

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract: Social media marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, with platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp influencing how people make purchasing decisions. This analysis looks at how different age groups interact with these platforms and the positive and negative effects on their behavior. Younger users (18-34) on Instagram are drawn to visually appealing content and follow influencers for product recommendations, but they can become overwhelmed by ads and question the authenticity of some posts. Twitter, popular with users aged 18-40, offers real-time interaction, but its fast-paced nature can make it hard for brands to hold attention, and public criticism can spread quickly. Millennials (25-40) on Facebook value the sense of community and appreciate detailed product information, though concerns about privacy and the sheer volume of ads can reduce engagement. For older users (40+) on WhatsApp, the direct, personal communication from brands is appealing, but too many marketing messages can feel intrusive. Overall, this study highlights the importance of brands adapting their strategies to fit the preferences and behaviors of different age groups on each platform. Additionally, the rise of social media activism has changed how consumers interact with brands. Many users now expect brands to take a stance on social issues and contribute positively to discussions around topics like diversity, environmental concerns, and social justice. This expectation can significantly influence purchasing decisions; consumers may choose to support brands that align with their beliefs and withdraw support from those that don't. Furthermore, the use of storytelling—where brands share their journey, challenges, and successes—can create an emotional connection with consumers. This narrative approach not only engages the audience but also builds trust, as consumers feel they are part of the brand's story..

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I. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:

Social media marketing is all about connecting with people online to promote products, services, or brands. It happens on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Essentially, it's about creating and sharing engaging content that resonates with users, encouraging them to like, share, or even buy something.

Additionally, social media marketing relies heavily on understanding audience behavior and preferences, allowing for tailored messaging that can enhance brand loyalty. Brands often use analytics to track performance and adapt strategies based on what works best. Collaborating with influencers can also amplify reach and credibility. Ultimately, it's about creating meaningful relationships and conversations that drive brand awareness and sales.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:

Social media marketing is essential for businesses today because it opens the door to a huge audience on platforms like Facebook, Instagram often at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising. It allows brands to connect with specific groups of people, making their marketing efforts more personal and relevant. Plus, social media fosters direct conversations between brands and customers, helping to build strong relationships and loyalty. By sharing engaging and valuable content, businesses can increase their visibility and drive traffic to their websites.

Also these platforms offer insights and analytics that help brands understand what works and what doesn't, allowing them to adapt quickly to feedback or any challenges they face. In a fast-paced digital world, this agility helps businesses stay competitive and connected to their audiences.

Moreover, social media platforms provide valuable insights and analytics that help brands understand their audience's preferences and behaviors. This data enables businesses to measure the effectiveness of their campaigns, identify trends, and adapt quickly to feedback or challenges. In a fast-paced digital world, this agility is crucial for staying competitive and connected to audiences.

Additionally, social media marketing can enhance brand reputation. Positive interactions and timely responses to inquiries or concerns can elevate a brand's image, while negative experiences can be addressed promptly to mitigate damage. Lastly, as more consumers turn to social media for product recommendations and reviews, having a robust social media presence can significantly influence purchasing decisions, making it a vital component of any modern marketing strategy.

CONSUMER :

A consumer is someone who buys or uses products and services for personal use rather than for resale. This includes individuals and families making decisions based on their needs, preferences, and social influences. The process of making a purchase involves several stages: recognizing a need, researching options, evaluating alternatives, making the purchase, and reflecting on the experience afterward.

Consumers are influenced by a variety of factors. Psychological elements such as motivation, beliefs, and attitudes shape how they perceive products. Social factors, including family, friends, and cultural background, also play a significant role in their choices. Economic conditions, like income levels and pricing, further impact purchasing decisions.

WHAT IS CONSUMER BEHAVIOR :

Consumer behavior is all about understanding how people make decisions when it comes to buying products or services. It looks at various influences, like personal feelings, social circles, cultural backgrounds, and financial situations. The process includes recognizing what they need, gathering information, comparing options, choosing what to buy, and reflecting on their experience afterward. By tapping into this understanding, businesses can get to know their customers better, customize their marketing efforts, and improve overall satisfaction. This not only helps build strong connections with customers but also encourages brand loyalty and boosts sales.

IMPACT OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON DIFFERENT AGE GROUP :

1. Instagram – Younger People (18-34 years)

Instagram is highly popular among younger people due to its focus on visual content and influencers.

Positive Effects:

- **Visual Appeal:** Younger users are attracted to aesthetic content, such as high-quality images, stories, and reels, making them highly responsive to brands that have strong visual marketing.
- **Influencer Marketing:** This age group is influenced by social media influencers and celebrities. They often follow influencers for product recommendations, which can lead to increased brand trust and purchases.

Negative Effect

- **Authenticity Concerns:** This group is highly aware of inauthentic content. If influencer posts feel too commercial or forced, users may distrust the brand and disengage.
- **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out):** While effective in driving engagement, FOMO-based marketing can also cause anxiety and dissatisfaction among younger users if they feel pressured to keep up with trends or purchases they can't afford.

2. Facebook – Millennials (25-40 years)

While newer platforms are emerging, Facebook remains popular among millennials, who use it to stay connected with friends and communities.

Positive Effects:

- **Community Engagement:** Millennials often participate in Facebook groups or local communities, which makes it easier for brands to foster loyalty through shared interests.
- **In-Depth Content:** Facebook allows for longer posts and more detailed information, which appeals to millennials who like to thoroughly research products or services before making purchases.
- **Targeted Ads:** Facebook's advanced ad targeting tools help brands reach millennials based on their demographics, interests, and behaviors, improving the chances of successful campaigns.
- **Family-Oriented Content:** With many millennials starting families, they are more likely to engage with ads for family-oriented products like home improvement, children's items, or health products.

Negative Effects:

- **Privacy Concerns:** After scandals like Cambridge Analytica, millennials have become more cautious about data privacy, which makes them wary of overly targeted ads.
- **Ad Overload:** The sheer volume of ads on Facebook can lead to ad fatigue, causing millennials to disengage from brand content.

3. WhatsApp – Older People (40+ years)

WhatsApp is commonly used by older generations for its simplicity and direct messaging features.

Positive Effects:

- **Personalized Communication:** Older users appreciate the direct communication WhatsApp offers, whether through personalized messages from brands or group chats. This personalized touch builds trust and makes them more likely to engage with brands.
- **Local Business Marketing:** WhatsApp is particularly useful for local businesses that can create community groups to promote offers, services, or events to older users. These users are more responsive to familiar, local brands.
- **Ease of Use:** WhatsApp's simple interface and straightforward messaging make it comfortable for older generations to use, especially for receiving updates or customer support from businesses.

Negative Effects:

- **Intrusive Marketing:** Older users might feel that marketing messages on WhatsApp are intrusive in their private space, especially if brands send frequent or unsolicited messages.
- **Privacy Concerns:** While WhatsApp is perceived as secure, older users might still be cautious about sharing personal information or engaging with brands through messaging apps.
- **Limited Discovery:** Unlike Facebook or Instagram, WhatsApp does not have a public feed, making it difficult for older users to discover new brands unless they are directly introduced via a chat or group. This limits the platform's effectiveness for broader brand awareness.

Challenges in social media marketing :

- **Too Much Content:** There's a ton of content out there, so it's tough for brands to get noticed.
- **Finding the Right People:** It can be tricky to know who to target with your posts and ads.
- **Different Platforms:** Each social media site has its own style, so you need different strategies for each one.
- **Measuring Success:** Figuring out if your posts are really working can be confusing.
- **Dealing with Criticism:** Handling negative comments or reviews in a positive way can be challenging.

- **Time and Money:** It can be hard to find enough time and budget to manage social media effectively.
- **Staying Updated:** Keeping up with the latest trends and platform changes requires constant attention.
- **Creating Good Content:** Coming up with fresh and interesting posts regularly can be a lot of work.
- **Privacy Issues:** Respecting user privacy and following rules about data can be complicated.

II. CONCLUSION

Social media marketing has changed the way people discover, connect with, and buy from brands. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp all play different roles in how consumers behave, depending on their age and how they use each platform.

Younger people on Instagram often make quick decisions based on trends, visual content, and recommendations from influencers. They like engaging with brands but are quick to spot fake or overly commercial content, which can turn them off.

On the other hand, older users on Facebook and WhatsApp prefer more personalized interactions and deeper connections with brands. They tend to trust companies that offer clear, helpful information and respect their privacy. However, they're less likely to engage with flashy or fast-paced marketing.

Overall, social media marketing is a powerful tool for influencing people's buying decisions, but it's important for brands to adapt to the needs and preferences of their audience. Building trust, being authentic, and creating meaningful experiences are key to winning over consumers across different platforms and age groups.

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