

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Author's Name: Dr. Bhawna Sharma

Affiliation: Associate Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University Maharashtra, India

E-Mail: bsharma@mum.amity.edu

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Abstract

The recent rise in Social Media has drastically changed the marketing landscape. The time of traditional marketing, where marketers were pushing out messages toward consumers using only one-way communication, is over. In contrast with traditional media, Social Media has greatly changed relationships between consumers and companies by allowing two-way communication. With the introduction to a new marketing function so-called 'Social Media Marketing' has arisen. The marketing has hence evolved from a time when marketers had the power of influence to today where consumers have a greater power of influence on their peers. Social Media enable consumers to share contents and ideas together, write recommendations, reviews and opinions about the company and its performance and to tell, to a wider audience than before, about their experience.

Consumers have access to a wide range of different Social Media types, platforms and tools, with different characteristics and possibilities which allow them to get connected and communicate together. Social Media has significantly impacted on how information's are shared among groups of consumers. Word-of-mouth also plays a key role in Social Media. Word-of-mouth is well known in marketing for decades. But today, word-of-mouth appears even more important than before in the influence of consumers' and their purchasing decision-making process. It is certainly true that Social Media can carry and spread word-of-mouth between millions of users, like none of the other channels have been able to do until now.

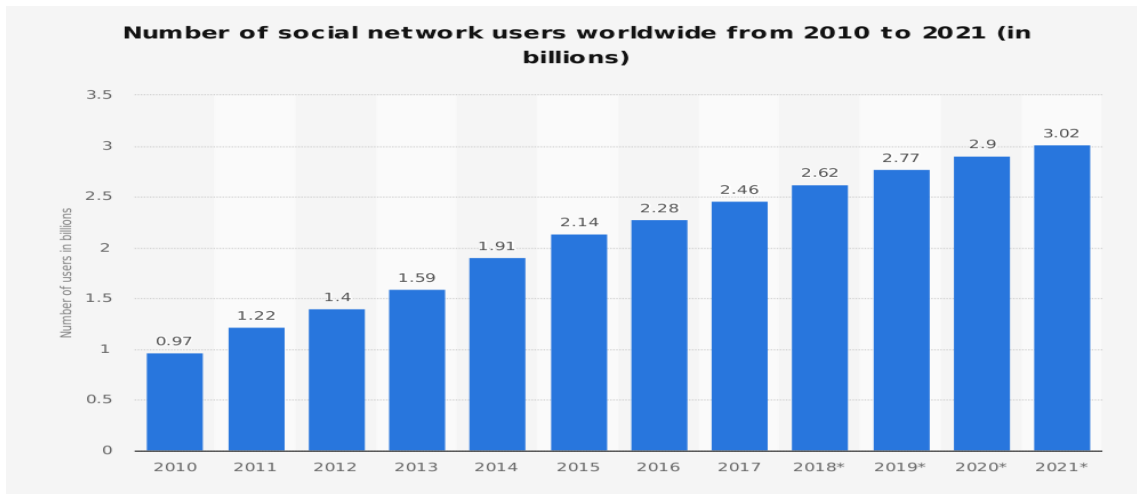
Keywords: Digital Marketing, Customer Relationships, Social Media Marketing, consumers, audience.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube illustrate perfectly the increase of social media usages by consumers. At the end of 2004, Facebook counted around 1 million users. 8 years later, in August 2012, the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, announced that the company almost reached the billions of users, counting around 955 million of users worldwide. This seemed to be a really important increase in usage but what came next was the perfect illustration of the incredible pace of Facebook adoptions by users (see figure 1 below). Thereby, worldwide, there are over 2.32 billion monthly active users (MAU) as of December 31, 2018. This is a 9 per cent increase in Facebook MAUs year over year. This is compared to 2.27 billion MAUs for Q3 2018. Facebook is simply too big to ignore as an on-going part of your digital marketing communications program.

If Facebook showed an incredible number of users worldwide, other Social Media types such as Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube sharing have also proved to be more and more used by consumers. According to reports, it is believed that after Facebook, YouTube followed by Instagram comes among the top three social media networks and applications according to its number of users. Currently, YouTube has more than 1.5 billion logged-in visits every month. Viewers are spending an average of 1 hour per day watching YouTube videos. On average, 300

Figure 1: Rise in the number of Facebook users from 2010
source: E-Marketer ©statista 2018



hours of video are uploaded every minute on YouTube. There are over 5 billion video views each day. Daily active users on YouTube are over 30 million an average visit on YouTube lasts for 40 minutes. After 8 years of its existence, Instagram has over 800 million monthly active users since its creation; more than 40 billion photos have been shared. Daily active Instagram users total more than 500 million on average; 95 million photos are being uploaded on Instagram daily. An approximate of 4.2 billion likes is given every day. Most Instagram users are in between 18 to 29 years of age with 32% of Instagram users being college students.

 Facebook Monthly Active Users: 2.2 Billion Daily Active Users: 1.4 Billion Founded: 2004 Photos uploaded daily: 300 Million Video views daily: 8 Billion Rank: #1	 Twitter Monthly Active Users: 330 Million Daily Active Users: 100 Million Founded: 2006 Tweets published daily: 140 Million New accounts daily: 460,000 Rank: #6
 YouTube Monthly Active Users: 1.5 Billion Daily Active Users: 30 Million Founded: 2005 Video views daily: 5 Billion Average visit length: 40 min. Rank: #2	 Snapchat Monthly Active Users: 301 Million Daily Active Users: 178 Million Founded: 2011 Snaps created daily: 3 Billion Video views daily: 10 Billion Rank: #7
 Instagram Monthly Active Users: 800 Million Daily Active Users: 500 Million Founded: 2010 Photos uploaded daily: 95 Million Stories daily: 250 Million Rank: #3	 Reddit Monthly Active Users: 274 Million Total Users: 330 Million Founded: 2005 Votes daily: 25 Million Active communities: 50,000 Rank: #8
 WhatsApp Monthly Active Users: 700 Million Daily Active Users: 320 Million Founded: 2009 New users daily: 1 Million Messages sent daily: 43 Billion Rank: #4	 LinkedIn Monthly Active Users: 200 Million Total Registered Users: 546 Million Founded: 2002 New accounts monthly: 5.26 Million Company Pages: 20 Million Rank: #9
 Google+ Monthly Active Users: 395 Million Total Registered Users: 2 Billion Founded: 2011 U.S. based users: 55% Ages 15-34 users: 28% Rank: #5	 Pinterest Monthly Active Users: 200 Million U.S. based users: 70 Million Founded: 2010 Total Boards created: 1 Billion Total Pins created: 100 Billion Rank: #10

Figure 2: Top Ten Social media social media networks and applications
According to its number of users

Source: Social-media-statistics 2018

Technological development plays an important role in this increase in usage of Social Media by consumers. These days with smartphones, consumers can connect and interact together from everywhere by simply using their mobile phones. Companies started to see opportunities to exploit from the rise in Social Media usage by consumers, the use of Social Media by the Fortune Global 500 and found out that 87 per cent of these companies were using at least one Social Media Platform. This represented an increase of 10% per cent over the two previous. According to the same study, the average number of followers on companies' LinkedIn account and Twitter accounts and has drastically increased these two last years (see figure 3 below). Hence more and more marketers are now using Social Media to engage with consumers.

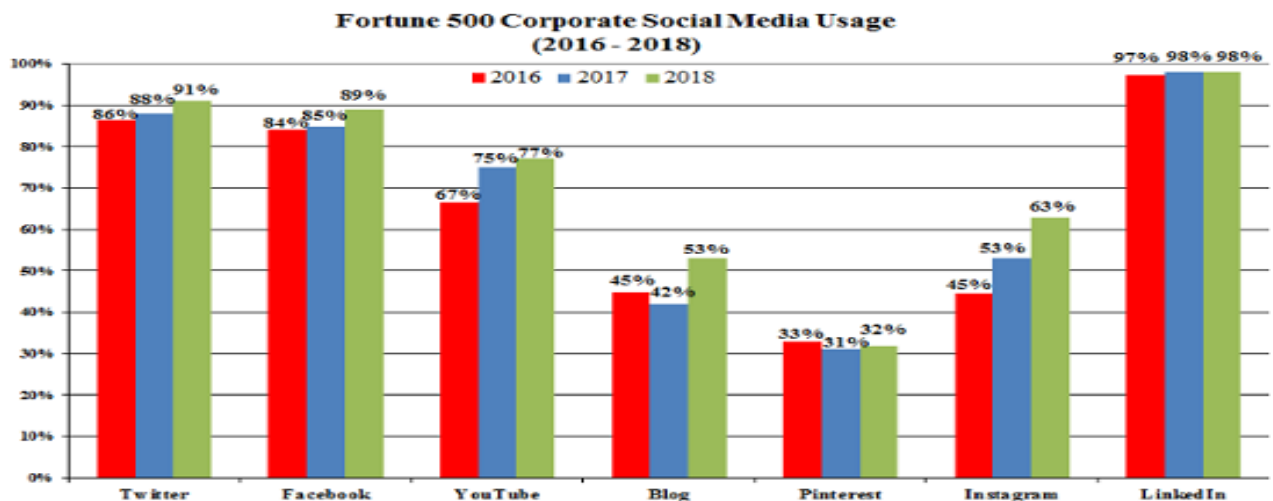


Figure 3: Increase of Fortune Global 500 Social Media Usage

Source: Conference board post detail 2018

Digital marketing is one kind of marketing which being broadly used to advertise goods and services to reach customers using digital channels. It extends beyond online marketing including channels that will not require the usage of the Internet. Social media marketing, banner advertising, search engine optimization marketing and several other types of digital media. Through digital media, customers have access to information whenever and then for any place where they desire. With the use of digital media, consumers do not just depend on just what the company says regarding brand but additionally, they are able to follow what the media, friends, peers, etc. To look at the utilization of digital channels in marketing from a customer relationship a viewpoint offers much assistance to a marketer. Brand communication could be persistent and personalized, and various options for dialogue exist. The benefits of this include learning from and about customers, revealing certain requirements and interests, and being able to provide them with more personal service. From the customer context, the web has given chance to get up-to-date information with less effort to compare goods and services, and to get in touch with marketers. Moreover, in a very digital environment, customers increasingly use self-service and also have more choices to begin action (e.g. give feedback, check account balances, request and personalize marketing communication). From the customer context, perceived valuation on using digital channels and keep in touch with a marketer can come in several ways. It could be money, time, information, convenience, entertainment, assistance, social interactivity, prestige, or something else the customer enjoys. Building up a healthy relationship with a customer through the digital platform can have a huge impact on business

growth.

This report examines how marketers can use digital platforms to develop and strengthen customer relationships.

WAYS OPTED BY COMPANIES FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is a term used to describe the integrated marketing services used to attract, engage and convert customers online. Digital marketing utilizes multiple channels such as content marketing, influencer marketing, SEO, social media and online advertising to help brands connect with customers and uncover performance of marketing programs in real-time. (Lee Oden, 2014).

The concept of Digital Marketing is very broad. It brings together all forms of marketing, operating through electronic devices (i.e. online, on mobile and on-screen). Have a glance at some of the **most common digital marketing types** used these days;

Email Marketing

Being one of the earliest forms of digital marketing, it includes delivering personalized or targeted messages at the correct time. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Well, it is the most general type of Digital marketing which is used to increase the website's visibility across the search engines. There are various techniques involved in this process ranging from on-site technical analysis and improvement, to blogging, link-building and content creation. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

PPC (Pay per Click)

It is better known as Paid Search. In this process paid adverts are typically placed to the right or above of the 'organic' search results. The cost will depend on the competitiveness of the keyword you're bidding on. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

Social Media

It is all about managing a brand's image across multiple social channels including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn and many others. This type has become greatly popular, mature and complex over the last few years. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

Online Advertising

Don't confuse it with PPC! This involves the process of advertising on others website. For example, you can buy a banner space on popular website, paying the website owner for the same. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

Text Messaging

Besides, the online marketing components, it is the widely used Digital marketing type. Especially, with the exponential rise in usage of smartphones around the world has enhanced the dependency on them for quick and timely information. (KVRwebtech, 2015)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the changes brought by digital media in brands relationship marketing.
- To see how relationship marketing changed over the years and what differs from traditional approaches marketers had.
- To understand how digital media changed the way brands act toward customers and how customers gained power in their relationships with brands.
- To examine their attitude towards queries and feedbacks received through digital media

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this research is to understand the effects of digital marketing on customer relationships. Both quantitative and qualitative methodology have been adopted in this research.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data is numerically presented & analyzed. The data is examined to identify exact facts and figures. Numbers are used to state important facts such as degrees of relationship between the different variables that are considered in the study and historical data. The figures in this are easily interpretable and are recorded in standard charts and diagrams. In this conclusion is drawn from quantitative data. In this work I adopt..

Descriptive Methodology

Primary research through personal interview & observation methodology

Analytical Methodology

Secondary research through analysis and filtration of data collected from newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs etc.

Quantitative Methodology

In this research I will use both quantitative and qualitative data but mostly quantitative data.

Descriptive Methodology

A structured questionnaire was sent across to target audience using online survey through Google forms.

Analytical Methodology

Secondary research through analysis and filtration of data collected from newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs etc.

EXPECTED SCOPE AND OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT

This study focuses on how digital marketing affects customer relationship to a brand. Within the past few years, digital marketing has become an increasingly popular medium for brand and consumer engagement. For years, marketing professionals have used different mediums to provide customer service and promote products and services. Digital marketing has fostered the growth of trusting relationships between consumer and brand, making it an increasingly

important medium to utilize in order to maximize brand loyalty.

Traditional marketing used to be the only source of marketing in the past. Over the past few years, we saw a new marketing tool and it's called digital marketing. The way of implementing marketing strategies have been modified. Customers can directly talk to the marketers and provide feedbacks. Previously it used to one sided communication. There are few other things that are not the same anymore. To measure the impact of digital marketing on customer relationships, we have to run a study. The purpose of this study is to emphasize and bring out the impacts of digital marketing on customer relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The landscape of marketing has drastically changed in the last decade. Before, companies and their customers had no direct link to each other's respective worlds. The rise of Social Media has changed the way consumers interact together but also with companies.

Title-Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study

Author-Afrina Yasmin, Sadia Tasneem, Kaniz Fatema

Year-06.04.2015

Extract-This article focuses on the importance of digital marketing for both marketers and consumers. It also involves the differences between traditional marketing and digital marketing in this paper are presented. This study has described various forms of digital marketing, the effectiveness of it and the impact it has on a firm's sales.

Title-The Effects of Digital Marketing on Customer Relationships

Author-Marko Merisavo

Year-1.4.2003

Extract-Viewing the use of digital channels in marketing from a customer relationship perspective offers several benefits to a marketer. Brand communication can be frequent and personalized, and different options for dialogue exist. The benefits of dialogue include learning from and about customers, revealing their needs and interests, and being able to provide them with better and more personal service. From a customer perspective, the Internet has given the power to get up-to-date information, to compare products and services more easily, and to get in touch with marketers. In a digital environment, customers increasingly use self-service and have more options to initiate action. A customer's perceived value of using digital channels and interacting with a marketer can come in several ways; it could be money, time, information, convenience, and so forth. This chapter examines how marketers can use digital channels to develop and strengthen customer relationships. In our framework, brand communication, service, personalization, and interactivity are suggested to be the key elements.

Title-Using Social Media to Increase Consumer Loyalty to a Brand

Author-Lindsey Julian

Extract-The following study investigates how to use social media to increase consumer loyalty to a brand. With the increasing trend in the utilization of social media practices in the fields of public relations and marketing, it is becoming significantly important to understand how to effectively reach and communicate with consumers through this medium. This study focuses on the necessary tools, tactics, and strategies that should be utilized through social media in order to increase consumer loyalty.

Title-Social media as a new engaging channel in brands' relationship marketing.

Author-Charles Rupin

Year-1.4.2003

Extract-The objective of that research paper is to notice the changes brought by social media in brands relationship marketing. Also, it aims to see how relationship marketing changed over the years and what differs from traditional approaches marketers had. Moreover, this paper's purpose is to see how social media changed the way brands act toward customers and how customers gained power in their relationships with brands.

Title-The Role of Digital Branding on Consumer Retention: Evaluating uses of Social Media in Bangladesh

Author-Afsary Priyanka

Year-2012

Extract-The purpose of this paper is to evaluate social media in respect of digital branding and how it has helped the organizations to retain consumers in Bangladesh. Through this paper, consumer retention was linked with various variables: Social Media Platform, Post Engagement, Purchase Behaviour and Adverts on Social Media. Facebook is the most used platform in Bangladesh, which has been proved in this paper. The discussion is done on how brand loyalty is directly linked to consumer retention.

Title-A Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer's relationship

Author-Daiana Maria

Year-2011

Extract-The main paper objective is to investigate how high-street fashion brands use social media in order to develop customer relationships and thus create personal relationships between the brands and consumers. Moreover, the study will provide answers in regards to the properties of high-street fashion brands social media marketing in regards to media platforms and how these affect customer relationship constructs such as intimacy and trust.

Title-Consumer Perceptions of a Brand's Social Media Marketing

Author-Taylor Michelle Smith

Year-17.06. 2016

Extract- The purpose of this project is to assess consumer perceptions of a brand's social media marketing. The results show that brands must be actively engaging their consumers via social media in order to compete in a competitive marketplace. Engagement can be promoted through entertaining and interactive posts, useful and relevant content, word of mouth communication from other consumers, as well as extrinsic, reinforces such as promotions and giveaways. Social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter, is a key platform to build relationships with consumers and for consumers to get information about a brand and its products. Consumers are trustworthy of the information posted by the brand and information posted by other consumers online. The future of social media as a marketing tool is also considered.

Title-Effectiveness of Digital Marketing

Author-Satata Satez

Year-2012

Extract-This report shows how Smartphones have been a dominating factor in the growth of Digital Marketing. Some of the recent trends of Digital Marketing are then discussed followed by the digital presence of Telecom Industries in Bangladesh. The report has been integrated with a lot of data tables that verify the significance of digital marketing in our country.

DATA ANALYSIS

RESPONDENTS: GENDER, AGE, OCCUPATION

Gender
103 responses

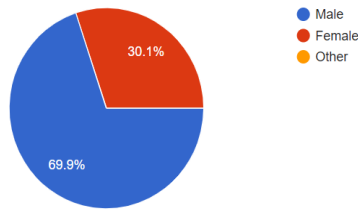


Fig 4: Gender

Age
103 responses

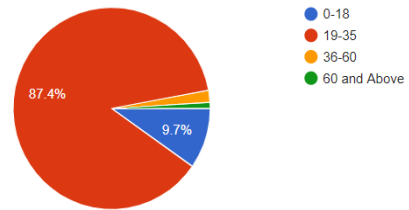
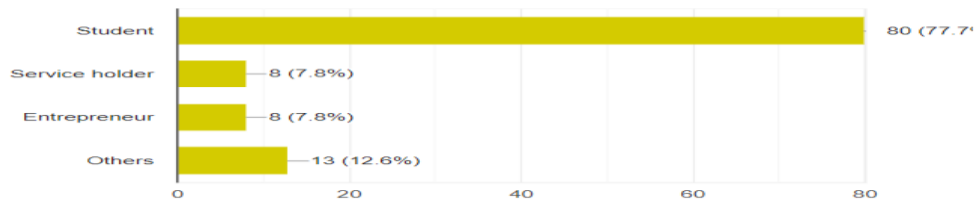


Fig 5: Age

Occupation
103 responses



Fig

6: Occupation

Findings and Analysis

These three questions are basic. From the 103 respondent 72 are male and 31 are female. From them, 80% are student, 12.6% are people who are doing other jobs , 8% are entrepreneurs and service holders.

How much time do you spend on internet?

How much time do you spend on internet?
103 responses

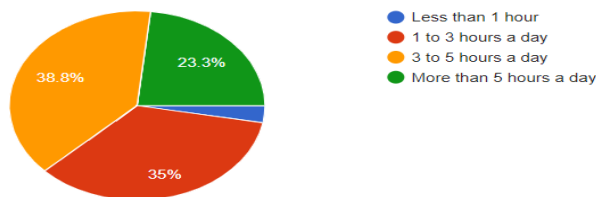


Fig 7: Time

Findings and Analysis

In this question, I have asked them how much time they spend on internet. Out of 103 respondents 38.8% spends more than 3-5 hours a day on internet and 35% spends 1-3 hours a day on internet. It is clear that people are spending a good amount of time on internet on daily basis.

Why do you follow brands on social media or any other digital media?

Why do you follow brands on social media or any other digital media?

71 responses

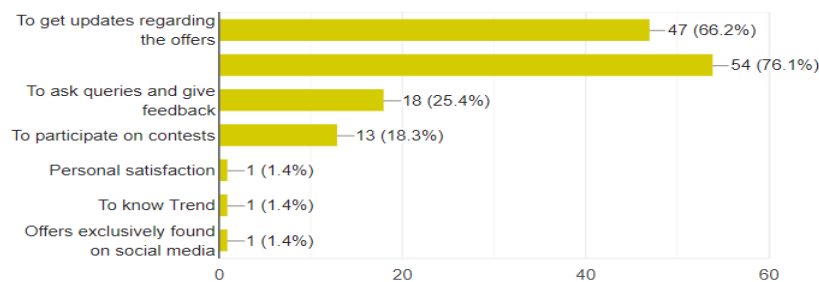


Fig 8: Reason of following brands

Findings and Analysis

From 71 respondents 54 % of them follow brands on digital media to stay up-to-date to get updates regarding new product launching, 47% of them follow brands to get updates regarding offers, 18% of them follow brands to ask queries and give feedback and 13% of them follow to participate on contests. From the above data it is clear that people are interested about the brands activities and they have certain expectations from the brands that they follow.

Do you respond (like, comment and share) to their contents on digital media?

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71 responses

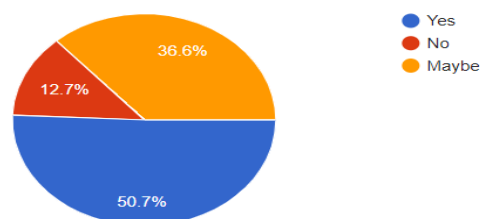


Fig 9: Respond

Findings and Analysis

50.7% respondents said yes. They follow brands online and like those contents, share those in the digital media. Customers spend time on these brands and by sharing they are promoting the brand. Customers tend to share those things which they like or dislike to let other people know

If yes, do you expect them to reply to your query?

If yes , Do you expect them to reply to your query?

71 responses

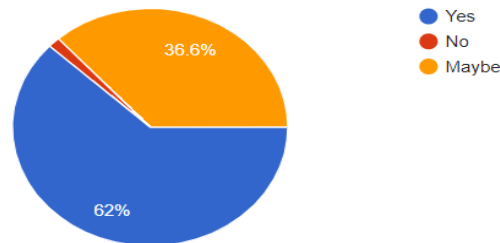


Fig 10: Query

Findings and Analysis

62% respondents said they expect to get a reply to their queries and it can also be seen that more than 36% are in middle of an agreement; only 3.6% said they do not expect a reply even if they get a reply. This shows that customers are trying to connect to their brands and sharing their problems. In return they expect query management team will get to them and solve the problem.

How much time they take to respond to your query?

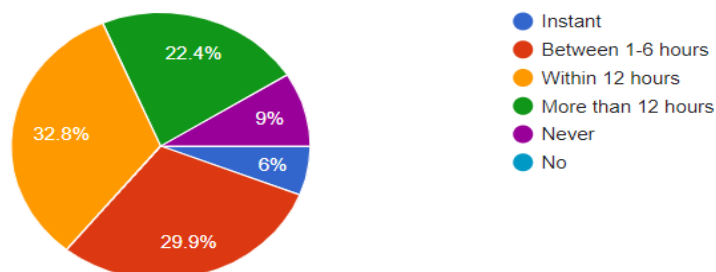


Fig 11: Response to queries

Findings and Analysis: The results are good looking, , 32.8% said they get response to their it within 12 hours, 29.9% said they take only 1-6 hours to respond to their query, 29.9% said they get reply instantly and 22.4% said it takes 12 hours to get back to them. From the data we can see that brands are trying to listen to their customer problems and trying to give answers to that. Some are taking short time and some are taking a bit long but they are getting back to their customer queries.

Did any brand ever highlight you or your friends on their social media pages?

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71 responses

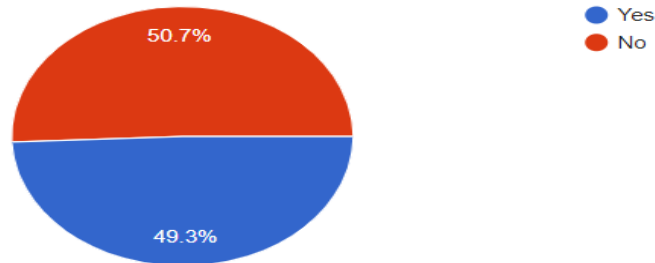


Fig 12: Highlight

Findings and Analysis: Brands often highlight their fans on their social media pages. To verify this I asked respondents whether they or their closed ones did get featured or not. From the data, it shows that 50.7% of them got featured in the page and 49.3% did not get featured. Getting featured in a brands page always attracts customers to like the brand.

Is the reply that you get on brands pages or forum are reliable and solve your problem?

Are the reply that you get on brand's pages or forums are reliable and solve your problem?

71 responses

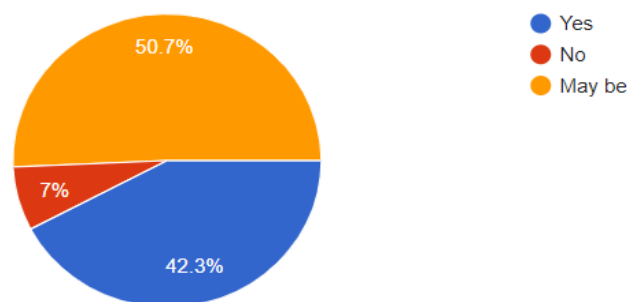


Fig 13: Reliability

Findings and Analysis: 42.3% respondents agreed that the reply they get or see on social media or any other online forums by the brand are reliable and does answer to their problem, 50.7% are in the middle of the agreement and 7% are dissatisfied with the replies. From them 42.3% are happy with the brands. This point can make them loyal to the brand.

What is the attitude of the query management team?

What is the attitude of the query management team?

71 responses



Fig 14: Query management team

Findings and Analysis: Most of the respondents agreed to the point that the query management teams are friendly and positive toward the customers, 32% rated their attitude as average and 4.2% claimed that they are rude to them. From the data it is clear that brands are trying their best to be humble to their customers. Every strategy has a flaw. 63.4% is a positive statistics. Most of the customers are happy. When a customer is happy, he/she is more likely to become loyal to the brand and will try to make a good relationship with them.

What type of content do you like to see the most on digital media?

71 responses

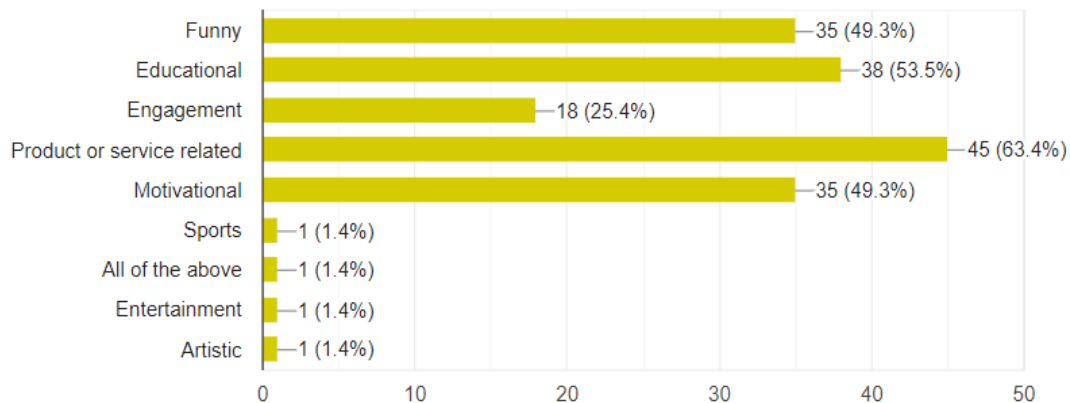


Fig 15: Content

What type of content do you like to see the most on digital media?

Findings and Analysis: According to the data, 45% customers like to see product or service related data, 38% customers like to see educational contents, 35% customers like to see funny contents, 18% customers like to see engagement contents, and only 1.4% respondents like to see contents that are based on sports, entertainment and also artistic. From this data brand can rethink about their content planning and act upon it. If brands create contents which are based on customer likings, they are most likely to be happy with the brand. In business, happiness

does create loyalty.

Do you think that every brand should now focus on promoting their business online rather than offline?

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71 responses

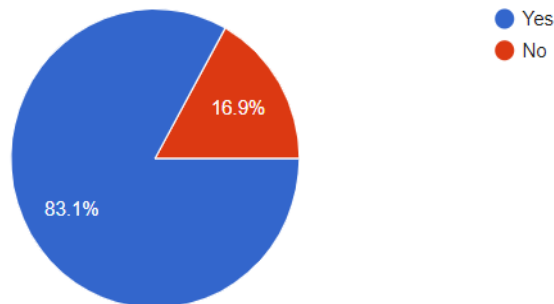


Fig 16: Online VS Offline

Findings and Analysis: 83.1% said every brand should now focus more on digital marketing rather than traditional marketing. In this research paper I have taken surveys of 103 people of most of them spend at least 3 hours a day on internet and most of them follow brands online. It clearly indicates that people are always found on internet. Marketers have to promote their products and services on internet.

Do you think brands are trying to build relationship with customers through digital media?

Do you think brands are trying to build relationships with customers through digital media?

71 responses

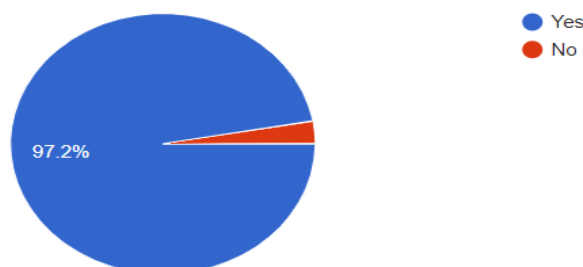


Fig 17: Customer Relationship Building

Findings and Analysis: The impact of digital marketing on customer relationships is positive. 97.2% customers feel that brands are trying to build relationships with the customers through

digital marketing channels. Only 2.8% disagreed. This clearly shows that customers are getting the point of brands. They actually feel that brands are trying to build good relationship with the customers.

Do you feel act upon the feedback they get online from customers?

Do you feel that brands act upon the feedback they get online from customers?

71 responses

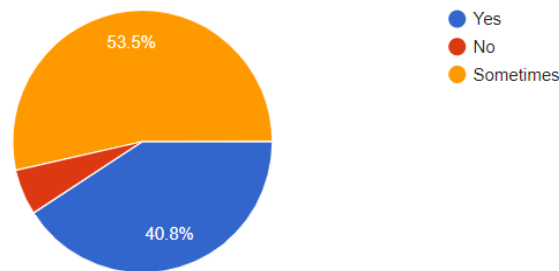


Fig 18: Feedbacks

Findings and Analysis: 40.8% respondents agreed that brands do act upon the feedback they get online from customers. However, 5.6% said they do not do that and 53.5% said sometimes they do. If customers think brands listen to them and do change certain things, there is no doubt that the brands have successfully created a good relationship with the customers.

Do you feel closer to the brands through digital media?

Do you feel closer to the brands through digital media?

71 responses

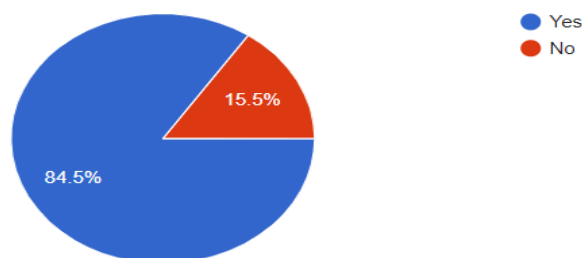


Fig 19: Closer to the brands

Findings and Analysis: Through digital marketing strategy, customer do feel closer to the brands. This study also proves that. Traditional marketing could never have done it but digital marketing did. 84.5% thinks that they feel closer to the brand just because of the presence of digital marketing run by the brands. Only 15.5% do not feel closer to the brand and they are ones who prefer traditional marketing over digital marketing.

Which platform should a brand use more to create relationship with the customers?

71 responses

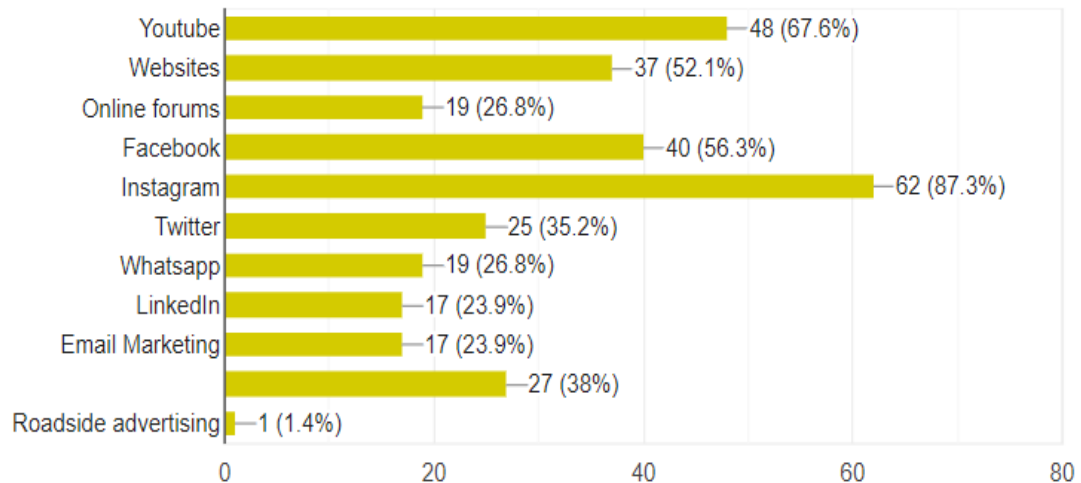


Fig 20: Platform

Findings and Analysis: According to the study, brands should use social networking sites like Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, to create relationship with the customers. Over the few years, Instagram has become a popular social networking site where people spend god amount of time from their daily life. 8% suggests traditional media and 1% suggested Roadside advertisements. YouTube is becoming popular in our country. Brands are opening their channels and vlogging from their and also giving advertisements on YouTube. YouTube could be the next game in our country in terms of customer relationship building.

Write your opinion about brands social media pages compare to traditional communication tools in building relationships with customer?

Findings and Analytics: This part is qualitative. Few respondents shared their opinion regarding customer relationship. One of the respondents said “Social media is always effective to create relationships with the customers” Here this person knows the importance of social media and has a good idea about it. He knows social media is easy to access and customers can get their problem done from here. Another respondent said “Social media is the best way to get connected to the consumers.” Yes surely brands are connected to the customers now more than ever. They are communicating with each other on daily basis.

CONCLUSION

In this work I tried to show the effects of digital marketing on customer relationships. After taking the survey, I can conclude that brands are connected to their customers more than ever. The effectiveness of digital marketing is clearly shown in the report. In this digital age, to build a

good relationship with customers need only one thing to do and that is digital marketing. Brands are trying to listen to their customers and providing best possible service to them. The amount of people in digital media is huge. Anything positive about the brand can lead them to success.

- **To notice the changes brought by digital media in brands relationship marketing-** For fulfilling this objective, I asked proper question to the respondents. Changes are clear and customers do not have to wait in line to get their service. They can get it from the online. Besides, brands organize online contests and give reward to their customers, they feature their fans on their pages and take feedback from the customer and act upon it.
- **To see how relationship marketing changed over the years and what differs from traditional approaches marketers had-** Traditional marketers had to talk to face to face or activation to keep relationship with the customers but in digital media marketers can give support to their customer at any time and unlimited number of times.
- **To see how digital media changed the way brands act toward customers and how customers gained power in their relationships with brands -**Customers are god to the brands. Negative word of mouth can spread quickly in these days with help of social networking sites. This can hamper in sales. Brands try to be humble with customers and listen to their problems and solve them.
- **To find out whether customers are being loyal toward the brands or not -** Understand what digital media are as well as digital marketing. In this report I have mentioned all the digital media like social networking sites, website, SMS/MMS, Media sharing site and what is digital marketing. In digital marketing there is pay per click, sponsored advertisement, skip able advertisements, social media marketing, google ad words, Google AdSense etc.
- **To compare traditional marketing and digital marketing to understand the impacts of digital marketing on customer engagement-**Customer engagement has been rising in digital marketing. Continuous contests, campaigns, regular posts on pages are making people to engage whereas traditional marketing has failed to engage customers.
- **To measure the impact of digital marketing on consumers and brands -** Digital marketing has enables so many things to the customers and brands. Through digital marketing brands are able to increase their sales volume and maintaining a good relationship with them. Consumers can compare brands easily and can figure out who is actually providing good services to them.
- **To examine their attitude towards queries and feedbacks received through digital media -** Query management teams are working hard and most of the time they maintained positive attitude toward the customers.
- **To measure the degree of reliability of those queries -** Most of the respondents think that the degree of reliability of those queries is high

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