



AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, STRATEGIES, PROS AND CONS AS A MARKETING TOOL

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Abstract- Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms to connect with audience to build our brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic. This involves publishing great content on social media profiles, listening to and engaging the followers, analyzing the results, and running social media advertisements. The major social media platforms (at the moment) are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat. In this article, we discuss the strategy used for marketing, planning and publishing, listening and engagement, how to analyze results using tools and advertising the business. It also provides some steps for social media marketing strategy in 2020. Each technology has its pros and cons. This article enables to gain facts about the positive and negative aspects of social media marketing.

Keywords: Social media, Platforms, Strategies, Pros and Cons.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing first started with publishing. Businesses were sharing their content on social media to generate traffic to their websites and, hopefully, sales. But social media has matured far beyond being just a place to broadcast content. Nowadays, businesses use social media in different ways. For instance, a business that is concerned about what people are saying about its brand would monitor social media conversations and response to relevant mentions (social media listening and engagement). A business that wants to understand how it's performing on social media would analyze its reach, commitment, and sales on social media with an analytics tool (social media analytics). A business that wants to reach a definite set of audience at scale would run highly-targeted social media ads (social media advertising). As a whole, these are often also known as social media management.

There are also a range of social media management tools that help businesses to get the most out of the social media platforms listed above. For example, Buffer is a platform of social media management tools, which can help you achieve success with your social media marketing. Whether you want to build a brand or raise the business, we want to help you succeed.

Objectives

1. To evaluate the social media marketing
2. To discuss the five core pillars of social media marketing
3. To know few steps of Social Media Marketing Strategy for Businesses
4. To specify the pros and cons of Social Media Marketing Strategy
5. To identify the tools used for analyzing the results

The Five Core Pillars of Social Media Marketing

1. Strategy

Before publishing something on social media, let's take a step back to look the bigger picture. The first step is to think about your social media strategy.

What are your Achieving goals? How can social media help you achieve your business goals? Some businesses use social media for increasing their brand awareness, others use it for driving website traffic and sales. Social media can also help you generate engagement around your brand, create a community, and serve as a customer support channel for your customers.

Which social media platforms do you want to focus on? The major social media platforms, mentioned above, are Face book, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat. There are also smaller and up-and-coming platforms, such as Tumblr, TikTok, and Anchor, and social messaging platforms, such as Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat. When starting out, it's better to pick a few platforms that target audience rather than to be on all platforms.

What type of content do you want to share? What type of content will attract your target audience best? Is it images, videos, or links? Is it educational or entertaining content? A good place to start is to create a marketing persona, which will help you answer these questions. And this doesn't have to be fixed forever; you can always change your strategy according to how your social media posts perform.

2. Planning and Publishing

Social media marketing for small businesses usually starts with having a consistent presence on social media. Close to three billion people (3,000,000,000!) use social media. By being present on social media platforms, you give your brand an opportunity to be discovered by your future customers.

Publishing to social media is as simple as sharing a blog post, an image, or a video on a social media platform. It's just like how you would share on your personal Facebook profile. But you will want to plan your content ahead of time instead of creating and publishing content spontaneously. Also, to ensure that you are maximizing your reach on social media, you need to publish great content that your audience likes, at the right timing and frequency.

There are now a variety of social media scheduling tools, such as Buffer Publish, that can help you publish your content automatically at your preferred time. This saves you time and allows you to reach your audience when they are most likely to engage with your content.

3. Listening and Engagement

As the business and social media following grow, conversations about the brand will also increase. People will comment on your social media posts, tag you in their social media posts, or message you directly.

People might even talk about the brand on social media without letting you know. So it is important to monitor social media conversations about the brand. If it's a positive comment, you get a chance to surprise and delight them. Otherwise, it might be helpful to offer support and correct a situation before it gets worse. ///

We may manually check all the notifications across all the social media platforms but this isn't efficient and we won't see posts that didn't tag our business's social media profile. Instead of that, it is better to use a social media listening and engagement tool that aggregates all the social media mentions and messages, including posts that didn't tag our business's social media profile.

4. Analytics

While we are publishing content or engaging on social media, we will want to know how our social media marketing is performing. Are we reaching more people on social media than last month? How many positive mentions we get a month? How many people used our brand's hashtag on their social media posts?

The social media platforms themselves provide a basic level of such information. To get more in-depth analytics information or to easily compare across social media platforms, we can use the wide range of social media analytics tools available, such as Buffer Analyze.

5. Advertising

When we have more funds to grow social media marketing, an area that we can consider is social media advertising. Social media ads allow us to reach a wider audience than those who are following.

Social media advertising platforms are so powerful nowadays that it is possible to specify exactly who to display our ads to. We can create target audiences based on their demographics, interests, behaviors, and more.

When we are running many social media advertising campaigns at once, we can consider using a social media advertising tool to make bulk changes, automate processes, and optimize our ads.

15 Step Social Media Marketing Strategy for Businesses in 2020

All businesses need to create a social media marketing strategy and operate the business social accounts in a thoughtful, measured way.

Firms can't ignore social media, however. According to Ambassador, 71% of consumers who have had a good social media service experience with a brand are likely to recommend it to others. Yet, 96% of the people that discuss brands online do not follow those brands' owned profiles.

Here is our 15-step social media marketing strategy for businesses in 2020.

15 Step Social Media Marketing Strategy for Businesses in 2020:

- Select Relevant and Realistic Social Media Marketing Goals
- Determine Your Most Relevant Metrics
- Decide Who You Want as Your Social Media Audience
- Understand Your Social Media Audience
- Select the Right Social Media Networks for Your Audience
- Investigate How Your Competitors Approach Social Media
- Plan the Types of Content You Intend to Share
- Set Up Your Accounts Properly Before You Make and Promote Content
- Establish the Best Times to Post and Set Up a Content Calendar
- Create Suitable Content to Share with Your Followers
- Promote Your Social Channels
- Engage with Your Audiences
- Consider Paid Promotion to Boost Your Audiences
- Consider Working with Influencers to Widen Your Reach
- Track Your Results and Adapt
- Frequently Asked Questions

Social media analytics tools

There are some social media analytics tools that help to track the social presence

- **Sprout Social**
- **HubSpot**
- **TapInfluence**
- **BuzzSumo**
- **Snaplytics**
- **Curalate**
- **Keyhole**
- **Google Analytics**
- **ShortStack**
- **SHIELDApp**

1. Sprout Socials

The need for cross-channel social media analytics makes Sprout Social an easy choice for No. 1 on our list.

Whether we want to dive deep into our performance on a single network, or quickly compare results across multiple networks at once, Sprout has you covered.

Track Facebook Page impressions, tally up Twitter link clicks, measure Instagram follower growth, and evaluate LinkedIn engagement, assess content performance on Pinterest and much more, all from the same location.

Then quickly organize and share the data with easy-to-understand, presentation-ready reports. Or take it a step further with Premium Analytics and create our own custom report, tailored to organization's KPIs.

2. HubSpot

HubSpot's social analytics tools offer expansive graphs and visuals that break down the numbers by specific platform features, like audience, session lengths, and impressions.

What's important to highlight is that HubSpot's social analytics tools is part of HubSpot's marketing Hub, their all-in-one inbound marketing software. This means that using the platform we'll have insight into the entire customer journey, not only social media-specific metrics. It'll be able to see which marketing tactics are working best for the business, how are they impacting the bottom line, and learn about our social media campaigns ROI.

3. TapInfluence

The boom of influencer marketing has created a need for social media tools specifically tailored for influencer campaigns.

Enter TapInfluence, an analytics platform which removes many of the "what-ifs" related to influencer marketing. This includes metrics such as reach, engagement rate and the potential price tag behind any given influencer.

In short, TapInfluence highlights relevant influencer metrics in black and white so brands can better understand whether or not a potential relationship makes sense prior to outreach.

4. BuzzSumo

Although not strictly a social tool, BuzzSumo is an awesome resource for analyzing the social engagement of any given piece of content.

If you want to see how many shares our latest blog post received on Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest, BuzzSumo can provide you with that data. We can also monitor the performance of content competing for relevant industry keywords, allowing us to see how the content marketing campaigns are stacking up against the competition.

5. Snaplytics

The popularity of ephemeral content on social media speaks for itself.

Snaplytics focuses solely on analytics for Snapchat and Instagram Stories. The platform looks at metrics such as open and completion rate, allowing brands to see where story engagement peaks and likewise at what point viewers drop off.

The need to optimize story-based content is something that modern brands should overlook at their own peril.

Although Snapchat might have fallen out of favor for some brands, bear in mind that the network still boasts hundreds of million active users among millennials and Gen Z.

Meanwhile, Stories represent one of the most-engaged methods of Instagram promotion. Going beyond native analytics is a smart move for brands who want to craft more compelling Stories or eventually run story-based ads.

6. Curalate

More and more brands are trying their hands at direct social selling.

Platforms such as Curalate serve as a hybrid storefront and analytics tool for companies looking to maximize their sales from Instagram

Chances are we've seen a branded or unbranded "Like2Buy" link in the wild. Major brands like Bose take advantage of Curalate for social sales – take a peek at their Instagram bio.

7. Keyhole

For the sake of expanding our content's reach, hashtag analytics are a must-have.

Tools such as Keyhole provide a real-time performance analysis of the industry and campaign-specific hashtags on Twitter and Instagram. Doing so allows brands to promote during peak times and likewise understand which tags are most popular among their followers.

8. Google Analytics

While it's not solely a social media analytics tool, Google Analytics is one of the best ways to track social media campaigns and even help you measure social ROI.

9. ShortStack

Typically, running a social media contest requires a surprising amount of legwork.

From the process of picking a winner to analyzing engagement from a giveaway campaign, ShortStack can pick up the slack.

For brands running frequent contests or giveaways, a dedicated contest analytics tool ensures that we aren't just giving away freebies for no reason. ShortStack looks at everything from entry data to long-term campaign performance to do just that.

10. SHIELD App

As the source of 80% of B2B social leads, B2B brands are paying more and more attention to LinkedIn. Meanwhile, the increasing need for employee advocacy means that brands should be tracking the LinkedIn presence of individual salespeople in addition to their company page.

Up-and-coming social media analytics tools like SHIELD are helping bridge that gap. For example, SHIELD examines the performance of individual employee profiles and their posts. Content analytics including average likes, comments and hashtags can help employees optimize their posts prior to sharing to maximize their reach.

Advantages

The most obvious advantage for businesses using Facebook to promote their brand is the large userbase. There are 2.7 billion monthly users according to Statista. There may be a chance to think it would be impossible to target the advert at intended audience, but improvements in tech have been put to good use for advertisers.

Customer Data Analysis

Sites like Facebook have third party providers specializing in software and services for data segmentation and businesses using the data get the reward with their SMM adverts been seen by their anticipated customers. This is an advantage for advertisers but for users it's been a disadvantage as noted by the negative outcome of Cambridge Analytical use of Facebook user data in the US 2016 election.

Increased brand awareness

By 2021 Statista predict over 3 billion people will be using social media in one form or another. Therefore given that almost every person owns a smartphone, desktop or a laptop, and they spend a lot of time on social media sites, doing any sort of SMM if implemented correctly should at worst increase brand recognition for the business.

The key to being successful with social media marketing is executing a well-thought-out plan. Organic sharing of boosted posts, for example, can improve exposure, and this can begin within the business with employees. Generating engagement is vital, and it's in the true nature of social networking so when people interact with the product posts greater awareness among other users occurs, and from here referrals and enquiries increase and then actual sales.

Better customer satisfaction

By and large, most humans seek to attract attention and acknowledgement, and the networking sites encourage it. It's standard practice to take selfies, and that includes sharing images and videos of using products etc.

Followers will like, comment and share these posts and before long prospective customers will ask questions relating to the products and services, and they expect a quick reply. It's this immediacy of contact that improves customer satisfaction. Therefore when we're attentive, and should respond directly within the page to queries, that page attracts more views from the followers and the customers' networks.

The perception is that business genuinely cares and provides excellent service, and this is an advantage for SMM, i.e. the immediacy of contact with prospective customers.

Cost effective

Social media marketing can be cost-effective when you know how to do it well. The initial creating of a new profile and signing in is free for almost every social media platform so getting set up is not a huge investment nor risk. However, we can burn through the marketing budget quickly by attempting to do it without any support from an SMM expert.

Don't do it yourself. Choose a marketing professional or agency with a history of proven SMM success. For example, ask to see the agency's case studies on Facebook ads for business. Ask for assistance on an SMM strategy and the budget. Do it right the first time, this is the most cost-effective approach for the business.

Increased inbound traffic

Online marketing should increase inbound traffic to the website. With SMM, when the campaign is expertly crafted with a one-click action from the channel to the website and ideally the product page, visitors will come and stay on site if they like what they see and read. Therefore make sure the advert has a call to action and on the landing page avoid populating it with 'noise,' i.e. pop up banners and unintuitive features.

Provide value with high-value content on all pages and particularly on your product pages. Hence, the increase in traffic to your site from social media channels not only likes what they see but also converts into a sale or at minimum signs up for your newsletter.

Gain market insight

For any business to succeed, it must know its customers really well. It is mandatory to know their needs, opinions and interests. This is called personalised data and we wrote a new article on how to acquire more insight into customer expectations and desires from current digital marketing initiatives.

With the high engagement among users on social media, the platforms provide a vehicle for businesses to gain market insight to improve their offerings and service.

Disadvantages

Social media has been around nearly a couple of decades, so we're more comfortable with it now, and we trust it more too. However, it's not always been this way. Take Facebook, for example, using it was a steep learning curve, and there were too many software updates which altered displays and usability. Then the default user privacy setting set to 'public' which after user backlash still took Facebook five years to change to visible to friends.

Privacy is important, and all sites must have privacy statements on how they manage customer data capture and what they do with it. However, for business using SMM, the negatives include cost, slow returns, complexity, and competitors.

Exposure to competitors

Social media marketing enables you to study our competitors' strategy. However, they can still study our business methods through social media platform. This puts our business at the risk of being outdone.

Needs qualified personnel

To focus on core business issues, we will have to employ qualified personnel to manage the account and have the traffic under control. This implies that we have to invest both in apparatus and salary for a quality outcome.

Slow returns on investments

Social media marketing is a long term investment i.e. plan to run campaigns continuously.

Tarnish brand name

If a piece of negative information finds its way onto a social media platform, the public will have the chance to express their dissatisfaction. This will tarnish the product name and deter potential customers from establishing relationships and doing business with the brand.

Time consuming

People may deliberately ignore our page because they may be interested in other sites. To get them to appreciate and share our posts may take time. For this reason, resources in terms of money and time must be allocated to ensure frequent publishing of aesthetic posts.

II. CONCLUSION

Before you invest in a social media marketing strategy, engage an SMM agency to help you research and plan a workable approach to achieve the marketing and sales goals.

SMM is not a 'one size fits all' strategy. Therefore it's easy to get it wrong and end up worse off with little new business to show for our investment. Therefore it is better to engage the experts to cut through the 'noise' to deliver a high rate of conversion and ROI for your business.

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