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DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT -THE LAKME WAY

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ABSTRACT

Social networking is the most popular online activity among consumers across the world. The rise of mobile and social technologies has made customers more powerful than ever before. In order to cope up with today's ever-changing landscape efficiently, marketers need to provide real-time, personalized experiences that customers can access as and when they need them.

Even the most popular brands struggle to engage with more than 1% of their entire fan base on Facebook. With marketers looking for the best ways to approach their customers; social media marketing is proving to be one of the easiest and most cost effective options. Social media marketing enables businesses with easy access to their customers on various social networking sites where they devote a big chunk of their time.

This paper explains the conceptual framework of Customer engagement on social platform and identifies the various popular social media platforms available to the companies to reach its customers. It examines the social media strategy adopted by Lakme India Ltd. for its customer engagement through digital platforms and provides suggestions for companies to enhance their digital customer engagement.

Keywords –customer engagement, social media platforms, Lakme's digital strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of mobile and social technologies has made customers more powerful than ever before. Their continuous online status and ability to find information in seconds puts them in

control of their own experience, and this trend has compelled the modern day marketers to redesign their strategies to engage and connect to their customers.

Social networking is the most popular online activity among consumers across the world. According to a study, it accounts for almost one in every five minutes spent online, and reaches 82% of the entire world's online population, which represents an audience of nearly 1.2 billion internet users. It's obvious that, the industry has followed this online trend and around 94% of all businesses with a marketing department have established their presence and continuously go after engaging their current and potential customer on at least one of the "Big Three" social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Google+.

In order to cope up with today's ever-changing landscape efficiently, marketers need to provide real-time, personalized experiences that customers can access as and when they need them. Whether it is a mobile push notification promoting a sale or an email confirming an order, customer engagements is the present day norm in any of its form. By stimulating relevant and consistent communication throughout the customer experience, marketers are posed with immense opportunity to engage their potential customers with their brands.

By committing substantial resources towards social media, brands from all over the world are in continuous bid to grow their online fan base. However, if we take a better look at the engagement metrics, such as "Talking about it" on Facebook, the tools clarify that even the established brands are finding it tough to engage more than 1% of their followers.

With marketers looking for the best ways to approach their customers, social media marketing is proving to be one of the easiest and most cost effective options.

Social media marketing enables businesses with easy access to their customers on various social networking sites where they devote a big chunk of their time. Social media marketing involves marketing or advertising of company's product, on the most popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Social media marketing involves creating original, free, content on the sites so as to invoke buzz about a brand. The whole idea is to create content that followers would find interesting enough to share with their family and friends. The end goal is to produce a larger circle of consumers taking interest in a business.

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to micro-blogging, social networking, wikis, social bookmarking etc.

II. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Some examples of social media are given below:

- Facebook : an extremely popular free social networking website that enables its registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages to stay connected with family and friends.
- Twitter is a micro-blogging service that enables the members registered on website to post messages up to 140 characters called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and share other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- Google plus is Google's social networking project it is designed in a way which is more closer to the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in any other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web."
- Wikipedia: is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January, 2001.
- LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally. People update their bio-data and skill sets on this site.
- Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them or an image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the conceptual framework of Customer engagement.
- To identify the various popular social media platforms available to the companies to reach its customers.
- To examine the social media strategy adopted by Lakme India Ltd. for its customer engagement through digital platforms

IV. WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Customer Engagement on Social Media in very simple terms is the things your fans and followers do to interact and engage with the brand. This can be commenting on a Facebook, status update, posting a picture on your wall. It could be checking into a location on Facebook or can be entering a contest or sending a tweet. Engagement means when a business and consumer interact within their channel of relevance during various moments of

truth. Engagement though, is then measured by the actions, sentiment, and outcomes that result from each interaction. To optimize results, experiences, click paths, outcomes, and sentiment must be defined and enlivened through each channel in each moment. To do so take vision, articulation of that vision, and collaboration with all stakeholder groups to cast a unified approach.

A. Digital engagement

Digital engagement means connecting with more customers, more frequently, more personally, through more channels, in a more meaningful way. It's getting doors to open and your customers to invite you to come inside, kick off your shoes, and stay awhile. It's participation rather than dictation. It's about weaving your brand willingly into the fabric of people's lives, by engaging with them where, when, and how they want to engage, whether they're playing a game on their iPad, looking for the answer to a question on their smartphone, or sharing their interests and passions with their friends on Facebook and Twitter. Digital engagement isn't always easy, but it has to seem easy, natural, organic, unforced. We build brilliant digital engagement solutions for brands of all kinds, and we're experts at every step of that process, from the initial introduction to a lasting consumer commitment.

V. CASE OF LAKME INDIA

The overall Beauty Business in India is growing phenomenally with the cosmetics market **growing at 15-20% annually**. The retail beauty and cosmetics market in India currently estimated at USD 950 million is **pegged at USD 2.68 billion** by the year **2020**.

In India, the beauty care market consists of salons, cosmetic treatment centers and cosmetic products and is likely to become the main contributor to the growth of Indian wellness industry. Women contribute to over 85% of the Salon industry revenue, while men's hair is the next wave set to hit the Indian Salon Industry. The rising beauty concerns among both men and women are propelling the Indian cosmetics industry, which has witnessed a strong growth in the last few years.

Over the last five years the growth figures are:

- **Cosmetic Products - 60%**
- **Salons - 35%**
- **Cosmetic Treatments - 5%**

A research report, "**Indian Cosmetic Sector Forecast to 2015**", sees that the Indian cosmetics industry holds promising growth prospects for both existing and new players. The forecast for hair and beauty industry is pegged at a per capita annual spend of USD 1.2 which is expected to grow to USD 6.2 by 2015.

The country's cosmetic sector has, in fact, emerged as one of the markets holding immense growth potential. New product launches catering to consumers' growing requirements will fuel growth in the industry, for which the future outlook seems exceptionally bright. According to a latest research report, the Indian cosmetics market registered impressive sales,

and with rising purchasing power and growing fashion consciousness, the industry is estimated to expand at a an annual growth rate of around 17% during 2013-2015.

A consumer behaviour analysis, has observed that consumers are increasingly shifting towards ‘natural’ and ‘herbal’ cosmetic products as they are associated with bio-active ingredients and safe for human skin. In addition to this, it is noticed that women are spending more on cosmetics as they are actively earning and spending money on grooming themselves.

On an average, working women intend to spend 35% or more of their income on themselves.

A. Lakme’s Customer Engagement Strategy on Social Media

In its attempt to diffuse the message to the mass, the cosmetic brand has used all kinds of marketing channels, including the now-popular digital media, led by social media platforms. The following findings show how well the brand has performed on social media.

a. Audience Analysis of Lakmé

Owing to the brand building exercise by Lakmé, the sentiments expressed by people both male and female, is either positive or neutral (refer to table 1.).There is almost no negative emotion flowing for the brand, but what is surprising is the number of male followers of the brand. As is evident in table 1, slightly over 40% of social media fans of the cosmetic brand comprises of male.

	Male	Female
Buzz by gender(Facebook)	40.65 %	59.35 %
People retweeting by gender(twitter)	5.77 %	49.19 %
Mentions by gender (twitter)	2.87%	58.5%

Table 1- Gender Distribution

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Audience Sentiments	20.72 %	nil	79.28 %

Table 2- Sentiments towards the brand

Age Distribution	Percentage
13-20	24.82 %
21-30	32.37 %
31-40	26.44 %
40+	16.37 %

Table 3 - Age distribution

The gender distribution of Lakmé's fans could be a bit surprising, but not so its age distribution. The closer a person is to his/her prime, the likelier is his/her chance of following the brand on social media- as you can see people between 21-30 make the largest chunk of its social media followers.

B. Overall Strategy of Lakmé

Looking gorgeous and feeling beautiful seems to be the mantra that Lakmé follows on social media. The content it shares and the design of it talks not only about its products, fashion shows, and contests, but also about the little steps a woman (or a girl) can take to look gorgeous and be the object of much-coveted desire, as the brand sees it to be the driving agenda of all women, or at least its fans.

a.Lakmé on Facebook

With almost 24.26 lakhs Facebook fans, of which a little over 39,000 actively engage in discussion, Lakmé has a pretty strong Facebook presence. The brand has used a nice mix of image and video updates from its events, make up tips, and contest, which has helped it maximize its reach among Facebook Users.

When sharing tips the brand does add a call to action asking its followers to take a particular action. For example, in the following image, the brand has asked its fans and followers to "like" the post only if they are going to use the shared tips. 233 likes, 17 shares, and 8 comments are the testimony to how seriously fans take the tips shared by the brand (see Image 2).

Talking of the post updates, it is worth noting that Lakmé has made an apt use of hashtags, mentions, and links to important pages, and the copy used in the posts may not be impressive, but it has secured some rather emotionally-charged comments. It could also be because of the reward announced for the winners

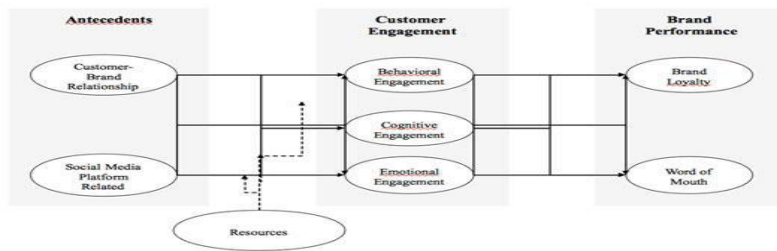


Fig 1

It is the interesting content pieces that have moved people to engage with the brand, though mostly it is in the form of likes rather than comments or shares . The brand should work on improving the instances of share and comments on its posts and that can be achieved by improving the quality of copy it uses in its updates.

Customer Response	Percentage
Likes	95.54 %
Shares	2.19 %
Comments	2.27 %

Table4 Customer Engagement

b. Lakmé Elsewhere on social media

The brand is also active on YouTube and Pinterest. It has more than 64,000 followers, with total video views of around 48 435 005, which is a respectable number in its own right. While many of its videos have not crossed a 1 lakh view count, some of them have recorded way beyond that.

On Pinterest, it has more than 1755 followers. Here the cosmetic brand has created 49 boards to entice followers with attractive pins. Although 1755 is not a number to be proud of but seeing the strength of the platform in India, it is not a number to complain about.

c. Social Media Strategy during lakme fashion week

Lakmé Fashion Week (LFW) is the most coveted Fashion show of India. The social media team of Lakmé used this opportune time to create buzz about the event. The Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) recorded more virtual followers than physical. The event garnered more than 65,000 viewers from 57 cities and 24 countries over 40 hours. But, behind the scenes was a gust of intense activity that included Internet of Things for live streaming and media for hi-marketing impact. Following moves helped Lakme to generate spurr among the customers during LFW:

Firstly ,During the launch campaign “Playtime for your pouts” the pout play zone with the gaming console and the photo-booth was set up which proved to be perfect way to bring it alive- it was fun, inviting and addictive- no one at LFW could resist it!

The brand broke perfectly well into a more playful vibe .Be it online through gamified content, on-ground through the wildly popular Pout Play Station or the overall strategy deployed across mediums, Lakmé redefined ‘playtime’ amidst fashion week, a first for the brand, indeed.

Secondly, Ogle, an on-demand streaming that enabled the virtual endeavor for LFW, actively used IoT to provide Front Row Experience to millions of live visitors. The company used connected devices and provided viewers access to exclusive on-stage and backstage happenings, favourite Bollywood celebrities walking the ramp or the red carpet, and also interviews of their favorite designers and models. The live streaming roped in people from more than 50+ cities in India, and LFW recorded highest ever unique visitors at 65,000 from 57 cities across 24 countries.

Thirdly, with the help of social media, Lakme reached out to almost two million users. Over the course of a week, the dedicated hashtag #OgleLFW was circulated to over one million unique users online. Influential designers like Narendra Kumar, Sapna Bhavnani, Ritu Kumar and others attendees also helped Ogle to expand its digital presence to include new audiences.

C. Unique Approach - Establishing the Command Centre

The HUL’s Command Centre, powered by multiple live data streams and resources, empowered HUL’s marketing teams to design more conducive and result oriented digital marketing strategies for Lakmé through relevant social media innovations.

A Digital Command Centre is an integrated brand communications facility that enables real-time management of marketing campaigns. It has state-of-the-art tools for advanced digital listening and monitoring trends that enable marketers to respond immediately to conversation opportunities on the web.

The entire project was implemented using social media tools which primarily included – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Command Centre was the key facilitator to create and plug real-time conversations about Lakmé and Gloss as the big buzzwords for the season. The campaign lasted for five days of Lakmé Fashion Week.

Command Centre facilitated the company to measure and strategies within fraction of seconds which enabled Lakme with speedy and relevant content creation around the event. It performed the following functions in specific:

- It tracked what hashtags were being used around the event
- Whom people were talking about
- Tracking which celebrity/influencer was getting more traction at which point
- Who were taking ‘about’ the brand and who were talking ‘to’ the brand.
- Mix of LIVE organic content creation through FB, Twitter and Instagram
- Strategic forecasting and robust response management
- Disruptive response management to plug Gloss as the big word for the season.

Lakme adopted a unique approach by allowing its team to use a three days testing period for all its strategies. The findings from this testing period were used to float content on social media in the next two days and go all out with the plan. All teams viz - Command Centre team, Lakmé team and the digital agency team worked in synchronized manner throughout the event

D. Key Performance metrics of digital strategy adopted by Lakme at LFW

- Sentiment value of Lakmé was 89 on a scale of 0-100.
- Engagement rates on Twitter post were as high as 12%
- 30,589 new likes on Facebook over a 5 day period.
- Achieved a reach of 18 million compared to estimated 8 million in 5 days on Facebook with an average engagement of 3.2%
- Achieved an average engagement rate of 7% on Twitter compared to estimated engagement rate of 3.5% in 5 days.

Following were the important takeaways from this digital strategy of Lakme India Ltd:

- Engaging strategy
- Right content at the right time
- Targeting the audience well
- Testing content
- Allowing the posts to breathe

VI. CONCLUSION

The digital lifestyle is has become just a way of life these days and businesses that don't think beyond social or conventional ways will miss the greater opportunity to lead desirable customer journeys, experiences and outcomes. Digital engagement doesn't concentrate on selling products; it involves making friends, building connections to brand that not only make customers come to the company for once , but that make them keep coming back for more. It involves creating things online that build the kind of long lasting relationships between the brand and its customers .

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