Nutshell

Understanding Social Media Marketing

From the Chairman's desk

Dear Members,

We are all aware that this is the era of the social. Brands need to not just be present on social media, but also excel at it as it is the most effective way to engage with consumers today, have meaningful conversations, and build lasting relationships.

While most marketers are participating in social media, an alarmingly high percentage is not sure of which platforms and tools are the most effective for their brand. This issue of Nutshell is an attempt to answer these fundamental questions of social media marketing. The different pieces aim to equip marketers with a keen understanding of the different facets of this new-age media, and the high potential it presents for their various brands. We hope to provide everyone with a robust foundation, basis which they can swiftly navigate the waters of this fast-paced, dynamic environment of social media.

Please feel free and share your suggestions with us. Your feedback will go a long way in helping us make our future issues relevant. You can send your feedback to isa.ed@vsnl.net

Regards,

Saugata Gupta
Chairman

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Social Media Marketing

Bharat Rajamani, Ernst & Young

"Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make, but about the stories you tell" quoted by Seth Godin, a famous author, holds true in the current world where the game has moved from being on social media to how well they are doing on Social Media.

Social Media Marketing is the process of promoting brands, gaining website traffic or attention and engaging with the consumers through social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ etc. Social media marketing programs are about creating content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it in their social channels. This result in generating electronic word of mouth (eWoM) refers to any statement consumers share via the Internet (e.g., websites, social networks, instant messages, news feeds) about an event, product, service, brand or company, especially on social media platforms. When the main idea spreads from user to user and connects, it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself and this form of marketing results in earned media rather than paid media.

Social media are also referred as interactive media where the power has shifted to the hands of consumers. Social media has made it simple for anyone to publish and distribute media. It has also made it simple for anyone to access the content that has been published. The realm of social media is about collaborating, creating content, sharing and, most of all, connecting.

Source >

Emergence of Social Media
'Take a risk and keep testing because what works today won't work tomorrow BUT what worked yesterday MAY work again' this is the state of digitalization in India which is increasing EXPONENTIALLY with every passing day. However, at the same time, it has re-worked the market potential in such a way that it has integrated the old world charm of marketing and consumerism with modern day social media advent into the consumers' life.

The first noticeable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular, creating a social media sensation that's still popular today. After the invention of blogging, social media began to explode in popularity. Sites like MySpace and LinkedIn gained prominence in the early 2000s, and sites like Photobucket and Flickr facilitated online photo sharing. YouTube came out in 2005, creating an entirely new way for people to communicate and share with each other across great distances.

By 2006, Facebook and Twitter both became available to users throughout the world. These sites remain some of the most popular social networks

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on the Internet. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare and Pinterest began popping up to fill

specific social networking niches.

Today, there is a tremendous variety of social networking sites, and many of them can be linked to allow cross-posting. This creates an environment where users can reach the maximum number of people without sacrificing the intimacy of person-to-person communication. This infographic from Unified Social gives us a timeline of all the developments in social advertising across platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Source >

Importance of Social Media for Marketers
It's been widely quoted that with the foray of social media in our daily life, 'we have FINALLY found for the first time in human history, a technology that allows people to really maintain a rich connection with much larger number of people resulting in bigger and better opportunities.' In terms of marketing, we can safely say that it has provided the marketers a global platform for their products and services and the consumers an even larger scape of canvas where they can, not just widen their buying scope but also their perspective at looking at the brands globally.

The whole marketing landscape has changed due to the emergence of social media, new platforms have opened up for marketers to inform their consumers about their product and create content which can influence a consumer in their buying process.

According to Hubspot, 92% of marketers in 2014 claimed that social media marketing was important for their business, with 80% indicating their efforts increased traffic to their websites. And according to Social Media Examiner, 97% of marketers are currently participating in social media—but 85% of participants aren't sure what social media tools are the best to use. Now, with the use of social media one can see their target market, up close and personal, you can find customers you didn't know existed. Since social is real-time
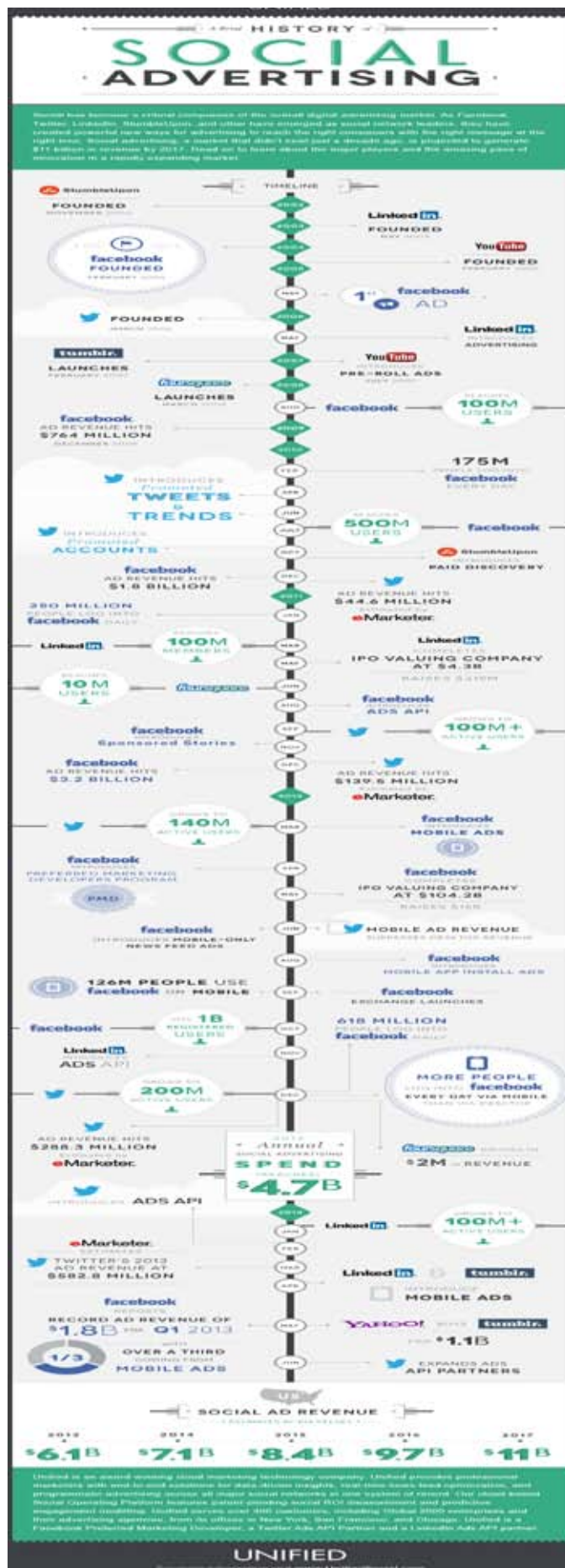
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marketing, one of the most important feature is that you can respond to your customers problems immediately and opportunities can be converted with every post on your social media page. Not surprisingly, when you stay in touch with your customer base they are more likely to buy from you when they need the products you sell. Posting coupon codes can also help boost the sales of your business which is called "The Content Factory", in which people make purchases using the code. Communication is most important for any brand to drive its business and positive interaction with your TG can lead to an improved reputation for your brand. Ultimately, people do not buy from companies, they buy from people and social media can put a more informal, hip and personal face on an impersonal company.

Source >

Social Media as a content creation platform
Social media is real time marketing it helps you to get in touch with your customers and solve their queries and grievances. Social media can also help in content marketing distribution system. Social media accounts for a huge portion of referral traffic on the web. A joint study by AOL and Nielsen found that people spend more than 50 percent of their time online with content and an additional 30 percent of their time on social channels where content can be shared.

Source >

CONSUMER USAGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
As 'Nostalgia gets replaced with convenience', consumers are increasingly using the internet as their first port of call in framing and driving their purchase decisions. While this number is different for different categories of products/services, one thing is clear: 'this number is CONSTANTLY on the rise!'

It is evident that the learning curve on the internet

is EXPONENTIAL. As the Indian consumers get more comfortable with the internet, their usage pattern exhibits exponential growth that belies age and other demographic variables.

In addition, due to the increasing usage of internet there is an advent of SOCIAL MEDIA platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. in the daily lives of consumers, in-sync with the e-commerce industry. Social media is so changeable that it is difficult to predict its future. However, due to its changeable nature and fast-paced growth, social media is said to disrupt the world in a number of ways, both, for businesses and end-users, which is the exact synopsis of Social Media trend in India. Though it took a while to penetrate into our lives, it today has a staggering number of almost 142 million Indians just on a social media site like Facebook from all strata at its behest.

Even from a marketer's perspective, social media plays an increasingly important role as a marketing platform. In today's socially adept age, more and more retailers use social media to target online consumers, as a result of which, importance of bringing social networking sites (SNSs) as a part of daily life transactions cannot be underplayed.

Due to social media's role is marketing being fairly new, it cannot be defined as an integral marketing function from a marketer's perspective. Is social media part of a bigger function? Is it a distribution channel or perhaps a function on its own right?

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Is it part of the brand team, digital team, or customer support? These questions have no industry-standard or broadly-accepted answers. As such, they prevent social teams from clearly defining their role and, therefore, the results they aspire to achieve. Consequently, when asked what results they need to drive, social marketers tend to provide a variety of inconsistent answers; from brand awareness, to lead generation, to share of voice, or even customer support.

Ray Potner, Managing Director, The Future Place, while describing the importance of social media platforms said ,"Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc. are not successful because their technology is especially clever (although it is), they are successful because they tap directly in the super-social collective, and provide easier and more fulfilling ways for people to exhibit group behaviour.''

Talking about the gravity of the advent of social media in the scope of marketing of various brands Kay Madati, VP, Audience Experience, CNN said, "You talk to a lot of brands and they're terrified of the user-generated space. We all have to get a little bit more comfortable that the conversation is already happening. It's whether or not we begin to participate that counts."

Further, reiterating the importance of social media, Daniel Rowles, Chartered Institute of Marketing said, "Social networks and social media offer great opportunities for marketers, especially in gaining feedback and customer insights. The biggest problem, and the biggest barrier to entering this online world, is that we might not like what we hear."

In India, Karthik Nagarajan, Director, The Nielson Company India pointed out, "Social media is no more a concept in India but something that brands are investing real time and money into, as we speak. There is an overwhelming acceptance of the fact that there are huge gains from this medium if used correctly, and that is shown in the structured approach that brands are adopting - in deployment as well as measurement."

From a consumer's perspective, social media is giving them a significantly narrower and niche range of sources which further eases the process of shortlisting future purchases or helps in bifurcating similar pool of products from each other.

It is widely said that LinkedIn is for people you know. Facebook is for people you used to know. Twitter is for people you want to know and this can be seen with the kind of usage statistics that have been noticed:

Just towards the initial days of 2016, the user base of Facebook increased to 142 million which is quite a hike from its exhibited user base in 2015.

Along with Facebook, even social media sites like Instagram and Foursquare boasts of a user base of 5.9 million and 55 million respectively.

Social media websites are providing a platform for buyers to voice their opinion in an open forum where their voice can be heard by other like-minded individuals. By building strength in numbers, consumers through increasing social media usage are being able to put their point across to reputed organizations and brands, and force them to change their product through the use of social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and many more.

This is just one of the many ways consumers have found social media platforms to be a form of expressing and exercising their consumer specific rights.

Due to the advent of social media, there has also been a dramatic shift in the relationship between a brand and a consumer. Social media has taken

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power and control out of the hands of large corporations and famous brands, and has put it in the hands of the consumers. Realizing this, many CEOs and other top level executives of big name brands have taken to Facebook and Twitter to engage directly with the customers who might be buying their products.

Brands too, have realized the potential that lies in using social media for marketing purposes and in alluring the consumers and several brands have adopted this medium as one of their main marketing tools.

Through sites likes Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and more, brands and the consumers are being able to strike a better communication.

Along with brand and consumer relationship, more and more consumers have started interacting with each other over websites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and more, and promoting their favorite products on these platforms. This gives the business more exposure, and an opportunity to understand their buyers, their needs and their dissatisfaction.

Ensuring that consumers feel valuable can help businesses stay two steps ahead of their competitors in this ever-changing market. Social media has drastically changed the marketing game for businesses. The sooner companies realize the importance of social media and the role it plays in marketing, the sooner they can start reaping the endless rewards it offers.

Thanks to social media, everyday consumers have built an undeniable follower base, giving them stronger voices and the ability to impact public opinion and sales. In fact, consumers engage with 11.4 pieces of content prior to making a purchase, making user generated content even more powerful than before. Curated content is also more engaging. Posts with curated content links generate 33% more clicks than original content links.

Facebook:

"One picture speaks a thousand words" and this is the most important thing for customer engagement. Facebook allows the features of photos, videos and long descriptions about the product and how to use it. It also provides with the feature of directly going to the online shop through Facebook and buying the product immediately with a few clicks.

Facebook has crossed the 1.55 Billion monthly active users (MAU) and India has the second highest user base after USA with 142 Million MAU, including 133 Million accessing it through their phones and 69 Million users every day with 64 Million users over the phone.

There are 3 Million businesses who advertise on Facebook with a booming increase of 50% from last year. Looking forward to the push for small business, the social media giant is providing the perfect platform where 57% of the users are connected to the small business as of 2016.

Source >

Facebook Notes

This feature allows profile users to create long form of the content and hence providing detailed information about the same. One of the easiest ways to generate leads through Facebook notes is writing a short summary about your post and then adding a link so that if the viewer finds the short summary interesting he can directly access the website and the entire traffic can be diverted there.

This same concept can be used by brands by using Facebook notes where the description about the product or the service and can be linked to the company's website.

Facebook Adverts

Facebook advert is used to target the right people. The most important aspect of this feature is you can choose the type of people you want to target. We can see facebook adverts when we open stories from our connections. Facebook Adverts are placed in the stream of information people view on Facebook, they're more likely to see your adverts and take action.

Facebook adverts have many advantages because of the variety of features such as they can find the direction of the shop, watch videos.

Source >

You can segregate your customers on the basis of location, demographics, interest, behaviour and connections.

The customer based can be expanded with custom audience where you can find the customers who are on Facebook and look alike audience which helps you to find out people similar to your best customers.

This forms a very effective practice as it reduces the ambiguity as it is more of a BTL activity. Trends can be generated as you are targeting a very specific set of customers

Marketplace

This feature is powered by Oodle. You can list down what you have and what you want among your network. Listing can be done for anything and track the connections easily in a market place.

It helps to lead on to a page or an app on Facebook or a third party website. The buying process is simple and automatic. Payment can be directly made through the debit or credit card.

Source >

The top 5 ads on Facebook for the year 2015:
1) Ice bucket challenge
2) #Likeagirl
3) #KissaLOT
4) GT Ride
5) KAFA

Source >

Instagram

Instagram is an online photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service. It becomes a very effective platform because it's completely image based.

The monthly users for Instagram is as huge as 400 million and out of this 5.9 million users are from India

Source >

Instagram users in India are mostly young. 80% of the Instagram users are below 30 as of November 2015. 90% of the users use their phone for taking and posting photographs. This subgroup has a very high spending power as a whole.

Over 50% of the Indian instagrammers follow brands and have purchased the product and services from the brand they follow.

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The brands are been followed so that the customers are up-to-date about the upcoming products, learn about the deals and shop for product online.

The companies which advertise on Instagram in India are:
• Procter & Gamble
• Nestle India
• Grofers
• Paper Boat
• Truly madly match makers
• Sports Keeda

Other areas of interests for Indian Instagrammers include:
Food, travel, photography, technology, fashion and sports

Source >

The top 5 brands on Instagram in 2016:
• We Work
• National Geographic
• Coca Cola
• Frooti
• Frank Bod

Source >

Multiple Accounts
Users can maintain multiple accounts on the same device.

These feature rolled out considering the profiles which are dedicated to business, sports etc.

This feature therefore helps to maintain a dedicated account for its personal and professional use. Marketing becomes more effective and fruitful when it caters to the product more.

General strategies for using Instagram as a platform for marketing are:
1) Using general Hash tags
2) Two way communication Portal
3) Increase the frequency of your posts

Marketing is all about reach, more the reach better is the awareness. This general strategy increases the exposure.

Instagram Direct
Instagram Direct received a major update, adding new features such as instant messaging, adding more than one user and sharing more than one photos in a single conversation, and sharing post and profiles from feeds directly to the user. This will help to share a post in a group or to a single user.

Looking at the number of users surging everyday on Instagram, it is becoming a very important platform for brands.
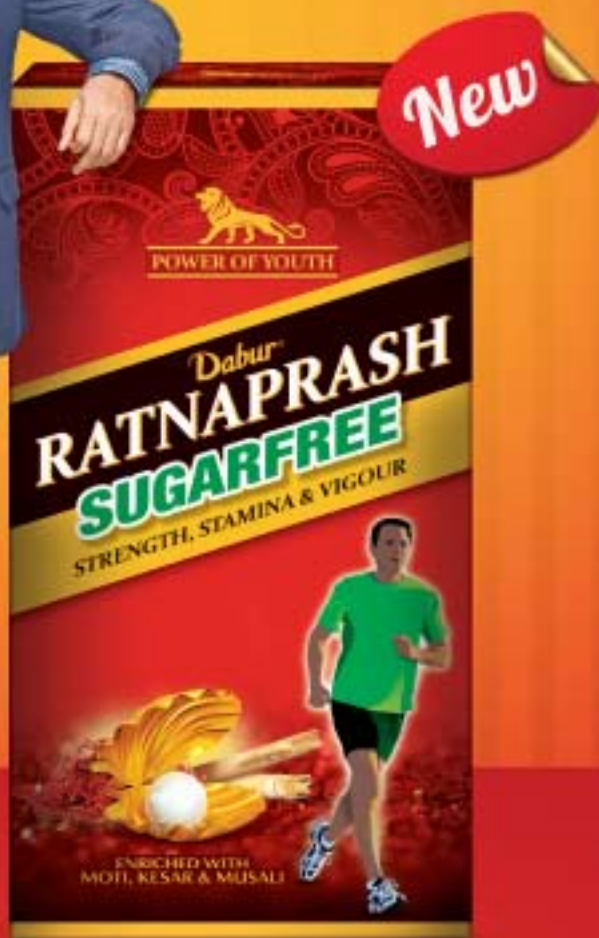

Companies such as Nike, Starbucks, Nordstrom are effectively using it by planning their strategy well in advance.

The entire concept of Instagram is based on the

system of followers where there are a few trend setters or influencers who have a great influence over the entire social media world.

The top 10 accounts which you should follow in 2016 in are:
• @photowali
• @indiapictures
• @shivesh17
• @fotobaba
• @dayanitasingh
• @hashimbadani
• @delhistreetart
• choudharyravi
• bala.murugan.9693
• @abhinavista

Source >

Facebook is promoting Instagram as a profitable medium for advertising in India. It feels a bit ironic that a social media giant as big as Facebook which has 1.55 billion users is promoting a platform which has just crossed 400 million users. But looking at the potential for this medium it is a very positive and a fruitful move.

Nestle's KitKat has seen a surge in the brand association and message association for consumers between the age of 15 to 17. As the targeting was proper by the company because majority of the user on Instagram are young and chocolate lovers everything almost went right for the Swiss food major.

Source >

Entrepreneurship is the new wave in India and is taking pace and power simultaneously after the PM promoting it and liberalizing the norms for the same. Instagram has formed a very important channel for providing a superb window shopping experience for online buyers.

The other social media sites like Facebook,

YouTube and Twitter are main stream channels and Instagram has become the trend currently.

After getting a good response on Instagram they have expanded their paradigm of advertising on other social media platforms but they haven't received the same response for the rest.

Tumblr

Number of Tumblr user as of 2016 is 555 million per month out of which 69% of Tumblr users are millennials having a whopping 280.4 million blogs and 129.7 million posts as of 2016.

Looking at the statistics the internet giant yahoo has made the right decision to acquire the micro blogging channel for $1.1Bn in 2013 but the valuation has come down to $230 million.

The price of the startup has been a topic of debate when Forbes published that Yahoo has just paid $262 million.

Source >

Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website the channel allows users to post multimedia content in forms of blogs.

This is one of the fastest emerging platforms in the country because of the excellent dashboard interface and GIF replacing images in the paradigm of marketing.

Different aspects that needs to be considered while branding on Tumblr

Images and videos

The products which are attractive should be promoted over this channel many different strategies are used and as and how GIF is getting

more advanced it is giving a news strategy for its promotion.

Marketing is not about the content but the timing of the promotion.

Posts in the morning, during the lunch time and dinner are the best because people are detached from their work during that particular time hence new ideas get drilled easily and effectively.

Hashtags are the key entities for the search so never spam it because the first five counts.Tumblr allows to create bit.ly-like shortened URLs from within your Tumblr page for each post.

Source >

Marketing on Tumblr can be made more effective by:
• Tumblr used for customer care
• Link to other social network platforms
• Make your customer feel special
• Using Tumblr as a selling platform
•Tumblr specific details

Source >

Pinterest

For marketers it's always about views and hits and Pinterest provides the perfect platform to drive traffic to their websites. This can be authenticated by the figures published by pre research which shows 28% of the adults are on Pinterest.

Pinterest becomes such an important platform in the world of digital because it has 100 million users having 81% of female users with more than 50billion pins and 1 billion plus Boards as of 2015. Pinterest has a huge potential and it has been predicted that the growth will at the rate of 24% which will outshine Facebook's 9.2%.

Looking at the facts and figures, from the marketing point of view, users who have saved shopping pins are 2 million per day, where 87% of the user have made their purchase decisions on the basis of Pinterest.

Source >

Pinterest has become such widely accepted platform because of the many advantages it offers.

It has a very well organized interface where you can see pins made by family and friends. Getting the desired hits can be done by social integration and that's exactly the case with Pinterest because the user needs an account on twitter or Facebook. Pinterest drives more traffic than Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube combined. It has been observed that pins with price tags are more likeable than the one without.

All the above data are so much inclined towards sales and marketing, as this platform provides the perfect information about the products listed on it. Pinterest works on the basis of pins and repins where you repin some stuff of a particular user the person whose photo is been pinned gets notified

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via the mail and hence it's a win win situation for both.

The organized interface is very helpful to reduce the ambiguity of the data and sum up all the information on one board.

Sephora has recently entered India but is a very famous brand all over the world because in lay-man's language, it's a super market for makeup. They have boards such as Make up of the day, Today's obsession, Eyes etc.

Ladies brands have a huge presence here because Pinterest caters to a very huge female audience. This not only promotes the changes in the fashion industry and trends but also the brands.

Top 5 brands on Pinterest:
• L.L. Bean has 5.2 Million followers and 1740 pins
• Nordstrom has 4.4 Million followers and 24958 pins
• Lowes has 3.4 Million followers and 4000 pins
• Everyday health has 3.6 Million followers and 10767 pins
• Etsy has 0.6 Million followers and 12900 pins

Source >

YouTube
Today, video content is grabbing the lion's share the content marketing; so much so that Facebook and Twitter are targeting video marketers by giving them the best platform for hosting videos. YouTube, a free platform from the stable of Google is the leading platform for Video-blogging and marketing.

With over 4 billion video views per day and 6 billion hours' worth of videos viewed per month, there is a tremendous audience out there for every kind of video. The Indian space has seen an exponential rise in marketers in the form of stand-up artists, fashionistas, tech advisors, pranksters and the likes; thereby enabling the discovery and growth of people from all walks of life. The Joker says in his iconic role that "If you are good at something, never do it for free". The same mantra applies here as YouTube is a great platform to strut one's expertise over an ever growing network as proven by the 27% year on year growth rate.

During the press conference to announce Nokia being acquired by Microsoft, Nokia CEO ended his speech saying this "We didn't do anything wrong, but somehow, we lost". Upon saying that, all his management team, himself included, teared sadly. Our strengths from the past will be replaced by the trends of the future. Winston Churchill once said that "In failing to prepare, we are preparing to fail." YouTube and video blogging is that new tide which is evident by the fact that 81% of millennials and 81.9% of internet users aged between 14-17 years, use YouTube. The teenagers of today will hold important decision and policy making positions within their respective organisations. YouTube has already exceeded the 10 million mark for the YouTube kids app download.

Indian bloggers have learnt to broaden their internet reach by making their subscribers feel connected and have leveraged the social media

giant to get massive benefits. The possibility for a blogger to drive huge traffic to his blog from YouTube is high and that calls for more subscribers on YouTube. Indian marketers and brands are leveraging its potential to expand the base and grow their business by increasing awareness of their brand, building trust, taking the business to a huge audience thereby giving an opportunity to realize business objectives. Videos enjoy better search engine rankings and are easy to integrate

with other platforms thus, marketers and businesses can benefit from cycling and sharing of videos.

Foursquare

The interesting thing about Foursquare is its competitive edge that awards user a virtual badge

after accomplishing a certain check-in feat. For instance, checking-in into a certain location on a timely basis will earn users a Mayor's badge, etc. This keeps the app interesting and fun to use. A nifty tool, the foursquare integration has gone deeper as locations like pubs, hotels, etc. have started offering discounts and offers to people who check-in at a stipulated time. It can also be integrated in Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites. However, the idea was to never "build the world's best check-in button" but to create a system that could assimilate the world with people in the same way Google assimilates web pages with machines and then puts all of it to use it in helping people find the best and most interesting experiences in the real world.

Foursquare app can ping you to suggest a sandwich shop you'd love as you walk through a neighbourhood for the first time, or so the Swarm app can automatically "snap" you to the place we know you're about to check-in to Foursquare is one of the only companies doing proactive and predictive local search and firing off contextual notifications.

Special discounts, welcome deals, first time check-in treats, giving away free goodies – Indian brands have started giving away all these and many

more free goodies to the customers who are active Foursquare users. What are even better are the advantages a Mayor gets on becoming the mayor of a particular location. Brands give away a lot of free goodies/ special deals/discounts reserved only for the mayor. For instance,

• Timberland – a global apparel bigwig, located at Vasant Kunj, was offering a special edition t-shirt for free on the 5th check in at the store.

• Underdoggs; an up market pub & restaurant located in Vasant Kunj campaigns aggressively by offering fresh new deals to users such as a making a choice from among Veg. Spring Rolls, Veg. Shammi kebabs, Chicken Kabaddi; all for free just by checking in.

• Underdoggs also offers unlimited happy hours for a group of friends if they all check in together and oh yes, not to forget the free drinks, free games and a more personalized service for the mayor.

Underdoggs has been great at keeping it minimal on the advertising front by only utilizing radio

to inform its prospects but secondarily diverting their budget towards engaging more and more users through social media. Utilizing this platform very efficiently and charting the way for other brands to follow, understand and take cues from, 'Underdoggs' is a quality example of how a brand can embed themselves in the life of the user.

The third Foursquare Day was celebrated all across the world, and India saw a glimpse of

it in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi where avid Foursquare users gathered on this merry occasion. The date, April 16th.has been chosen since April is the fourth month which denotes the four in Foursquare and 16 being four's square. The Mumbai ensemble chose Salt Water Café, a Bandra pub as their rendezvous point and was giving away goodie bags, discounts, prizes and more to the participants. Similar gatherings were also planned in Mocha in New Delhi and Blimey in Bangalore.

The passage of time has seen advertising get more streamlined and brands are evolving by becoming a more intimate part of the user's lifestyle thereby maximizing returns without blowing a hole in the pockets of the marketers. In a country obsessed with ownership and real estate, having a psychological reason attached to a place via Foursquare is a great way of inducing a sense of belonging of the brand in the users psyche. Giving them more and more reasons to keep coming back by offering them discounts, great deals and special offers only sweetens the deal.

The rapid rate of saturation means that businesses will be forced to move beyond the used and abused platforms of Facebook & Twitter to plan and push a campaign. What makes Foursquare this potent is that with user generated content at the core of it all, tips left by other users help users decide about the place and if the tip was left by a friend they're more than likely to take it and discover the place. Foursquare has yet to come of age in its Indian brands chapter, but then again the graph will head for the heavens eventually.

Twitter:
The creation of 'A Moments Feed' around the festival of Navratri on Twitter Moments, the newest product offering by twitter depicts how crucial India is when it comes to strategy formulation, especially when it comes to South East Asia or Africa which share similar demographic opportunities and infrastructural constraints. Twitter is building technology that works in the background to ensure that videos can be streamed even in handsets and areas with patchy broadband connectivity which is a rampant issue not just in India but also in other emerging nations.

Bitrate streaming is a technique that detects a user's bandwidth and processing capacity and adjusts the quality of a video stream accordingly. This has been implemented in India in a bid to counter the infrastructural shortcomings.

Shah Rukh Khan's selfie with Zayn Malik at the Asian Awards in London was declared the Golden Tweet for India in 2015, with over 141,000 retweets and nearly 18.3 million views globally.

Most Popular Twitter handles:
1. Amitabh Bacchan: 18.1 million followers.
2. Shah Rukh Khan: 16.5 million followers
3. Narendra Modi: 16.4 million followers
4. Aamir Khan: 15.5 million followers
5. Salman Khan: 15 million followers

Most Popular Twitter hashtag trends:
1. IPL: 9 million tweets throughout season 9.
2. SelfieWithDaughter: 3,75,000 tweets
3. BiharResults: 2,60,000 tweets on polling day
4. SaalEkShuruaatAnek (Modi's e-governance and digital diplomacy initiative): 1,79,000 tweets
5. DDLJ20Years (20 years of the movie Dilwale

Dulhania Le Jayenge): 1,40,000 tweets

Firsts on Twitter:
1. Special cricket timeline for the World Cup and Indian Premier League.
2. Make in India initiative became the first non-US brand to get its own Twitter emoji for a worldwide audience.
3. Twitter's partnership with JetInstant, introduced to help passengers check the lowest fares or view flight status with just a single Tweet.
4. Local citizens sent over 1.4 million tweets using #ChennaiRains, #ChennaiFloods and #ChennaiRainsHelp hashtags to crowd source assistance and help each other through this natural disaster.
5. Reliance was the first Indian telecom operator to launch a Twitter-powered customer service called SmartCare this year, allowing 120 million Reliance Communications users to access and manage their mobile phone accounts, pay bills, recharge, view and buy best deals, track usage, and check the balance.

Most Influential Moments:
1. Cricket World Cup
2. #INDvsPAK match
3. DelhiElections
4. HappyDiwali
5. ChennaiRains
6. Independence Day

Assessing the social media readiness of an organization/brand
Social Media has become an important medium for organizations/brands to connect with existing and potential consumers. Facebook alone boasts of 92mn users in India. With such high user base, presence on social media is a good to have strategy for brands. However, it is important to assess the social media readiness of an organization/brand in order to ensure effective utilization of the medium.

The need to go social for organizations/brand is driven by the following factors:
• To reach potential consumers through branding activities like regular posts/tweets, contests, etc.
• To monitor consumer sentiments
• Competitive presence on social media
• Strategic business need

Social media strategy of any brand should take into consideration the following aspects:

• Social Media goals and Channel Integration: What are the measurable KPI's for social and how can the social media assets is integrated with rest of the digital assets like website and mobile apps?
• Social Media listening: Are there any tools that the organization/brand will use for monitoring conversations/buzz
• Content Strategy: What type of content will the brand page publish and what is the relevance of the same with the brand?
• Interaction and Community management: Are there dedicated personnel to interact with online consumers?
• Paid Advertising: Will social media be used for paid placements?
• Evaluation: How effective is the social media campaign?

		Initial 'Starting out with Social'	Managed 'Using Social'	Defined 'Starting to Plan'	Quantified 'Starting to Integrate'	Optimized 'Fully Integrated Social Strat-'
A.	Goals and Channel Integration	No goals beyond 'doing social media'	General goals defined. Social buttons on website	SMART objectives defined. Social Media integrated into website. Automated email integration	Attribution using analytics. Social integrated into offline campaigns	ROI reviewed. Goals agreed throughout the business. Social a key part of integrated multi channel strategy
B.	Social Listenin and Governance	No Social Media Monitoring	Monitoring of brand mentions. Reputation Management	Defined process for customer reporting issues via social	Proactive PR – Influencer outreach. Social Media Care	Proactive outreach to customers. Inputting into new product development
C.	Content Planning	No planned content creation. Page Updates only – Not linking to hub	Social hub/blog with content being created and shared in social updates	Monthly content plan with key content themes and engaging assets	Longer term 90 day content plan with themes for different audiences	90 day content plan with themes which are announced and integrated
D.	Interaction and Community management	Limited, reactive interaction on social media	Monitoring and replying to comments	Proactive interaction with fans, influencers company pages. Social Care	Community management resource for facilitating discussions. Localized	Team in place for personalized replies and to facilitate discussion 24/7
E.	Company Page optimization	Pages set up, but not well branded	Branded pages on priority social channels (Eg Facebook, Twitter)	Branded pages setup on common and newer social channels (Eg Pinterest)	Branded pages set up on channels requiring non text content Eg YouTube	Additional page features such as integrated videos and aps utilized
F.	Paid Advertising	Not using paid advertising	Experimenting with promoting updates without targeting	Targeted ads to boost page fans, site visits or leads	Remarketing for leads or sales. Power Editor in Facebook	Optimized investment based on attribution and ROI review
G.	Evaluation	Not analyzing page statistics	Recording basic stats of growth (Eg Page Followers, Likes)	Benchmarking reach, interaction rate. Tracking site outcomes.	Using analytics tools to evaluate behavior of audience	Integrated dashboard of social media performance and alerts on key issues

The social media readiness of an organization can be divided into 5 stages:
• Initial
• Managed
• Defined
• Quantified
• Optimized

Designing the right social media strategy for a brand :

In the early days of social media, it was seen as an initiative of the marketing department. It was often the place where marketing interns started their career and brands took the liberty of not being too serious from a strategy point of view. But times have changed and the social media has evolved to gain prime importance in a brands digital play.

Social Media is still a place for brands to have a meaningful conversation with its fans, detractors and influencers, but it also has a real and measurable impact on a brands bottom line. Thus, social media can no longer live in a silo; it must be worked in tandem with the rest of your business strategy.

A good social media marketing campaign should contribute to the brand's greater business objectives. Here are the 7 steps to follow in building the right social media strategy:

Step 1: Ensure Social Goals Solve Challenges
Goal setting is a staple of all marketing and business strategies. Social media is no exception. Of course, with a range of social capabilities, it can be difficult to determine exactly what a brand's objectives should be. For guidance, look to the challenges before you.

STEP 7 Track and Improve Efforts
STEP 6 Engage Instead of Ignore
STEP 5 Identify Business Opportunities Through Social
STEP 4 Create Engaging Content
STEP 3 Focus on Social Networks That Add Value
STEP 2 Extend Social Efforts Throughout Your Organization
STEP 1 Ensure Social Goals Solve Challenges

• Has website traffic dipped?
• Is customer loyalty low?
• Do you need to do a better job of building a positive brand reputation?
• Do you just need to make people aware that your product exists?

A smart social media marketing campaign can answer each of these questions. For a better understanding please look at the examples mentioned below, a few common business obstacles and social objectives that can help brands overcome them.

• **Challenge 1: Low Website Traffic**

A brand's website is one of its most important marketing tools. Low website traffic can mean fewer customers and lower profits.

To combat this challenge, the social media team should focus its goals on creating links directly to the website (whether they're from brands own social posts or influencers'). Link to useful content, subpages and company images to position the website and the brand as a resource rather than just another cog in the corporate wheel. This traffic should increase leads and, in the long run, revenues.

• **Challenge 2: Decreasing Customer Retention**

It is a commonly known marketing fact it costs more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. To keep a brands customers around, social should be used as a tool to support, communicate and engage. A good social relationship with customers should translate into a better perception and offline relationship with the brand. By developing a strong social bond, customers will be more likely to stick with the brand time and time again.

• **Challenge 3: Poor Customer Service**

People turn to social to engage with businesses. Therefore, it is important for a brand to be ready to help customers on any channel they can contact a brand through. The social media team should be empowered to respond to customer questions and issues. When you do so, your brand will be equipped to respond to your customers in a timely and accurate way, regardless of how they reach out to you.

• **Challenge 4: Weak Brand Awareness**

Social allows a brand to reach a broad audience. But honing and perfecting that message takes brain power and time. To create authentic and lasting brand awareness, avoid a slew of promotional messages; instead, focus on creating meaningful content and a strong brand personality through the brands social channels. Determine relevant hashtags and industry influencers the brand can engage with, and tap into those resources to extend your brand's overall awareness.

Step 2: Extend Efforts Throughout Your Organization

Social has long lived within the marketing department, but that doesn't mean it can't (and shouldn't) have a hand in nearly every business function, from human resources to research and development. To create a fully integrated social media marketing campaign, you'll need to involve and integrate multiple departments, especially if your goals have a direct impact on them. Work with all your teams to determine how you can best support their goals and what key performance indicators are important to them (we've outlined some ideas on both below).

• *Sales*

Social selling is a term that has grown in popularity since the rise of social marketing. By searching for sales opportunities and then engaging in a helpful and authentic manner, social media can be a great way to prime the sales funnel and find new leads.

• *Customer Service*

Social media is quickly becoming one of the most important channels through which companies

interact with their current customers. Social is an easy and very public way for customers to air their grievances with your brand. If you aren't responding, it can hurt your reputation and customer relationship.

• *Human Resources*

While the HR team probably spends a good amount of its time on social media looking

through the profiles of applicants, it can also use social as a way to increase overall application numbers. Showcase job postings on social media and encourage your employees to share them to their networks as well. Beyond just job postings, social is a useful tool in showcasing your company culture to the world. Highlight some behind-the-scenes images of what it is like to work for your company so you can improve the perception of your brand among candidates.

• *Research and Development*

Your brand's social audience represents a group that is highly engaged, invested and interested in your product or service. Why not leverage that to serve as an online focus group for your company? Asking for and listening to customer feedback on social media is a nimble and easy way to get instant feedback. Additionally, social media can help expose gaps in a product or service.

• *Marketing*

The marketing department,specifically advertising and PR, traditionally has a strong role in the social media strategy. But there are always new ways to ensure people are aware of and excited about your brand through social. Whether you're debuting a product, ad campaign or initiative, ensure that social has a strong hand in spreading the word.

Step 3: Focus on Networks That Add Value

Just because a network has billions of users doesn't mean it will have a direct contribution to your brand's objectives. Instead of trying to

be everything to everybody, focus your efforts on networks that hold the key to your target audience and objectives.

Each network has its own strengths and weaknesses, and each social media marketer should carefully pick and choose which networks they want to take advantage of. Here are some of the most popular networks as well as what they're best at.

• *Facebook*

With an audience of 1.23 billion monthly active users, Facebook offers an opportunity to reach a broad range of customers and potential customers. The chart below breaks down Facebook's demographic representation—your target audience is most likely represented in some way.

But how can Facebook contribute to your overall goals? Because Facebook's News Feed is a very visible place for social posts, it's one of the best places for you to distribute your content in order to increase brand awareness, drive website traffic and distinguish yourself as a thought leader. This strategy is even more effective when you take advantage of Facebook's targeting capabilities that allow you to tailor your messages to users with certain interests.

• *Twitter*

Where Facebook has the volume of users, Twitter has the volume of messages. In fact, there are over 500 million Tweets sent every day. With all those social messages, there is a great chance that someone is either mentioning your company or starting a conversation that you would be interested in joining.

That's why Twitter is best to use as a customer service and business development channel. Monitor the network for inbound messages from dissatisfied customers, and quickly turn them into happy interactions. At the same time, look for prospective customers.

• *LinkedIn*

LinkedIn has a robust network of over 332 million users, most of whom frequent the site

with a "working" mindset. The advantage with this is that LinkedIn is an amazing network for B2B social media marketers. Whereas, sites like Twitter and Facebook catch users more or less on their personal time, LinkedIn gives you access to customers when they're at their professional best. Use this to build relationships with future customers.

• *Google+*

One of the great things about Google+ is that if you have a strong presence on the site and someone searches for your company through Google, a snippet of your profile will appear on the results page.

Another great feature of Google+ is the ability to hyper-target your potential customers by Communities. Communities are groups of people who get together to discuss specific topics, so if you can find one that your customers are likely to be in, you can post content there that might interest them.

Step 4: Create Engaging Content

Once you've involved the right stakeholders, department and networks, it's time to start building engaging content for your social channels. This

content—whether a video, tip sheet or simple Tweet—should all ladder up into your business objectives. Below are just a few examples of good content for social and how to use that to support your goals.

• *Videos*

How-to videos can be a proactive approach to

social customer care—answer your customers' questions before they're asked.

Behind-the-scenes videos give your audience a sense of your company culture and brand personality.

• *Guides*

Position your organization as a thought leader and elevate your brand by developing engaging content that speaks to your customers.

Guides should cater to your target audience, ensuring you're actually adding value.

• *Infographics*

Internal or external data can be turned into a beautiful, insightful infographic.

When done right, infographics can be some of the most socially shared pieces of content, so make them engaging and resourceful.

Get ahead of the game by planning your content in advance, using a social media editorial calendar.

Step 5: Identify Business Opportunities Through Social

With millions of messages being sent across social channels every day, there is no doubt conversation happening around your brand. Social media monitoring, therefore, should be an essential part of your social media marketing strategy. Below are some ways you can monitor social media to identify larger business opportunities for your brand.

• *Brand Mentions*

People who are mentioning your brand on social are some of the highest quality leads you can drive. They've already proved they know your product/service and have an interest in reaching out to you. Engage with them, foster that relationship and potentially create a brand advocate. If the mention was less than positive, use the opportunity to showcase your stellar social customer care and prove that you are listening.

• *Industry Terms*

Think of some of the words you use when discussing your brand, and look out for them on social. By monitoring these terms, you can identify relevant hashtags you should be using, conversations you should be having and influencers with whom you should be engaging.

• *Competitor Info*

Keep a pulse on the competition. Social media can give you insights into your competitors' marketing plans and help you identify gaps in your product or service.

Step 6: Engage Instead of Ignore

Whether someone is commenting on a brand post, writing on a brands wall or mentioning the brand on Twitter, it's important to always stay engaged. It has been observed that many brands do not respond to user queries on social. If customers are consistently ignored, they'll eventually ditch your brand all together and look for an alternative. Be sure to respond to customers who have left negative feedback about your brand as well. Too many companies have lost favour with their fans by trying to delete the message and sweep it under the rug.

Step 7: Track and Improve Your Efforts

It is important to follow the steps 1-6 in order to begin analysing and improving a brand's social media efforts. This final step is actually a step back, letting a brand team figure out what's working and what's not.

Use a Tool to Track Performance

Popular platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest have their own analytic tools to

evaluate a brand page performance. Tracking competitive data is the biggest challenge in digital marketing as it is not easily accessible. Competitive social media data can be tracked through a series of paid and free tools/resources on the web. Some of the popular tools in the market for measuring social media performance are as follows:

Once you have a good understanding of which content is driving the most engagement, site visits and conversions, you can use that knowledge to increase your success. Write content and social media posts that are similar to the ones that have worked in the past. This is an ongoing process that will help you hone your unique social voice.

Measuring effectiveness of Social Media

If a brand team is investing time in social media,

they need to measure performance, but it can be difficult to identify relevant metrics. There's no one-size-fits-all method of measuring social media success because goals vary from brand to brand. But one can certainly find ways to measure all the work one is putting into one's social presence.

5 Steps to Effective Social Media Measurement
The above chart can be summarized into 5 points:

• Create strong measurement objectives from the start.
• Weave social media into your customer service approach in a trackable way.
• Focus on the metrics that indicate a shift in the way your audience is viewing or interacting with your brand.
• Save money training employees by using social media tools.
• Determine which social media channels are best suited to boost your bottom line.
• Put a dollar value on social media metrics such as Facebook likes.

Finding and mastering the key performance indicators (KPIs) for your digital marketing efforts is a top priority for marketers. Social media marketing comes under scrutiny often for its effectiveness and performance. It's important to know how a brand is measuring performance and mastering the metrics that matter.

Facebook KPI's	Twitter KPI's	YouTube	Social Buzz
Organic Fans	Tweets	Aggregate Video Views	Total Brand Mentions
Paid Fans	Followers	Paid Video Views	Share of Mentions
Fans who unliked the page	Following	Organic Video Views	Source of Mentions
Fan Growth %	Followers Ratio	Video Views Growth %	Sentiment Analysis
No of Posts	Klout Score	Total Subscribers	
Page Level Engagement Rate	Replies	Subscriber Growth %	
Total Reach	Retweets		
Paid Reach	Twitter Mentions		
Organic Reach			
Total Interactions (Likes+ Comments + Shares)			
Avg Interactions			
Post Clicks			
Facebook Advertising Spends			

Some of the popular social media KPI's among digital marketers are as follows:
An effective social media measurement strategy demands relevant data and the flexibility to tweak your tactics. It also takes time and effort. But when you start seeing greater results from social media, your investment will be worthwhile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Bharat has more than 18 years of experience serving in EY & over 15 years in specializing in MARS reviews covering :

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Telecom : Vodafone, Airtel, Idea, MTNL, SriLankan Telecom / Mobitel, Maxis Telecom / Aircel (India & Malaysia),

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Bharat has :

- Assisted AC Nielsen in validating the controls implemented by them for conducting the National Readership Surveys on behalf of the National Readership Survey Council. He also worked on projects for leading broadcasters across India & US.
- Led projects with BJP for Lok Sabha & all Vidhan Sabha Elections held in 2014 (i.e. Maharashtra, Haryana, J&K, Jharkhand and Delhi elections)

He actively participates on Industry Thought Leadership initiatives conducted by Indian Society of Advertisers on Media Audits, Return on Marketing Investments & Digitization.

He is also a visiting faculty for Marketing in SIES College of Management Studies

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"I go to fine restaurants to *savour* the food. Not to photograph it."

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