stellar reputation for their company. The current trends & future prospects of social media marketing are ever evolving and bright. In fact, social media marketing is the future.

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