

Has the Social Media Virus Reached Businesses

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Abstract

Social media dominates every aspect of life. The business world has experienced complete infiltration from this "virus" to what extent? This study investigates both social media marketing effects along with business adoption approaches and tests its actual effectiveness. Facebook and Instagram alongside TikTok and Twitter have emerged as vital marketing resources so businesses had to implement digital marketing strategies. This paper evaluates how social media transforms business success by conducting an analysis of Duolingo's case study. The conclusion? The correct execution of social media marketing establishes it as more than a fashionable trend because it represents what lies ahead.

Research Question

Thanks to social media marketing businesses now carry out digital consumer relationships by leaving traditional marketing methods behind. The endless possibilities of social media open doors for businesses but also bring demanding hurdles which companies need to overcome to maintain their competition.

Problem Statement

What changes did social media introduce to business marketing techniques while remaining a suitable instrument for company expansion?

Scope and Objectives

- Social media marketing in the business world requires examination to understand its effects
- The evaluation distinguishes between viral marketing and social media marketing strategies.
- Social media marketing will be assessed for its advantages together with its associated obstacles.
- This research analyzes how effectively Duolingo utilizes social media marketing as its example.

Methodology

The secondary study relies on industry reports together with case studies and social media statistic data. The main research example focuses on Duolingo which demonstrates outstanding expertise in social media marketing strategies. Professionals accumulated their data from two sources: business research websites combined with social media analytics platforms. This paper focuses on the difference between two similar concepts and how social media has impacted the business world in both positive and negative terms.

Introduction

Social media has indeed become a vital part of our lives. Either it's older generations talking about how it's ruined the current generation or it's people saying that their lives have changed for the better after social media.

But have you ever looked at it from a business standpoint?

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok have evolved into

powerful marketing tools. This research investigates the extent to which businesses have adopted social media marketing and its effectiveness in modern business strategies.

Digital marketing allows customers to access offered products every moment of day and night. Social media posting stands as the most popular online activity in the United States according to data from the 2014 Marketing tech blog. According to **Marketing Tech Blog (2014)**:

- 99% of digital marketers use Facebook
- 97% use Twitter
- 69% use Pinterest
- 59% use Instagram
- 83.8% of luxury brands maintain an active Pinterest presence

Literature Review

The Shift from Traditional to Digital Marketing

Before contemporary times businesses used billboards together with TV advertisements and newspapers to engage with their customers. Everything reshaped upon the transformation of the internet into an essential domestic tool.

Theoretical Perspectives on Social Media Marketing

Through Social Media Marketing Theory (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) organizations succeed in reaching customers by combining their digital and traditional marketing methods.

The Viral Marketing Theory (Phelps et al., 2004) describes how purposeful content moves swiftly through online spaces.

Consumer Engagement Theory established by Brodie et al. (2011) business-to-consumer interaction improves brand loyalty rates.

Findings & Analysis

What is Social Media Marketing?

Social media marketing comprises digital promotions which maintain focus on brand promotion through content productions and disseminations. The field of social media marketing includes viral marketing as a specific approach that generates rapid content spread through consumer engagement.

But what's the difference?

- Social Media Marketing represents a wide approach which aims to achieve brand awareness and engagement results from customers.
- Viral Marketing represents a certain approach for developing content that functions as highly contagious material across digital platforms.

Social media marketing constitutes viral marketing but the two concepts do not overlap completely.

In short, all viral marketing is social media marketing, but not all social media marketing is viral marketing.

The Rise of Social Media in the Business World

Now, we move on to discuss the shift from traditional marketing and digital marketing.

In 1995 CSNL launched its internet services in India, which was the origin of digital marketing in India. It did not perform well initially, as only 0.5% of the population used the internet till 2020.

With the advancement of technology, new marketing platforms developed as well. Digital marketing took

over from traditional marketing as the preferred mode of marketing for new-age businesses when it arrived on the scene. It enabled brands to reach their target audience at a very minimal cost.

Benefits of Social Media Marketing

From the above data, we can clearly tell that social media marketing has brought in a lot of positive change in the marketing industry. Below mentioned are some pointers that are considered benefits.

- cost efficient.
- targets specific demographic groups that will spread product information through viral marketing.
- information can be updated frequently and quickly in order to respond to changes in the market.
- reaches groups that are difficult to reach any other way.
- Marketing is easier when an influencer on the internet is doing it. Not only do some social media users follow influencers, they are also turning to these accounts to inform their buying decisions. Three-in-ten adult social media users say they have purchased something after seeing an influencer or content creator post about it on social media.
- Improved feedback from consumers.
- Data driven decision making which leads to betterment in future performance

Challenges faced by Social Media Marketing

There are always two sides to a coin. Social media marketing does also have its own set of challenges.

- It is difficult to manage negative comments and criticism especially with the rise in the amount of internet trolls.
- If a company tends to focus on Viral Marketing then they might not be able to find the time to stay tuned with the latest trends and changes in algorithm.
- A lot of competitor companies will have access to data and might even copy certain ideas.
- Risk of security and data loss.
- Measuring ROI (Return on Investment) and effectiveness in social media marketing refers to assessing how well a business's social media efforts translate into tangible results, such as brand awareness. The challenge lies in attributing direct financial gains to social media activities, given the complex customer journey and external influencing factors.

Case Study

There are rather countless examples, Nike, Wendy's, Starbucks, etc. But I'm going to go into the depths of the one and only, Duolingo.

Duolingo is no stranger to anyone who has been a language enthusiast or even just someone who has even been online. Duolingo is an online language-learning platform that offers courses in over 40 different languages.

Duolingo captured the spotlight in a way that most contemporary brands couldn't. From over 16.2 million downloads in January 2024, a significant part of this success is due to the brand's genius social media marketing.

Duolingo focused on people who want to learn a new language but can't afford traditional courses, mainly targeting Gen Z and millennials aged 16 to 34. To attract this audience, they not only made learning fun and personalized through gamification but also built a playful and engaging presence on social media. This strategy helped them connect with younger, social media-savvy users and contributed to the

widespread popularity they have today.

On TikTok, Duolingo has a whopping follower count of 16.3 million and I'm not ashamed to admit that I am one of them!

In the bio, you can see that Duolingo communicates its mission of "Free language education for the world", and showcases its fun personality with "just an owl tryna vibe." Every content piece follows a definite brand style and an unhinged tone, while still packing a whole lot of entertainment.

But how is this working so well?

1. They've prioritized entertainment which leads the audience to watch more videos and end up downloading the app.
2. Regular trendjacking: The account is always up to date and following the latest trends which again aligns with the works of Viral Marketing.
3. Personifying Duo: their mascot is the one that lives in most people's hearts, even though it's all fake, you can't help but admit that everyone seems to love it.
4. Direct engagement with the audience: you can see how Duo replies to most comments on the videos and this leads to personal connection with their target audience.

Overall, Duolingo has over 575 million registered users globally as of 2024. And a large portion of that is because of their genius social media marketing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of social media on businesses is undeniable. From increasing brand awareness to driving sales through targeted marketing and viral content, social media has revolutionized how businesses engage with their audience. However, with all opportunities that it poses, challenges of coping with criticisms online, being in touch with trends, as well as ROIs, cannot be ignored. The success of companies like Duolingo proves the strength of creative and strategic use of social media in propelling a company to new heights. With digital spaces evolving further, business firms must do the same and innovate to make the most out of social media, stay ahead in this fast paced marketing era.

So in the end, to answer the question; Yes, social media has undoubtedly spread into the business world. However, its impact isn't entirely negative, in fact, this "virus" might actually bring positive change.

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