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“The Scope and impact of Digital Marketing Trends in Today's Business Market”

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Abstract: This paper explores the newer trends in marketing communication to determine the types of trends that are emergent. The paper further discusses the more traditional practices of marketing that have been compared to the rise in these newer trends. Traditional marketing while relying solely on the promotion of a product, newer trends focus on the consumers' needs and expectations. In view of this the paper explains in detail the most popular trends that have emerged in marketing communications and further goes on to contrast traditional marketing with the more recent forms. A critical analysis of the same has also been developed that includes the view of several authors both for and against certain aspects of the marketing trends. By way of this, the paper also touches upon the feasibility of integrating traditional marketing practices with the technological advancements. A depiction of which marketing media is more popular has also been in the same purview. The study thus is a review, for the sake of examining the trends in marketing communication and determining the cause of such trends and also what makes them more preferred. The paper is thereby, concludes on the note of the findings of the review that states the emerging trends and also makes the observation that the trends are ever changing with the constant evolution of technology.

Keywords: marketing communication, traditional practices, consumer needs and expectation, technological advancement,

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing has been making a steady progress over the years. In order to attain a prosperous growth, many distinct kinds of marketing have evolved with its uses having a special kind of audience based on its nature of target. In the present world, where technology plays a main role, it is obvious that many unique marketing trends and techniques are involved to be duly updated. Business to Business marketing technique acts as the main background and has reach over the precise intended audience ranging from a few hundred to a few thousands of people. But, due to the implementation of this technique by the manufacturer/

producer, it is also subject to modifications in people's behaviour and lives (Kukulas, 2012). It also forms a basis for an appropriate configuration of the communication mix and the use of right marketing tools. Generally, five basic tools are included in the marketing mix. But, as the technology has been developed from time to time, more tools are now being introduced. The various types of communication forms available are categorized as old forms and new forms which have been developed in their own distinct way. It is true that there must be interplay of individual marketing communication tools, rather than their isolated effect (Csikósová *et al.*, 2014).

Formerly, five categories like advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing were present in the standard categorisation of the marketing communication tools (Jurášková & Horòák, 2012). Each category has its own distinct tools (Kotler *et al.*, 2008). However, there has been some extension and modification done in the current communication mix due to the advancement in technology. The current tools have been extended to include sponsoring (Karlíèek & Král, 2011; De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 2007; Pøikrylová & Jahodová, 2010), exhibitions and trade fairs, interactive marketing, event marketing, online communication or word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing (Jakubikova, 2008; Karlíèek & Král, 2011). In light of this the distinction between traditional and new forms of marketing are discussed in the following.

2. TRADITIONAL MARKETING VS NEW FORMS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Marketing flourishes in accordance with the society and advancement in various global social, economic and technological fields. New forms of marketing communication have evolved due to market fragmentation and the gradual increase in the support of customers to traditional stimuli (Vysekálová & Mikeš, 2010). As is commonly known, the Internet is an essential and primary mode of communication. Thereby, consequentially companies began to comprehend the value of the Internet with respect to marketing communication and started to implement various marketing techniques which gave a more profitable solution and the also paved way for effective active engagement of the consumer when compared to the conventional marketing channels (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Companies hence formulate creative strategies with the help of new technologies and address their customers' needs in a most effective manner (Pøikrylová & Jahodová, 2010). Hence, new forms and tools of marketing communication have evolved and have been employed in various activities. Guerrilla communication, mobile marketing, viral marketing, WOM and buzz marketing (Pøikrylová & Jahodová, 2010) or also e-mail marketing, SEO, event marketing, and social media marketing, such as chats, blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and so on, (Castronovo & Huang, 2012) are the current trends of marketing communication in 21st Century. The following segment will highlight the importance of the above mentioned tools.

3. THE CURRENT TRENDS IN MARKETING

3.1. Online marketing tools

Online marketing has emerged as one of the most noticeable trends for marketing communication today. In view of this social media marketing is what is most rampant today. The progress or growth of social media has had a profound impact on the manner with which client organizations communicate with the

public. Digital and online media (Social media) communication have increased to more than that of traditional media (Baines, Fill, & Page, 2010, p.413). Major forms of interactive and direct marketing opportunities include digital technologies and the impact on digital television, internet, email, viral marketing, blogging, and social networking sites (Baines, Fill, & Page, 2010, p.416). New ways of conveying messages to the public is evolving with respect to the changes within the mix of media used by an organization (Baines, Fill, & Page, 2010, p.413). A higher usage of digital resources like mobile technologies to internet and social media resources such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, and similar multimedia sharing services have increased in developed countries due to the increase in the thirst for what the Internet offers. This digital space makes way for marketing and also satisfies the expectations of consumers in interacting with the web or an organization (Baines, Fill, & Page, 2010, p. 627).

The most popular and attractive social media in the current age is Facebook. The advertising campaigns of Facebook has increased a particular company’s website visit rate (78%), sales (68%), improving client awareness about trademark or company (56%) or launching a new product or a service (12%) (Vejaäka, 2012). The following Table 1 summarizes the most common social media tools and their objectives.

Table 1

<i>Tools</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve customer service • Create sense of community • Room for customer feedback
Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote for recommendations via WOM • Build a meaningful relationship with the customer increase loyalty
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness power of video to increase share of content in other sides
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Community development • Target specific audiences
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with professional community
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer engagement • Conversation propagation
Google wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase collaboration and engagement
Four square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowdsourcing • Increase local and mobile connectivity • Increase network engagement

In view of the above it is imperative to discuss a whitepaper as released by Stelzner (2012). The paper finds for the major leaning of the trend towards social media marketing. Statistics in this regard depict that a whopping 94% of marketers view social media as the single largest medium through which they can effectively market their companies (Figure 1). A part of the survey conducted for the white

paper, indicated that 83% of the marketers were of the opinion that social media was important for their business (Figure 2). Social media in the present scenario is thus considered one of the most important tools of marketing today. The main contributory factor to this is the fact that it connects with people on a deeper level. The growth of social media as a tool for marketing has however been tremendous over the last few years (Neti, 2011). This however can be attributed to the various benefits that social media marketing has brought to business, as detailed statistically in figure 3. The conversion to social media as a marketing tool hence can be no longer stated as a fad, but one that is on the rise more than ever. We have thus been faced with many options of the social media that is not only restricted to Facebook or YouTube. A graphical representation (figure 4) of the preferred social media only go to reaffirm the fact that social media marketing is here to stay.

However, this rise of social media marketing goes to question the place that conventional marketing holds in the world of marketing communications today. Discussed under the same purview is an analysis presented in the next section that contrasts as well as determines where traditional marketing stands in conjunction with online marketing.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

With the advent of the internet, marketing has undergone quite a substantial change. This change has hence brought about a shift in the preferences of the consumer from magazines, television, newspaper and radio to the Web. The Internet World Stats (2016) projected that an average of 2.4 billion people uses the net annually, with 273.8 million of them being Americans and 518.5 million of them from Europe. These figures have been estimated to increase several fold with each year. In view of this, it has

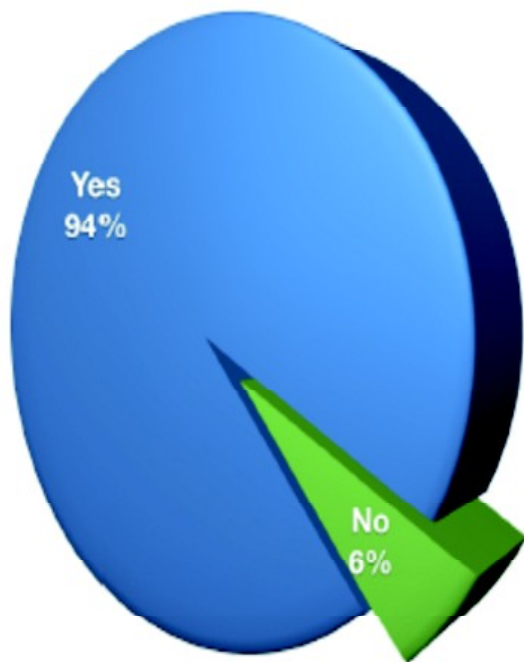


Figure 1: Use of social media marketing

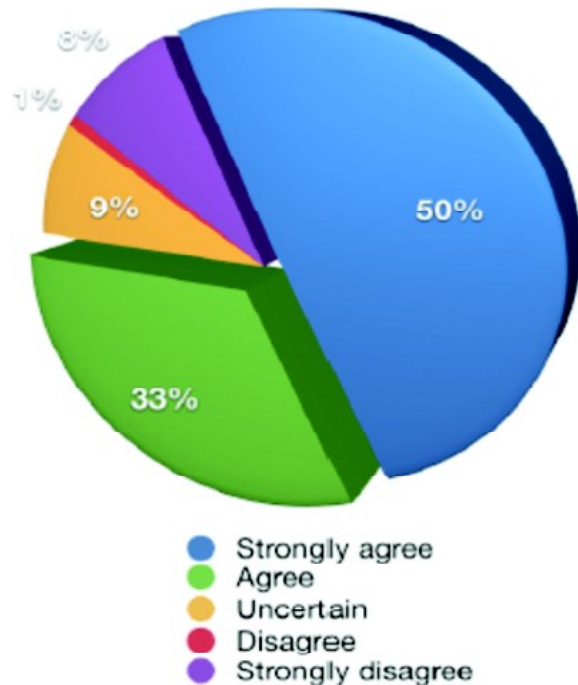


Figure 2: Social media is important for my business

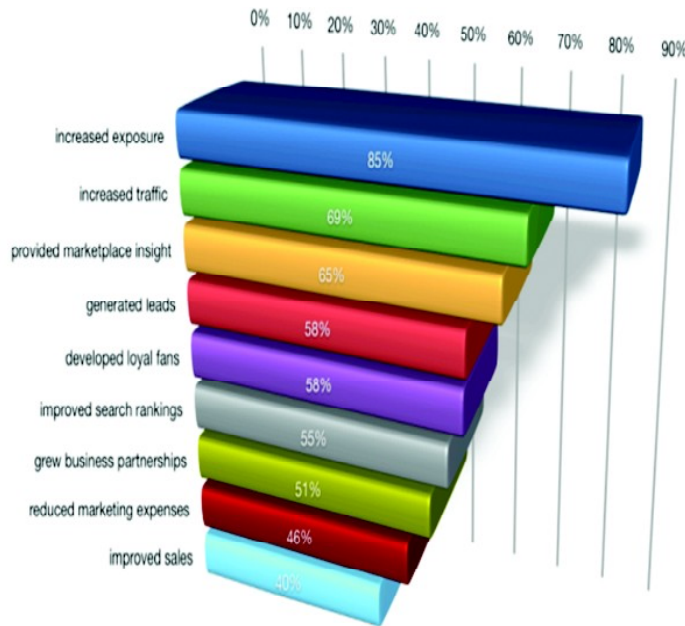


Figure 3: Benefits of social media marketing

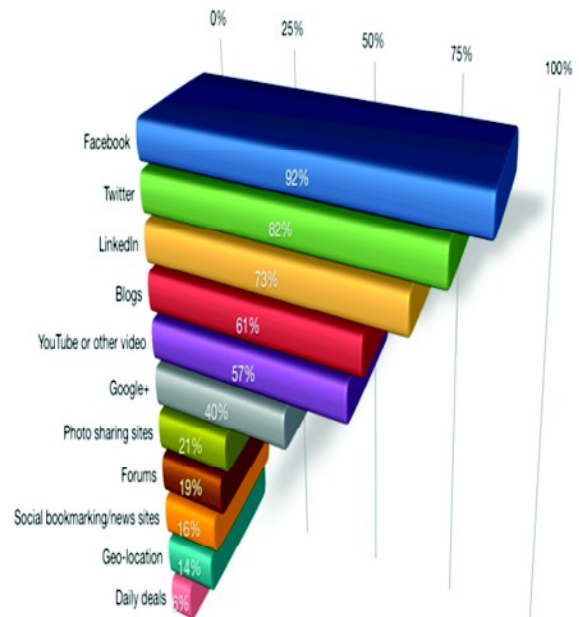


Figure 4: commonly used social media tools

been stated that the internet has not been accessed only via computers but has also been accessed through mobile phones, game consoles, and tablets. It can thus be stated that these changes mark the end of an era for traditional marketing. However, digital marketing does employ similar principles as those by traditional marketing except that more digital routes are employed to achieve this. The engaging of the customer in this regard is done via email, apps on the mobile, search engine optimisation, and online displays. North America, Europe and Asia emerge as the largest users here (Internet World Stats, 2015).

It is of the view that opportunities to access niche buyers in a more direct fashion have been facilitated by the web. This further has facilitated for the savings in costs that would otherwise have been spent for advertising that usually entail large budgets. Smaller companies however, are more benefitted as they are able to now reach a wider consumer base without the need for large marketing budgets. In lieu of the budgets, the companies need to be more creative in order for their ads to have better reach and they should also choose viable digital marketing media such as newsletters, blogs, pay-per-click and so on (Internet World Stats, 2015).

As per Garder's survey (2013), it was projected that the mainstay to investment in digital marketing included revamping social marketing, paying more attention to the creation of content and increasing mobile marketing. Other findings of the study point to the fact that majority of the marketing success of a company comes as result of its website. Furthermore, that the money saved through digital marketing can be used to further expand or reinvest back into the company. The cost statistics as received from the study depict that companies invest 10% of the earnings on advertising, while 2.4% for digital marketing, which is estimated to rise to 9% in the future (Garder 2013).

Respected authors in the field have asserted that traditional marketing both in theory as well as practice fall under the purview of social science (Pickton, 1999; Fill, 2009; Yeshin, 2003). Fendwick (as

cited in Fill & Cruz, 2008) makes reference to a nirvana stage for the effectiveness of advertising, as the use of medium such as the internet for marketing can be conducted with ease. At this point Fendwick also points to Web 2.0 applications that have the capacity to manipulate large forms of data that is to be used for the purpose of marketing. In view of this another author Edelman refers to the newer forms of marketing, in the stance that an increase in modern marketing has led to an equivalent rise in effective marketing (Edelman, 2010). Chaffey and Smith (2008) on the other hand discuss that critical success factors and key performance indicators remain diverse for each and every case of marketing strategies. The use of the measurement for the effectiveness of marketing has been represented by many an author as they have also attributed to the fact that such measurements have led to better return of investment which has been projected in the reshaped budgets for online advertisements which tends to include some aspects of consumer behaviour (Pergelova *et al.*, 2010; Pfeiffer & Zinnbauer, 2010; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Fill & Cruz, 2008). Keegan (2011) in his view has stated that this form of measurement needs to be applied to the areas of digital marketing as well, especially in the case of social media. Recent reports in this regard indicate that there needs to be an evaluation of how technical and relational marketing can be merged together for better marketing. Rowley (2004) reinstates the opinion and states that while modern marketing relies on the creation of value that is more collective in nature inclusive of turnovers, presence, and reach and so on while the traditional marketing strategies tend to focus only on the promotional aspects. Therefore, the achievable prospects of such a merging with relationship marketing and technology have become quite appealing. Rowley (2004) is further of the view that if the power were to be shifted to the consumer then such an association maybe viable. The general consensus from his study thus remains that this can be achieved through customisation of marketing techniques and also if the organisation understands such shifts in the communications for marketing. Another most interesting observation is that there has been much literature that have explored aligning traditional practices to more progressive ones that involve the use of technology, however only a few of them attempted its application more practically (Ivanauskas, 2009; Murdough, 2010; Bughin *et al.*, 2010; Fill & Cruz, 2008). Contrastingly, Weber (2007), is of the opinion that traditional and new forms of marketing cannot be applied together as social media marketing has re-written the norms for marketing thereby effectively overwriting the more established forms of marketing communication. However, Hermeking (2006) states that such a change in the trend of marketing communication is but a mere aspect of progression.

5. CONCLUSION

The newest trend in marketing is therefore online marketing, as evidenced above. The evidence is further consistent in that online marketing has a large potential in terms of consumer outreach. The shift in trend can be largely attributed to both the evolution of the consumers' needs and expectations coupled with the tremendous progress made in technology. It also has emerged as the focus has shifted from just promotion and turnovers for a company. The most popular trend within online marketing has now been pegged at social media marketing that solely only captures the consumers' behaviour with marketing strategies that cleverly target the same. Furthermore, social media marketing fuels the large changes to traditional marketing that was company focused. The trend however is now in a state of constant change what with the ever evolving technology.

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