

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

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Online Reputation Management (ORM) is managing, monitoring and improving your brand's online reputation. The perception about your brand that exists online greatly affects your sales, as the majority of consumers always perform online search before trying out any new brands or products. Thus, the ultimate objective of ORM is maintaining favourable consumer opinion coinciding with your brand's interests by being proactive¹.

There are four main components of ORM that entail the best practices for marketers:

1. **Strategy:** A definitive ORM strategy must be mapped out, monitoring all spheres of content, let it be user-created reviews or pieces of professional journalism. ORM of your brand could be taken care of in-house or outsourced to companies that specialize in it.
2. **Online Presence:** Building your online presence on at least three or four platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram, and having a dedicated team replying to users who express their grievances online, together make a very effective way of maintaining good online reputation.
3. **Content:** Original, relevant and fresh content must occupy the centre of your ORM strategy.
4. **Tracking and Analysing Results:** This is the last step but definitely the most important one. ORM is not a steady practice, it must

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the chapter, you would be able to:

- Explain how ORM works and how to effectively implement it
- Leverage online reviews and ratings to build and maintain a positive online reputation
- Describe how to generate favourable UGC, and manage online content about your brand
- Effectively incorporate co-marketing, native advertising and influencer marketing in your ORM strategy
- Understand how to ensure user's privacy and security at all times

be constantly altered and tailored to fit your brand's needs by analysing the results every step of the way. The ultimate motive of ORM is being proactive and quick to counter negative content that could potentially damage your brand's image.

TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT ORM

There are a number of tools a marketer can utilize to carry out in-house ORM, without relying on reputation management firms. The top three tools are as follows².

Google Alerts

Google Alerts is an extremely powerful tool that helps you monitor both web results and news regarding specific keywords that you can set. Through Alerts, marketers get real-time updates about any mention of selected keywords available anywhere on any web page. One can also monitor their competitor's activities this way, which makes this free tool very helpful.

Mention

Its simple interface provides you with in-depth analysis of mentions of your keywords across all social media channels. It provides you with features such as real-time Brand Monitoring, Competitive Analysis and Crisis Management.

Hootsuite Insights

It is a paid ORM tool that provides you a range of social media analytics after combing through all information available on all forms of social media about your brand. It accesses real-time data from over 100 million sources in more than 50 languages across 25+ social media channels and other platforms.

ORM VS. SEO

A common misconception held by marketers is that incorporating SEO in your online marketing strategy is synonymous to incorporating ORM in it. While some of the search engine optimization principles and tools are utilized in both, they are distinct services with different objectives and purposes. SEO is integral to ORM, but ORM is not a part of SEO³.

Main Goals

SEO: Drives traffic to one website. Thus, its focus is mainly on one website, with many search terms.

ORM: Manages content written on multiple websites, including ones that aren't owned or controlled by the brand. Uses fewer branded search terms.

Searches⁴

SEO: Focuses on product and service searches and link-building.

ORM: Focuses on showing positive reviews for branded searches like people or company names.

Buying Process

SEO: Drives brand awareness in the early stages of buying process.

ORM: Aids buyer in the decision-making process, almost at the end of the buying process⁵.

Thus, apart from these key differences, what needs to be understood is that ORM is a broad concept that encompasses SEO as one of its many tools. ORM improves ratings, results and reviews while removing negative content, while SEO focuses on bringing up search results on the first page of results⁶.

One of the significant facets of ORM is Ratings and Reviews. Let us see how marketers can leverage them.

SOCIAL COMMERCE: REVIEWS AND RATINGS

A marketer's ORM strategy focuses on monitoring all online ratings and reviews related to their brand or their competitors' brands. Reviews are longer and provide autonomous third-party assessment of a product or a service, with an opportunity for the users to contribute to and discuss specific topics. Ratings are votes given by the user to a product or a service and typically require less activity on the user's end⁷.

REVIEWS AND RATINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Reviews and ratings on social media forms the majority of content that is monitored to maintain a good online reputation of a brand. It provides an opportunity for the customers to have multidirectional communications, one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many⁸. They may contain videos, images, voting and texts; making user feedback more efficient. Allows the public to read, view and share information about brands, companies, products and services. These also take place in real time and not in order, thus increasing customer's trust.

MAJOR RATING CHANNELS FOR A BUSINESS

Customers and experts can voice their opinions, ratings and reviews on a wide variety of platforms, some of which are as follows.

Google My Business

Google My Business is the largest of all the platforms for listing a local business. Registering a business is very easy and requires only a Google ID.

Yelp

Yelp offers customer feedback of local businesses in the city. It offers to include photos, videos, coupons and also a short background on the company. It displays statistics for your profile and provides you opportunity to even interact with your customers' reviews⁹.

Bing Places

Bing Places helps to list a business on the third largest search engine in the world, Bing. It includes options to import details from Google My Business directly.

TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is one of the largest customer review sites for travel, food and restaurant, offering about 225 million opinions, reviews and photos taken by the travellers to help people plan their travel. This site is also popular for its content on extremely low air fares, travel itineraries and rental data.

Amazon Customer Reviews

In 1995, Amazon became the first online stores that allowed customers to post reviews of products and it was one of the important sources for the customers to make a purchase decision. What separates an original product from a fake one is the glossy gold stars and the customer reviews. Products are rated on a five-star rating scale, which is to be broken down by the percentage of reviews per star.

Great Place to Work

Great Place to Work has the most detailed company reviews. Great Place to Work's employer review scheme is built on a joint assessment of all present employees' response on an anonymous study in six different areas (Challenges, Leadership, Pride, Rewards, Communication and Atmosphere).

Indeed

Indeed has company reviews that are divided into a list of the greatest places to work and has about 500 businesses that are reviewed and rated by present and previous workers. Indeed also delivers individual ratings as well as collective ratings¹⁰.

Careerbliss

Helping multiple perceptions (proprietor, job searchers and recruiters), Careerbliss is a single destination for job searchers searching for material on a company. Careerbliss has the most comprehensive pay statistics, counting salary by designation and salary evaluations to the nationwide average and topographical averages. They also have a yearly company of choice award for the topmost 50 Happiest Corporations in America¹¹.

REVIEWS AND RATINGS SOLUTIONS

Many websites provide review solutions to facilitate companies in managing their feedback. These review solutions are in the forms of automated replies, follow-up emails, detailed statistics about the reviews, improving the feedback, handling negative feedback, etc. These also provide unique Q&A solutions for the customers and ways to facilitate the video testimonials by the employees and loyal customers of the brand. This is a significant way to maintain good ORM¹².

Example: rating-system.com is a significant review solution company. They provide solutions for reviews embedded in a company website and also a whole new interface, tailor-made for the reviews from the customers of a company. They also provide statistics and tips and tricks to improve SEO ranking based on customer reviews¹³.

THE FAKE REVIEW INDUSTRY

87% of the consumers said that an encouraging review helped them decide to buy the product and online recommendations are the second most trusted source of product recommendations after advice from family and friends. But only 3–10% of the customers leave reviews, so the easiest way to increase them is to buy fake reviews. Fake reviews not only increased direct sales but also increased engagements hence more sales. They provided an edge to retailers over their competitors on e-commerce websites such as Amazon, Flipkart, etc. Fake reviews not only work for products but also for services, travel companies such as TripAdvisor. GoIbibo.com had to come up with special laws for the listings regarding fake reviews. Amazon banned free products or high discounts in exchange for reviews; this led the false review practice to move underground¹⁴.

Reviewers get highly paid in cash for five-star reviews. An army of paid reviewers is hired by ORM companies run through invite-only social media groups all over the Internet. The services of these companies are easily accessible by sellers online. It's challenging to differentiate fake reviews from actual reviews due to the extra precaution taken while writing them by fake reviewers. Amazon has been primarily affected due to the fraud review market, and have developed different mechanisms to discourage the industry. Amazon has implemented advance detection techniques using machine learning algorithms, which give more priority to newer and more helpful reviews. Strict action such as suspension of accounts belonging to any individuals engaged in such activities are taken on Amazon.

IDENTIFYING FAKE AND REAL REVIEWS: CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE

The simplest way to differentiate the fake and real one is to look for a higher number of reviews in the central region of the ratings, as a product may be highly rated by their fake reviewers or lowly rated by the fake reviewers of the competitor. Looking for irregularities in the reviews is also a good strategy as brands employ fraud review companies for a short duration of times until the ratings are boosted. Also, pay attention to the profile of the user: fake reviewers present incomplete profiles lacking sufficient information, profile pictures, etc.¹⁵

Another method of separating fake from real is to use third-party apps and extensions, which indicate the fake reviews through their advanced machine learning algorithms. One such extension is Fakespot; it is a free website that examines reviews to differentiate the false and the real ones. Fakespot started with solutions for Amazon but has expanded to TripAdvisor, Yelp, Walmart, Steam, etc. Fakespot has developed a browser extension for Chrome, Safari and Firefox, along with an app for Android and iOS. These tools analyse the review written in terms of grammar, commonly used words and style of writing. This analysis takes place through the use of artificial intelligence algorithms and study of consumer reviews throughout the Internet¹⁶.

Differentiating between fake and real reviews is a challenging task, even for a human being¹⁷. Tools like Fakespot are meant to provide a clearer perspective of the reviews rather than giving a yes or no answer¹⁸.

HANDLING FAKE NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Most of the fake reviews can easily be analysed by using the following evaluation points in your ORM strategy:

1. **Brutal review tone:** An honest review, even an undesirable one, will generally have more reasonable language.
2. **A large number of positive feedback submitted over a short period** is a sign of fake reviews; fake reviewers do this to create online buzz.
3. **Wide-ranging or general condemnations:** Real feedback generally provides detailed data about the writer's knowledge with a product or service.

After analysing, they could be quickly reported with the appropriate reasons, and most e-commerce websites would take them down. Although at times, this would not happen. In such situations, a well-calculated response to the negative review can help restore the reputation. Some points to be kept in mind while doing so are:

1. **Sustain a professional image:** Exhibit professionalism and check the attitude and nature of your reply.
2. **Discuss the issue with your customers:** It's better to be clear and get things out in the open.
3. **Recoil Back:** After replying, minimize any possible damage by burying the forged review under a group of great reviews.

The most significant thing not to do is, reply negatively.

MOTIVATING CUSTOMERS FOR MORE REVIEWS

The easiest way to attract customers without fake reviews and also to handle negative reviews is to ask customers to give more and more reviews. Some of the ways to motivate customers to give more reviews are¹⁹:

Customer panels

Customers who have agreed to provide detailed feedback can be asked to join customer panels. These volunteer customers are then periodically sent a set of questions, which they have to answer. These volunteers contain both customers with bad as well as a good experience, with the former exhibiting more active participation as they want to change things for better. These panels are occasionally given incentives in the form of exclusive coupons, lottery, early access, etc.

Offering incentives

A significant increase in customer reviews can be observed when customers are offered incentives for their feedback. Google Rewards is one such platform developed and maintained by Google. Google Rewards asks users to answer surveys based on their location and web surfing history. In return, Google Rewards rewards the users with Google Play Store credits. These credits can be used to buy any items available on Google Play Store.

Keep the surveys short

Customers want companies to value their time. Time guarantees mentioned in the feedback forms or calls carry the message that the company values customer's time.

Explain the importance of customer feedback

Mentioning the use of their feedback in the forms can encourage customers to give detailed and longer feedback. After all, every user wants their feedback to be used in improving the products and services.

Creating customer communities

Asking customers to join communities increases their interaction with the brand and also polls and surveys could be published in such groups, which can be further used as feedback.

Easy to find feedback forms on the website

Feedback submission is often tricky on company websites; this increases frustration among users and hence a disregard for feedback. Easy-to-navigate 'Contact Us' pages reduce these and encourage feedback.

Ask for shorter feedback

Most of the websites do not ask for feedback at the time of purchase to decrease the customer handling time; feedback forms are sent to the customer after the purchase through email or text. Asking for shorter feedback in one or two words increases the chances of their reverting.

Customer feedback portals

These are particular areas for customers to relay their valuable suggestions and feedback to the company. These portals also ensure a central point for all the reviews and make them more manageable.

A marketer can get more reviews on websites such as Google My Business or Yelp, and use these for effective marketing and ORM strategies in the following ways.

Sites like Google My Business and Yelp automatically ask customers for their reviews and feedback based on their location and search histories; marketers should also encourage their customers for adding more reviews on such sites as this improves the SEO rating of the business due to the new online buzz developed. This encouragement could be in the form of discount coupons on next purchases, cashback on the current purchases, loyalty points that could be traded in for cash discounts, special offers for writing feedback and mini free items in exchange of reviews. Customers should be sent links to feedback forms of Google My Business, Yelp, etc. via emails and texts explaining the perks associated with giving feedback and the importance of feedback. These reviews should be exhibited on the company website in the form of images; bigger feedback that contain customer's stories should be added to the company blog and the customer feedback section of the company website. Reviews create a positive company image, 87% of the customers have been found to be optimistic about a brand after reading feedback by previous customers and their stories.

REVIEW MONITORING SERVICES

Review monitoring services are being offered by various platforms across the Internet. These services send a real-time notification in the form of emails, texts, etc. if anybody gives a review on the product. These service providers also offer automated replies and chatbots to reply to the reviews. Such services help a marketer to manage the reviews easily and to decrease the minimum time taken for the reply. This increases the trust of the customer and gives the message that the customer's voice is being heard as quickly as possible. Some of the leading service providers are AppFollow, Reviewshake, Review Command, Feedcheck, App Bot, ReviewBot, etc.²⁰

Example

ReviewBot: ReviewBot is a review monitoring service. They notify you each time someone leaves feedback for app, business, product or podcast. Notification can be received via Slack or email. They also offer you to follow other fellow competitors so as to get a better understanding of their customer base and their customer's feedback²¹.

Some of the unique features of ReviewBot are:

1. A unique page is generated for each product's reviews; these pages can be shared on social media. Also, they contain direct links to the product page.
2. Reviews can be filtered on the basis of score and hence allows you to focus on reviews less than five stars specifically.
3. All five-star reviews are shared on the Twitter account; this increases the number of followers on Twitter and also the traffic to the product page via Twitter.

Exhibit

Bonobos: Why does a pants company aim for 90% great ratings on its support email?²²

Bonobos, being an unknown brand, knew that selling a pricey pair of pants online in 2007, when online shopping was still not popular, was going to be tough. Bonobos founder Andy Dunn saw that a company's growth has less to do with the product that it sells and more with the great service that it provides.

For Bonobos, this meant to create a support team that would lead to achieving:

- 90%+ rate of response to all calls within 30 minutes
- 90%+ rate of five-star email ratings
- Sub-24 hour average email response time
- A direct traffic rate of 53.5%, according to SimilarWeb.

Bonobos highly focused themselves on the customer feedback they received. To increase this, they suggested each of their customers may order as many pants that they wanted and return all the others that they didn't want to buy. But for each pair of pants, Bonobos asked for reviews from its customers. These reviews were then analysed and sent to the think tanks and the research team. As a result, the standard of Bonobos customer experience has remained high. This helped them beat their fellow competitors like Fossil, Lowe's and Coach in the race for Multichannel Merchant's Customer Experience Leader award in 2015 and 2016.

WORD OF MOUTH

ORM, as mentioned before, focuses on portraying a positive image of the brand or company and thus monitors all relevant content on the Internet. Thus, all effective ORM strategies incorporate monitoring word of mouth (WOM) or electronic WOM (eWOM) as a part of their plan²³. eWOM was defined by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) as 'any positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet'²⁴. The eWOM can travel in the digital space through blogs, social networking sites, microblogging sites (like Twitter), emails, consumer review channels, online forums, etc. eWOM is made up of interpersonal communications, which help the consumers to relate to the message circulated, which makes eWOM one of the most trusted and credible sources of marketing²⁵. eWOM is extremely powerful because of the following reasons:

1. Humans trust other Humans: We trust a customer's opinion more than the advertisements by a marketer as this provides 'social proof'.
2. People seek advice online: People tend to look for online reviews to get knowledge about other customers' experiences before making a purchase.
3. Humans tend to share: People have an inherent need to share their experiences, reviews and opinions with other people. There are several psychological reasons for this such as a constant need to connect and belong, to be known as a person with appropriate knowledge, and the desire to help others. This explains the logic behind the discussion forums, review websites and social media platforms and how one person reaches out to other people and the message keeps spreading across different networks of friends. eWOM is more powerful than WOM as it can be accessed anytime on the Internet, targets a bigger audience and can be monitored as well.

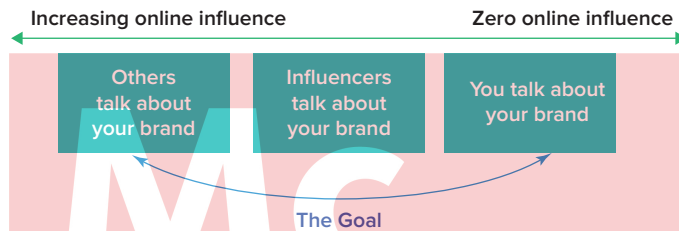


FIGURE 13.1 Goal: Getting Others to Talk About Your Brand

Source: Jeff Bullas, "Marketing Insights You Need to Know Today," <https://www.jeffbullas.com/7-influencer-marketing-insights-you-need-to-know-today/>

*Some of the key characteristics of WOM can be summarized as below:*²⁶

1. Valence: Positive or negative
2. Focus: On customer to customer, suppliers or alliances, employees, influentials, recruitment and referral markets
3. Timing: Pre-purchase (Source) or Post-Purchase(output)
4. Solicitation: Solicited vs. Unsolicited
5. Intervention: Stimulated or unstimulated

NETWORK STRUCTURE PARAMETERS OF WOM

Let's us see network structure parameters that influence WOM²⁷.

Density of the network: Density is a measure of all possible ties within a network. The denser the network, the faster the WOM spreads.

Clique: Clique is a subset of actors who all have direct connections to each other. The ties among the members of a clique will be strong, while the ties between cliques will be weak. These weak ties help in the flow of information between cliques, but the strong ties within the cliques are numerous and more influential.

Centrality: Usually, eWOM can be considered neither a centralized nor decentralized type of network. In such a situation, participation by a celebrity influencer can create a centralized WOM, while urging users to generate WOM through incentives is a more decentralized route.

Why do customers spread e-WOM?²⁸

1. Consumers' desire for social interaction
2. Desire for economic incentives
3. Concern for other consumers
4. The potential to enhance their own self-worth

SOCIAL INFLUENCE²⁹

The social influence of peer group is higher, so the references and opinions of friends and family will be considered highly valued by the customer. The social influence is different from the WOM, in terms of the personal relationship between the influencer and the customer. In WOM, the person who is providing the information and opinion about a product or brand can be a stranger, while in the case of social influence, the influencer is a member of the customer's social circle³⁰.

WOM leads to user-generated content, which is more powerful than marketer-generated content. Let us understand it in detail.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-generated content or UGC is basically brand-building material in which customers create the content for the organization. Think about the post that you see on social networks like Instagram, Facebook or Twitter, where someone is wearing a new item of clothing they want to show off and happens to mention the brand. Thus, a crucial feature of UGC is that it's unpaid. Brands sometimes hold contests asking customers to share their images or videos of experiences with the brand's product.³¹

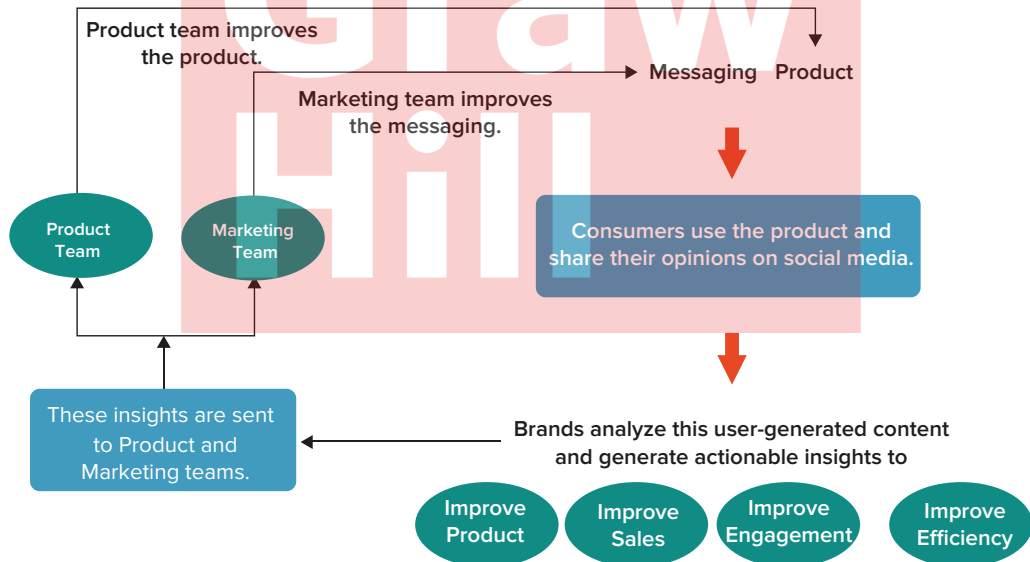


FIGURE 13.2 How User-Generated Content Should Be Used

Source: Quora, "Benefits of User Generated Content" <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-benefits-of-user-generated-content>

BENEFITS OF UGC³²

There are a number of benefits that marketers can derive from UGC, such as³³:

- **Increase in the user engagement and conversion rates** – ComScore suggests that brand engagements rise by 28% when customers are exposed to a mixture of professional marketing content and UGC. User reviews can significantly increase the conversion rates. An Olapic report shows that when consumers witness UGC while shopping, there is an increase in conversion rate by 4.6%.³⁴
- **Versatility in the UGC** – Every individual has their own perception about a brand, and they express it in the way they want. This helps marketers to broaden their mind to a whole new realm of possibilities and content generation on the brand.
- **Provides SEO values** – Kiss Metrics found of the world's top 20 largest brands, 25% of their search results are based on UGC.³⁵ This means higher organic traffic and more content being seen by the viewers. E-commerce websites are now facing problem with SEO since they always use the standard content of their manufacturers on the product that they sell.
- **Increase in social media followers** – Strategies that encourage UGC on social media include creating a custom hashtag or photo contest on Instagram, by asking a question or creating a challenge on Facebook or Twitter or launching of a video contest.

Friendly interaction with the customers, customer interaction posts and sharing your customer's images can all lead to increase in trust and engagement with the brand. This will also help in building a customer-centric brand image³⁶.

- **Cost effective** – UGC is all about users creating the content and they are unpaid; they do it for a number of reasons – whether to share their experience or build a connection with like-minded people. This obviously entails lesser expenses than the money spent for prime-time TV commercials³⁷.

INSIGHTS FROM UGC MARKETING³⁸

In order to derive the most out of UGC marketing, marketers must investigate some broader insights as follows³⁹:

- **Understanding the potential customers** – With UGC shared on social media, it is easy to find out the demographics and other characteristics of your customers, which can be used for fine-tuning your targeting.
- **Location at which users are using the product** – At times, people also add their location in Facebook/Instagram posts in their UGC. This helps marketers to analyse where exactly customers are using their products broadly in clubs or while they are on their vacations, etc. It can also be outdoors, leisure places, etc.
- **Brand positioning by understanding the way of usage of product by the users** – By seeing the UGC, marketers know how exactly the customers are using their product. It is also possible that the usage of products is different from what marketers thought. This gives details about what features of your product are important to the user. This will help marketing teams to highlight the favourites of customers.
- **Refine positioning** – UGC clearly depicts how the brand is being perceived by the users. It may so happen that company wants its brand to be an adventure brand, but people see it as a fun brand. Thereby, companies can work on their brand positioning and messaging across channels⁴⁰.

VARIOUS FORMS OF UGC

The following are various forms of UGC that marketers can leverage to their advantage:

1. **User Reviews** – User reviews are very important since customers rely on real human views on the product. Therefore, it must be used wisely to enhance brand's image.

Exhibit

Whole Foods, Hello BC, and Colour Street asked for permission to users to share their posts through messages on Instagram.

2. **Forum posts** – Providing the right platform for the customers to put up their ideas and thoughts on the product would help in greater brand engagement.
3. **Developing B2B communities** – Popular social networks such as Facebook groups, LinkedIn and Google+ communities give you the opportunity to create communities⁴¹.

Creating a dynamic FAQ page would help customers find answers to their doubts as present customers tend to be self-researchers.

Exhibit

IBM shared the photo of an employee on their Instagram account and the photo captured almost 1600 likes.

Developing B2C communities – According to content marketing institute, 86% of business firms now prefer B2C community building since it helps direct engagement with end users. Here posts on forums like Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. are supposed to be friendly and informal in their approach. It is due to this fun-packed content on these platforms that B2C communities show 30% more user engagement compared to B2B community pages.

CASE STUDY

SEPHORA

Strategy

Sephora created a searchable social platform for its users, called 'The Beauty Board'. Customers can upload their products on the platform and tag their favourite Sephora product. Viewers can then click to buy the product.

Result

Sephora achieved increase in product sales by featuring authentic photos in real case studies and thereby boost their brand image in the public for its authenticity and transparency.

4. **Blog posts** – Blogs are websites created by individuals or groups. It enables interaction between the blogger and reader through online comments. Examples for typical blogging platforms include WordPress, Blogger and Medium.

Boing Boing is a group blog with topics including fiction, science, adventures, etc.

5. **Testimonials** – Customer testimonials are endorsements of your service or product. These are posted on company's website and are used as marketing materials. It includes customers' evaluation of a product and the overall experience about it. A positive review or testimonial can convert leads into potential customers. Video testimonials are another way of promoting a brand. Apps such as Bravo and Nimbb allow customers to record testimonials on their computers or smartphones⁴².
6. **Question and Answer forums** – Being loyal to the needs and queries of customers, and even to their negative reviews, would develop a sense of trust towards the brand. Brands open Q&A forums in popular sites like Quora, shopify, etc. or they themselves would have a page that deals with customers' queries.

Due to increasing number of questions on Amazon by the sellers, they created an 'Amazon Seller Space', where all their queries will be answered immediately.

7. **Social media posts** – This has been the most popular method of sharing experiences with one another. This increase brand desire and customer outreach. For many brands, Instagram is the primary platform that users use to create and share posts with their peers.

Exhibit

HubSpot customer testimonial page

HubSpot is a well-known developer and marketer for inbound marketing and sales. Generally, companies rely on HubSpot for things like email marketing campaigns and lead generation. Its website has a testimonial page, which features photos of happy customers and their views on HubSpot⁴³.

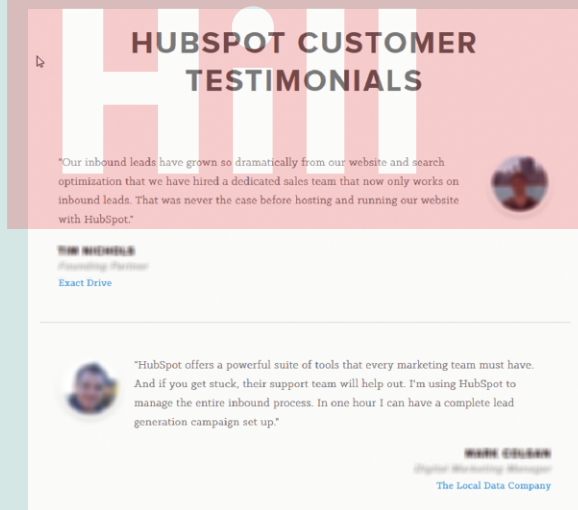


FIGURE 13.3 HubSpot Testimonial

Source: Hubspot

Exhibit

'Send a break-up letter'

T-Mobile found an amazing way to generate traffic to their product. They developed an app in which they asked people to 'send a break-up letter' to their previous carriers.

They put up an eye-catching post on Facebook regarding this campaign.

Thus, it helped them build a competitive edge over their peers. Customers sent around 113k letters to their page and the app reached about 27MM page views. The campaign generated around 67MM social impressions and proved to be a very effective method for generating traffic.



FIGURE 13.4 T-Mobile Campaign

Source: T-Mobile

Typologies of UGC classification:

Studies of online communities classify customer motives into two broad categories.

- Rational
- Emotional

Rational motivations may include sharing facts and figures with the world and advocating a specific stand for an issue whereas emotional motivation includes developing social connection with friends or other Internet users.

For example, under rational motivation, Wikis and issue-centric communities such as Rachel Ray Sucks community involves the opinions and contents of a large number of people.

Under emotional motivation of users, multiplayer online games such as socio town come into play.

THEORY OF CO-CREATION: COMPLETE CO-CREATION

Complete Co-creation refers to the process of value creation and productive collaboration with end users, giving them the central role. Co-creation is an economic strategy that brings a group of customers and company together to produce a mutually valued product. Thus, it is an integral strategy utilized in ORM. The process of co-creation involves mainly contribution and selection. Submission of contribution by the customers to the firms is quite hard since customers do not often respond to company calls. Hence many of the companies go for incentivization to get submissions. Selection of the most appealing ones from the submissions is then done later by the firm. Firms must go for most practical, viable, profitable and implementable ones.

Depending on the extent of control over the co-creation activities by the firm, it is mainly divided into the following.

- (i) **Tinkering:** Here customers have complete degree of control over the contribution activity and firm has control over the selection activity. For example, Sony Interactive Entertainment allows its users to design their own levels of programme for their puzzle platform video game, 'Little Big Planet'. The created games can then be shared with others or Sony. Here the contributors are even rewarded.
- (ii) **Submitting:** Here firm has the complete control over both the activities, that is contribution and selection. Therefore, in here, the firm places constraints on structure and basic format. For example, research-based NGOs take up submitting model of co-creation wherein they select the best submissions of contributions to carry out their experiments further.
- (iii) **Co-designing:** Here firms have control over the contribution activity, whereas customers take care of selection factor. For example, Local Motors employs the co-designing model of co-creation to build its car.
- (iv) **Collaborating:** Here customers have total control over both the activities. This is also known as open sourcing. It involves releasing the source code of the product and making it available to its users so that modifications can be made by them. Mozilla Firefox, Linux are based on collaborating model of co-creation.

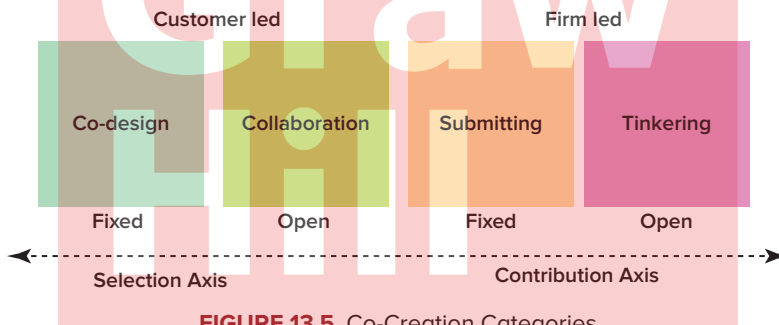


FIGURE 13.5 Co-Creation Categories

Source: Wikipedia, "Co-Creation," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-creation#/media/File:Types_of_co-creation.png

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MARKETING

Another way of developing and maintaining a favourable online reputation is indulging in customer engagement marketing. It improves the effect of the product experience on customer engagement by strengthening existing cognitive bonds (task-based engagement initiatives) and building new cognitive bonds (experiential engagement initiatives) with customers that enrich the product experience.⁴⁴

There are mainly two types of customer engagement marketing.

- (i) **Task-based customer engagement marketing:** A review reveals though that all task-based engagement initiatives consist of some element of work. That is, customers use their resources to carry out a task mostly assigned by the firm (e.g. refer a customer, participating in the contest) that involves mental or physical effort and usually accompanied by some form of reward such as discounts and rewards. These are short-lived and unsustainable. Example: Lays' 'Do us a flavour' contest.

Exhibit

Lay's 'Do us a flavour'

Strategy – The parent company Lay's, of PepsiCo, asked customers to come up with an interesting twist in the chip's flavour. The winner would be rewarded with a whopping \$1 million prize.

Approach – The company teamed up with Facebook and came up with an idea of turning the 'like' button into a vote of 'I'd Eat That'. Lay's Facebook cover photo became a rotating billboard featuring a new submission every few minutes.

Result – Customization was the key for the contest to be appealing for the masses. In the subsequent years, Lay's saw drastic growth in their overall profit margin.



FIGURE 13.6 Lay's 'Do Us a Flavour'

Source: Lay's

Exhibit

Starbuck's white cup contest⁴⁵

Strategy – The idea originated after multiple suggestions from customers on their My Starbucks idea page where customers posted pictures of beautifully sketched coffee cups. Subsequently Starbucks came up with the idea of harnessing the creative potential of their customers through the contest #whitecupcontest.

Approach – They were asked to click the photos of their designs on the cup and share them on social media with the hashtag #whitecupcontest. The winning designs would get printed on Starbucks limited edition reusable cups.



FIGURE 13.7 Starbuck's White Cup Contest Entries

Source: Starbucks

Result – Over 4000 customers submitted their designs in just three weeks, showing the willingness of people to take part in the contest.

Starbucks understood the mindset of its loyal customers and acted accordingly. Notice that no monetary prize was involved in the contest, rather it gave recognition of user's art on Starbucks cups.

- (ii) Experiential customer engagement marketing: A key difference is that they resemble play more than work and they tend to generate heightened positive emotions. Thus, experiential engagements are often desirable and valuable for the firm's sake. Experiential engagement initiatives are often communal (bring people together), which can make people feel as if they are part of something larger than themselves and create a sense of purpose and desire to contribute to the brand.

Exhibit

Google.org's Impact Challenge

Google.org has been rolling out Impact challenges since 2013, beginning with India and the United Kingdom. Since then, it has impacted 24 countries worldwide. The challenge invites local non-profit innovators and social entrepreneurs to come up with ideas that would make the neighbourhoods and the world a better place to live in.⁴⁶ The recent Google AI challenge 2019 offered the selected finalists grant funding from a 25 million dollars pool, support from Google volunteers, coaching from Google AI experts and access to the latest technology and co-working space at the Impact hub to help them turn their ideas into reality.

QUORA MARKETING

QUORA: WHAT & HOW

Quora is primarily a Q/A-based platform where users ask questions and seek answers from others worldwide. Their queries range from silly or witty questions like, 'If you write a book about failure and it doesn't sell, is it a success?' to life altering dilemmas like, 'Is it okay to drop out of college to follow passion?'

Here, the food-for-thought remains, how can a simple Q/A-based platform help marketers to gain leads and advertise their brands?

This section will throw light on some of the best practices and marketing strategies for advertising on Quora.

MARKETING BENEFITS OF QUORA

Research As a marketer, Quora helps in understanding target users, what they seek, and what topics/keywords can potentially drive traffic to your primary website.

Acquisition On some platforms, marketers chase the audience, but on Quora the audience comes to them. All that they have to do is to grab and seize their attention whenever they express interest. Around 300 million users visit Quora monthly. With such a large number of visitors, Quora extends immense exposure to all the marketers. Moreover, the concept of upvoting is very crucial in Quora. The more people upvoted your answer, the more reach you will gain on the platform.

Credibility Most of Quora traffic comes from Google or other search engines. Customers also seek reviews and recommendations on Quora. Thus, it can be used as a powerful tool to promote positive reviews gained by the brand and showcase customer-centricity.

Collaborations Quora is a valuable space to find like-minded people. Marketers can use it to direct strategic questions towards a certain set of users to seek their collaboration for market research.

Sales By answering questions on Quora, marketers can introduce or promote their products and demonstrate how their products solve specific problems. For example, if someone asks, “Which is the best hair removal method for women? Marketers can answer the question by introducing their products. Most people genuinely seek authentic answers. If you address your audience’s pain points on this platform, it’s highly likely that they’ll try the products/services recommended by you.

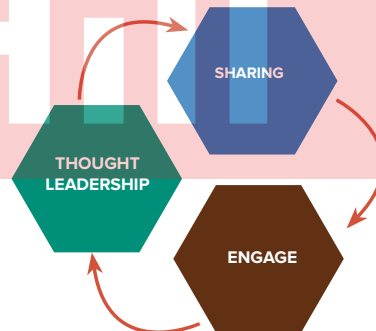
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON QUORA

According to a research by Edelman and LinkedIn, presently several B2B companies have started resorting to thought leadership content to boost brand goodwill, gain decision-makers’ trust, and spark innovative conversations. A study by the Economist Intelligence Unit reported that 56% of B2B marketing executives considered “positioning their company as a thought leader” as their top objective. (Prater, 2020)⁴⁷

Basically, **the goal is to demonstrate domain expertise and offer a unique point of view.**

And, if your goal is to accelerate brand authority through thought leadership, Quora is a great place to start.

Here are three best-practices to create a robust marketing flywheel on Quora.



- **Share:** consistently increase conversion rate by asking and responding to questions. That’s how your expertise will shine through.
- **Engage:** frequently interact with high-intent audiences and potential prospects on Quora. Actively up-voting, commenting, and resharing answers reflect your eagerness to be a vital part of the community.
- **Thought Leadership:** gain authority in the field by establishing your expertise on topics. Consistently provide insightful answers and a unique perspective. This increases the number of your followers and people seeking your expert opinions.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION ON QUORA

Let us understand the basics of Quora Marketing.

1. Create an Appealing Business Profile

Before purchasing a pair of shoes, most people consider factors such as brand, warranty, price, quality, etc. Similarly, when people read your answer, they'll probably check out your bio as well. Therefore, a solid Quora business profile is important to gain followers.

Your profile description should be succinct. Use this space to tell your target audience who you are and how you can benefit them. Clearly highlight your expertise, work experience, educational background and business details.

PRO TIP: You should mention the links of your digital properties such as website, blog, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. This will help to increase visitors of your website and social media handles.

2. Research Your Target Market

Quora is an excellent platform for conducting market research. Marketers can read threads to find out what the target market is searching for and is interested in. Content on Quora is bucketed into topics and divided into questions. Marketers can not only answer queries, but also read content to analyse what's ranking. By doing this, they can create more effective marketing content accordingly.

PRO TIP: The private follow feature allows you to monitor your competition and know what they're up to.

3. Select the Right Question

Your choice of questions is crucial for your popularity. Most users pay maximum attention to the responses with the highest upvotes. So, search for the questions that you can answer like a pro.

PRO TIP: You can use Screaming Frog's custom extraction to get relevant information on the number of people who have answered your questions, links to your competitors' platforms, etc.

4. Answers like an Expert

Provide statistics, sources, and evidence to support your answers. Your responses should be specific, focused, and referenced. Follow a formal format which makes your answer appealing and comprehensive. Moreover, social media awards consistency, and Quora is no exception. Be consistent, answer 1–3 questions per day to gain traction.

PRO TIP: Follow the AIDA formula to write better answers. Here's all you need to know about it.

- **Attention:** First, try to capture the reader's attention with something relevant and catchy such as a captivating introductory sentence or image.
- **Interest:** Tell interesting facts, hacks, stories, or use dialogues.
- **Desire:** Make your audience desire your product or services by sharing testimonials.
- **Action:** Encourage the visitors to engage, comment, and upvote your answers as upvotes help your answers attract traffic.

5. Join Quora Spaces

Quora spaces are a collection of content and communities with a shared interest. It makes easier for like-minded people to share and read content on specific topics.

6. Leverage Quora blog

Quora blog is one such platform where you can differentiate your brands from others and showcase yourself as the one in a million. Quora also allows followers to submit their articles on your blog. This way, marketers

can build a strong community of target audience. They can create a space for users to post relevant content in each other's Quora blogs and get backlinks. Thus, through Quora networking, marketers can form a cornucopia of thoughts!

PRO TIP: If you own a blog outside Quora, use Quora blog to promote primary bog. Write a short description in the given option, mention details about the most recent blog post, and add its link. This will help you in leveraging Quora blog to increase traffic on your primary blog.

7. Use the 'Promote' Feature

Let the world see what you have got to tell by promoting your answers. Following is a step-by-step guide to use this feature.

The promoted answers will be displayed to all the people interested in the topics you had selected while creating your Ad.

8. Generate Referral Traffic

Quora is a great way to generate referral traffic. Referral traffic is Google's way of reporting website traffic from sources other than Google. Generating organic traffic is good. However, marketers cannot always rely on algorithms as they keep changing. Hence, keeping doors open for other sources of traffic is a safe option.

9. Remarket on Quora

Remarketing means targeting ads towards people who have already visited the brand's website/ page. It is an essential component of marketing campaigns.

You can install Quora Pixels in your website code to create a list of the audience you wish to remarket.

AD CAMPAIGNS ON QUORA

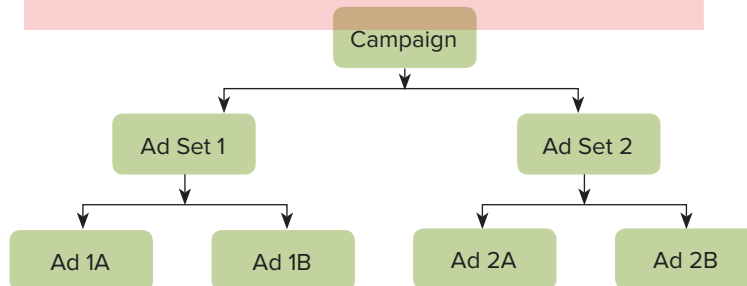
Let us dive deep into Quora's Ad anatomy and understand how it works.

Quora allows marketers to strategically place ads and make them appear as if they are part of the primary content in answers.

Marketers can post ads in the form of promotional images and text. These ads can be displayed using the Ad manager of Quora. The platform reviews each ad unit to ensure compliance.

Quora's ad campaigns have three layers as follows:

- Campaign
- Ad set
- Ad



Campaigns Campaigns comprise the broadest level. At this level, marketers set a campaign's objective, daily budget, and launch schedule. The objective that they select determines the metrics that appear on their campaign dashboard.

Ad Set At this level, marketers select the strategies for reaching out to the target audience. They also choose the locations, devices and browsers where their ads should appear. Moreover, they place their bid for the ads.

Ad At this level, marketers select the type of ad that they wish to promote to viewers. They can select Text Ad, Image Ad, or Promoted Answers. All these ad units can be combined with Quora's Lead Generation Forms.

Targeting in Quora Ads

Quora offers the following targeting options to advertisers:

- **Audience targeting:** Quora offers audience targeting options where advertisers can target demographics to display their ads.
- **Website Retargeting:** It allows you to retarget users who have visited your sites or Quora pages using Quora pixels.
- **Lookalike audience targeting:** This helps you widen your audience list by targeting the audience with similar characteristics and liking patterns. You can use your audience list to match the audience.
- **Topic Targeting:** Advertisers can run ads on issues that are in line with their industry. You can also use positive and negative keywords to have accurate results.
- **Keyword targeting:** Quora offers advertisers both broad-match and phrase-keyword targeting, thus making the targeting more accurate.
- **Question targeting:** Quora allows advertisers to target questions. You can also utilise the "follow question" tab that shows the curiosity of the audience.

QUORA AUCTION

Under Quora Auction, the advertisers bid for ad placements, and it works quite similar to any other auction.

Quora ads are only available on an auction basis. This implies that advertisers are required to state a bid value which they wish to pay for each click. Depending on the performance and competition, Quora's system determines the cost of that click, which is never higher than the bid mentioned by advertisers. There is no minimum spend amount needed to initiate the auction, so the budget can be as low as a few dollars.

Auction Factors

Quora's Ad optimisation algorithms use a variety of factors to determine the winner of an auction. These factors keep on evolving constantly. The Bid Price, Clicks on the ad and Conversions through the ad play a significant role.

DETERMINATION OF AUCTION WINNER

Every ad placement considers all the eligible ads from advertisers based on the budget and targeting specified in the ad sets. High performing ads win.

In other words, the likelihood of engagement on an ad, advertiser's bid, and users' experience of seeing that ad are immensely important.

QUORA AD MANAGER

As marketers, it is important to monitor the performance of ads periodically. This helps to utilise the budget effectively.

After setting an Ad Campaigns on Quora, the next thing to work on is analytics. For this, Quora Ad Manager becomes the saviour!

Metrics

The following metrics are tracked in ad manager:

- Delivery
- Impressions
- Clicks
- Cost per click
- Conversions
- Conversion %
- Amount Spent
- Remaining Budget

Auction Insights

Marketers can use auction insight to get an idea about competitors' activity. Following are the aspects that can be checked to improve ad creatives, targeting strategies, and bids.

- Auction lost to the competition tells the percentage of the sales your ad set entered but couldn't get the slot.
- Impression share tells the percentage of auctions where your ad set won the slot.
- Absolute image share tells the percentage of the auction your ad set entered and got top slots.

BEST PRACTICES

Here are a few tips for optimising Quora Ad Campaigns.

- Use A/B testing:** Test different headlines and see which of them performs better than others, phrase your headlines as if the prospect is asking a question, or state your headline as if you are providing a solution to an issue.
- Test landing page:** Use optimised landing pages. You can also try different landing pages and check which one brings more conversions.
- Keep strong cohesion between Quora ad and landing page:** Match your message from ad space to the landing page.
- Set up 2–4 ad sets and ads.** Setting up at least two to four ad sets for each campaign helps in testing the different types of targeting and bidding methods. Similarly, setting up at least two to four ads for each ad set is beneficial for testing different messages, images, and ad formats.
- Campaign objectives:** If your campaign objective is to optimise conversion, include a keyword, topic, audience, and question in your targeting mix. If it is to increase awareness and traffic, include interest, issues, and broad targeting.

PRACTICES TO AVOID

Below are a few don'ts for Quora platform:

- Plagiarism** is a big no while writing answers or blogging on Quora. They might ban you permanently from the platform.
- Don't spam too many links** in your answers. They may find it suspicious and take action against it.
- Don't violate BNBR policy.** Be nice, be respectful. It is okay to disagree with someone as long as you are civil and do not use harsh language or insult anyone.
- Editing just to thank for upvotes** is not against the policy, but this act won't fetch you results in the long run.
- Don't answer in one word.** You should elaborate more about the topic or give examples and help the readers to conclude.

- F. **Don't use incorrect or unusual capitalisation and abbreviations while writing ads.** Quora ads should be well formatted and should be free from grammatical and punctuation errors.
- G. **Don't bid too low** and not win the auction. Start initially at a higher bid to enter the sale as a strong contender.

BENEFITS OF QUORA

Here are the top reasons to consider Quora for marketing.

- **The resemblance to existing ad platforms:** If you are using ad platforms like Facebook or Google AdWords, you need not worry and learn new features or terminology. Quora's interface is easy to understand as it resembles existing platforms.
- **Quora can improve your search result ranking:** Google search results often include Quora posts among the highest ranking. All this makes Quora a wonderful SEO tool that can attract organic traffic to your website. You can research keywords and use keywords in your answers and increase your ranking.
- **Quora helps you connect with influencers:** One of the trends of digital marketing is the growing importance of influencer marketing. Quora is a place where you can connect, engage, and directly approach influencers and leaders from your niche.
- **Quora helps you to generate content ideas:** Quora enables you to create content ideas and get long-tail keywords. If you see many people posting a question "how do I increase subscribers to my YouTube channel," you get an idea for your next blog.

INSIGHTS & TIPS ABOUT LATEST TRENDS

Let us see some tips for leveraging Quora.

- Quora is a platform predominantly used for a B2B business. Still, these days many influencers, bloggers are also using Quora to build their brand by providing useful content and insights in their niche. If you want to know if Quora is suitable for your business, start testing with lower funnels like tracking your email list on Quora or remarketing your website visitors.
- As Quora is rapidly expanding into different languages, one thing you can try is translating your answers into different languages. Imagine the amount of traction your website and your quora account will get.
- With the increase of voice search, the use of long-tail keywords is increasing. Thus, you will find more results of Quora getting displayed on Search Engine Result Pages. Therefore, Quora has a long way to go. Start enhancing your Quora profile to attract leads and traffic in the future.
- These days, podcasts are one of the marketing techniques to grow your audience base. Quora has started, Grow with the Quora podcast, thus helping you to improve your brand and share your expertise with others.

CASE STUDY

BAJAJ FINSERV

Bajaj Finserv Limited is one of the leading companies that deal in financial services. Its core business includes lending, insurance and wealth advisory.

Challenge and Ideation

With an aim to extend innovative finance solutions in the market, Bajaj Finserv planned to enhance vis-

ibility of its major services in the domains of lending, investment and savings.

To achieve this goal, the team resorted to using Quora for content marketing. Following were their major challenges in this pursuit.

1. **Transforming perspectives:** Their greatest challenge was to make the internal team understand the power of Quora as an influencer marketing

platform and transform content creation approach.

2. **Gaining trust and building credibility:** The second challenge was to revamp the existing profiles to ensure that they appear more authentic and autonomous in their respective fields of interest.
3. **Scaling the campaign:** The last challenge was to accelerate the execution of new content marketing campaigns and enhance the impact on business metrics, so that the teams stay motivated and focused towards the new plans and goals.

Solution

Bajaj Finserv Limited strategised and executed their plan in the following way.

After extensive market research, the team identified and answered relevant questions related to the finance domain on Quora.

Also, new Quora profile personas were created called Arwind Sharma (made in 2015) and Anamika Verma (made in 2016). Initially, these profiles were created with an aim to acquire more backlinks for the SEO campaign. However, in August 2017 onwards, a new approach was brought in.

Here are the ways through which a stronger presence and authority was created on Quora:

Profile rebranding: Arwind Sharma's profile was rebranded as an "independent" expert in personal loans. Anamika Verma's profile was rebranded as an "independent" expert in home loans and mortgages. These profiles didn't reflect direct association with Bajaj.

Faith and authenticity: The team utilised the technique of experience-based storytelling and posted brand-neutral content to gain more trust from users regarding the offered services. They also alluded to external sources to answer finance-related questions. This made their answers appear more authentic and less marketing-oriented.

Diversifying content formats: The team utilised as many content formats as possible to engage the audience effectively. For example, they posted about the loan application process through a combination of videos, images, and walkthrough guides.

Found "more" queries to drive scale: Besides common topics like house renovation loan, purchase, and EMI, the team also engaged in other popular topics where expenses were being discussed such as vacations, weddings, medical requirements. The increased

frequency of content sharing directly influenced the number of views, followers, and engagement.

Ensuring fast resolution: The team aimed at being the forerunner in responding to the user's queries (both product-based and generic) and winning their trust before the competition could get the chance to pitch-in and steal their thunder. To ensure the fastest possible resolution, the team used Quora's profile notifications.

Succinct Answers: The team ensured to-the-point answers that resolved the user's queries quickly.

Result

Both the profiles, Arwind and Anamika, turned into "influencers" in their respective fields of expertise.

Arwind Sharma's profile gained 5,00,826 views between August 2017 and July 2018. From 28,781 in August 2017 to 68,457 in July 2018, the profile experienced 138% growth in monthly organic views. It achieved second rank in personal loans category and fourth rank in Loans category. (Techmagnate, n.d.)⁴⁸

Anamika Verma's profile gained 1,64,108 views between August 2017 and July 2018. From 14,244 in August 2017 to 31,400 in July 2018, the profile experienced 120% growth in monthly organic views. (Techmagnate, n.d.)⁴⁸

Owing to its strong, opinionated and extensively researched content, Bajaj Finserv became one of the top brands to be considered by users researching about financial services on Quora. The credibility enormously impacted the referral traffic and drove a large "in-market" audience to landing pages on the brand website. Their new content marketing approach also helped them gain multiple badges of recognition on Quora, such as:

- First position in 'Home Mortgage' for 'Most Viewed Writers' for Anamika Verma profile
- Second position in 'Personal Loan' for 'Most Viewed Writers' for Arwind Sharma profile
- Fourth position in 'Loans' for 'Most Viewed Writers' for Arwind Sharma profile

Conclusion

When users ask questions on specific topics, targeted advertising naturally comes into the picture. Quora offers marketers the ability to listen to the users and cater to their needs with superb content marketing features. Being active on Quora regularly should be a long-term strategy to attract traffic and provide social proof for your brand.

BLOGS

A blog is an informational website that includes discrete, often informal, diary-style texts. Recent blog posts appear at the top of the page. Topics range from politics to sports.

Most of the blogs are often textual, although there are a few blogs centrally focused on art (art blogs), videos (vlogs), photographs (photo blogs), audios (podcasts), music (MP3 blogs), for educational purpose (Edu blogs). Writing short texts on an event or an experience is called microblogging.

TYPES OF BLOGS

Blogs can be broadly classified into personal blogs, collaborative blogs and corporate/business blogs⁴⁹.

Personal Blogs

Personal blogs are mostly online diaries or commentary written by an individual. A majority of the personal blog posts attract fewer readers, unlike the collaborative or organizational types. For example, profseema.com is a personal blog maintained by the author, giving information on her professional journey.



FIGURE 13.8 An example of a personal blog

Collaborative Blogs

These are blogs managed by more than one author and mainly revolves around a single theme such as technology, politics, sports, etc.

For example, Blog Preston is a collaborative blog giving up-to-date information on incidents happening in and around Preston⁵⁰.

Corporate or business blogs

Corporate blogs help in enhancing corporate engagement and communication in business environment. Corporate blogs are broadly categorized into five main types based on author and content.

Employee Blog

An employee blog is a personal blog, which is managed by a single employee of the corporation. Employee blogs are being officially sponsored by the companies and are increasingly added to the company-owned domains.

For example, a Salesforce employee blog, which frequently posts about upcoming trends and events in the industry.

Group blog

These are maintained by several people in a corporation and they often focus on specific topics, mostly technical ones. They are mainly self-hosted out of interest for the topic.

Executive Blog

Executive blogs are under the control of top officials of the firm. Blogs generate huge traffic and drive readers' attention when it is managed by a top official of the firm.

For example, 'blog maverick' is a blog page created by Marc Cuban, to maintain better communication with the customers of NBA's Dallas Maverick.

Another example is Randy Baseler, Boeing Commercial Airplane's marketing vice-president, who published an online blog that was widely acclaimed in blogosphere.



FIGURE 13.9 Randy's Journal Blog

Source: Boeing Airlines

Promotional Blog

Promotional blogs are created with the purpose of promoting newly launched products and services. These types of blogs are often seen as controversial due to lack of authenticity, but are widely encouraged by top brands for business profits.

Exhibit

Coca-Cola conversions Blog (Promotional Blog)

Coca-Cola conversions blog does a good job on relating the events and programmes with coke collectibles.

We can see how coke is displaying one of its old bottle with 'Harry Potter' written on it, which was made when first film from the series was released. Writing a blog on this when the last one of the series is releasing as a movie, cashing on the hype created due to it is a smart promotional strategy.

Newsletter Blog

Some organizations have launched blogs officially that represent their positions in the form of newsletter. Hence these are presented with a professional tone with well-polished messages. Below is an example of newsletter blog in which yahoo presents its latest news and events in a very structured format.

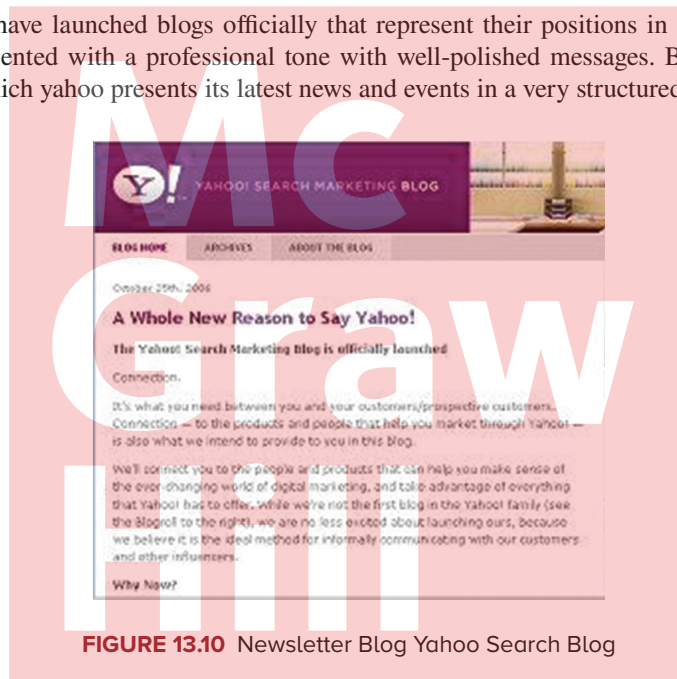


FIGURE 13.10 Newsletter Blog Yahoo Search Blog

Source: Yahoo

PERSONAL BLOG TOPICS

Many successful personal bloggers do not stick to a single topic. They write about those things with which they had a great experience and want readers to know about it. It might be a poem or about a movie that they recently watched.

For example, author Shannon Paul writes about different business objectives, about social media marketing, building of public relations, etc. on her blog.

Political Topics

An informed and insightful information on the current political situation and stands taken by political leaders can be highlighted in your blog. It can also be used as a filter for the public to help them wade through all political spins. For example, Republican Standard blog covers all latest news on Virginia Republicans.

Special Interest Blogs

These types of blogs require an interesting niche in which the blogger has a lot of relevant information. Here, bloggers stick to their area of niche and try to bring out something unique happening in their field of interest.

For example, Knowtechie is a blog that provides information on technological advancements.

General Interests Blogs

Here, most of the times, bloggers do not dwell upon a single topic, rather they take up topics that are socially relevant. Those topics are chosen which public needs to be informed about.

For example, HuffPost is a popular blog that offers information on news, satire, business, entertainment, business, etc.⁵¹

There are many factors to be considered before selecting a topic, such as public interest, your depth of knowledge in that topic, its longevity and audience's interest in that topic⁵².

Consistency matters a lot to increase the engagement of the audience with the contents. So, the ability of the blogger to come up with interesting content on a timely basis and keeping your content fresh over a long term are important. Be sure to research your competition. Consider other bloggers from the same field of interest, their target audience.

B2B BLOGGING STRATEGIES

Often the contents are mainly presented in the inverted pyramid style, that is initial paragraphs contain the most important information, and the least important information are put towards the end.

Search engines give importance to well-researched lengthy blog posts of about 2000 words. Provide the posts with navigational markers, bullet points and numbered lists⁵³.

For example, Mail Guard, an Australian cloud security provider, uses its blog to demonstrate the company's expertise in its services.

B2C BLOGGING

B2C blogs must use a relatable voice that encourages the customer to click on an advertisement.

Share news and opinions that your consumers will find interesting and engaging. It might not necessarily promote a direct sale, but it will affect their purchase decision-making at some point down the line if they trust what you have to say. In fact, 83% of consumers specifically prefer an informal tone in the blog content.⁵⁴ Many people will just skim blog posts, so you are advised to keep your content short and engaging.

Put key phrases throughout your blog in bold to highlight important information for skim-readers. Break up your text with headers, videos and images to make them more comprehensive. Visually appealing blogs get more views, with articles that incorporate images getting 94% more total views. Republish/syndicate your blog content on Medium or Tumblr. It's another source of generating traffic and another set of audience you can engage with in order to build brand awareness.

For example, Starbucks owns a blog under the name Starbucks coffee, where customers can write about their experiences with new dishes of Starbucks⁵⁵.

Syndicate Blogging

Content syndication is republishing your original content on other sites in order to generate more traffic to the original article. Content syndication is cheap (usually no-cost) way to make your content go popular. It's much cheaper and easier than creating a new blog post for a third-party site, either on the same topic or on something completely different to get more traffic. Popular content syndication platforms are inbound.org, medium, SlideShare, Quora, outbrain, Taboola, scoop.it⁵⁶.

Guest Posting

Publishing of your articles on someone else's blog to generate traffic to the original content is called guest posting.

The main difference between guest post and syndicate blogging is that with guest posting, a blog post only appears on one guest blogging site. It does not appear on your website at all. Also, a guest post is usually original content but with content syndication, a blog post appears on your site and on one or more other sites. Unlike guest posting, syndicated content is an original piece that is being republished.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF BLOGGING

Do's of Blogging

- **Concentrating on quality of the content** – Content quality is what people look for. Content that is helpful and actionable. A huge number of blogs are being created every day, and a large proportion of them are afflicted with plagiarized content. If readers can identify the passion in you on the topic, they will acknowledge the effort that you have made in creating it⁵⁷.
- **Post your blogs frequently and consistently** – Design a publishing schedule on which you will post your content and stick with it. Your audience expects interesting content on the topic and inconsistency will result in dropping of your target audience. You will have to take a fresh start to regain all those readers.
- **Build relationship with other Bloggers** – This is a sure way of reaching out to new audience. Use links within your posts: This will help you with your search engine rankings and draw visitors to your posts for a long time.
- **Respond to blog comments positively** – Responding to them in a positive way would make them feel that their engagement with the blog is always welcomed. Even just posting 'Thanks for reading my blog' would be sensible⁵⁸.

Don'ts of Blogging

- **Do not set unrealistic goals** – Even though frequent approach for posting of content is suggested, do not attempt to post every day if you cannot come up with engaging material. You should set your schedule according to the resources available.
- **Do not limit your word count** – Sometimes it will not be possible to convey the content meaningfully if you try to restrict the word count.
- **Do not write long paragraphs** – Break up your write-up into smaller paragraphs and sentences and try to include bullet points and lists wherever possible.
- **Make no grammatical errors** – Give it a professional quality that it deserves by eliminating grammatical errors so that readers would take your blog seriously.
- **Do not plagiarize or steal photos** – This would land you in serious legal problems and will damage the reputation and authenticity of your blog. There are many bloggers who grab some image relevant to their content from Google, but this would also put you in trouble. There are many stock photo sites from which you can choose images of your interest.

BOOST USER ENGAGEMENT ON YOUR BLOG

Here are some of the best practices to boost user engagement on your blog:

- **Minimum page load speed** – Make sure that the content loads faster for your readers. You can go for GIFs instead of images since they load fast and look reasonably good.

- **Choose a writing style appropriate for your target audience** – There are broadly two types of writing styles: friendly form and professional form. Most blogs prefer the friendly form of writing, but it depends on the blogger, target audience and the topic chosen.
- Use strong CTAs to make your readers stick to the post and generate more prospects. Put a subscription form at the end of every blog post. You can provide some sort of incentives for filling up of subscription form such as ‘Sign up to get free online course on XXX topic’.
- Display-related content at the end of every post to decrease bounce rates: this is also related to internal linking and helps them make a choice to browse through more related and relevant content.
- Placing social media follow buttons and share buttons on both top and bottom of the site can trigger readers to share your posts with their peer groups. If you have an infographic, you can invite your readers to embed them in their posts.
- Cross-promote your blog posts on Facebook, Twitter and other popular social media networks. Add popular hashtags to convert your posts into searchable content.
- Syndicate your content on LinkedIn Pulse, Quora, Tumblr, Medium to improve visibility and outreach.

VLOGS

Vlogs or Video Blogs have the same purpose as that of blogs, but the medium is not text anymore, and the vlogger uses a method of storytelling that is more visually appealing for the social media follower. Vlogs are trickier to produce, since it is not editable once it is uploaded. For example, if a part of a blog has to be edited, the blogger can edit it in a matter of minutes, but for any change in the vlog, the vlogger has to take down the existing video and upload a new video with the necessary changes.

Vloggers are becoming more and more influential in helping the customer know about a product or service. Some vloggers make review videos or comparison videos of products, which might be used by the customer to make purchase decisions.

Principles of Vlogging

The following things should be kept in mind for effective vlogging:

1. Quality camera and equipment: Necessary for high-quality content of both video and audio.
2. Design the flow of the vlog: Decide on how the communication must be made and present the video as a story.

CO-MARKETING

Two businesses that are having similar targeted audiences can join hands to promote the content to both audiences. In co-marketing, two businesses come together to execute a campaign that neither one separately could. Co-marketing gives a chance to increase the customer base and to enhance trust and reliability in existing customers. Co-marketing is a great way to introduce audiences to a wider range of opinions, topics and ideas⁵⁹.

FINDING POTENTIAL PARTNERS FOR PARTNERSHIP

The most important thing while deciding a co-marketing partner is to make sure that both partners have the same goal for the campaign. For example, if one is looking for leads and other is for sales from a partnership, then it will be difficult for both partners to accomplish the final goal⁶⁰.

Both the partners should have a similar audience for promoting the campaign. Otherwise, promotion may not be worth for one of the partners.⁶¹

After finding a potential partner, co-marketing agreement decides the role of each partner during the campaign. Under the co-marketing agreement, businesses should agree upon the following things:

- **Goals** – Goals must be clear to both the partners.
- **Timeline for the project** – The start and end of the partnership must be decided earlier.
- **Lead sharing agreements** – Profit and lead sharing agreement must be signed by both the partners before starting the campaigns.
- **Promotional plan** – It includes strategies regarding promotion of campaigns. During the plans, both partners decide the platform for campaigns⁶².

This agreement can help both the businesses if any miscommunication occurs.⁶³

DIFFERENT WAYS THROUGH WHICH BUSINESS CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CO-MARKETING

Co-marketing through e-books

The e-book is a very important co-marketing content through which partner businesses engage customers with brands. These e-books are written by partner businesses that contain videos, white papers, infographics and content that can be broken up and used as the fuel for multichannel campaigns. These e-books explain how the customer can take advantage of partner businesses or about various customer benefits.

HubSpot and LinkedIn have partnered to teach about social selling. Through e-book, they explain how their platform can be useful for conversation for both salespeople and marketers.

Joint Venture Webinar

In a joint venture webinar, two business owners host any event on any online platform and make discounts or offers at the end of the event. One business owner invites the other one to display to their existing audience. The business that is a guest presenting to a new audience will offer a percentage of any sales income to the 'host' of the webinar. Businesses also share resources such as data and expertise.^{64,65}

Businesses should swap their places as a 'Host' on each alternative webinar. So, both the partners will get equal opportunity to increase the audience base and revenue at the end of each webinar.⁶⁶

Co-marketing through Subscription Box

Subscription box is a new concept in India. Partner businesses provide different but complementary products to customers. For example, customers are provided chocolates with books, skin care products with a make-up kit, etc. Businesses ask for customer requirements and they provide the subscription box like a gift.^{67,68}

This collaboration results in attractive discounts and special offers for customers.⁶⁹

The partnership between e-commerce websites and courier services, and that between business and payment portal, are good examples of co-marketing through discounts and special offers.

Give Referral Bonuses

This is a very important way of co-marketing for businesses that are providing their services in the same industry. Under this type of co-marketing, the business gives a referral bonus to its partner business. This encourages other business owners to recommend you. When one trusted business refers to other business, it also increases trust and reach of its partner.^{70,71}

amazon.in All

All Fresh Gift Cards Amazon Business Buy Again Amazon Pay Browsing History Baby Kindle eBooks Grocery & Gourmet Foods Pet Supplies Shopping made easy | Download the app

Promotion Terms Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Offer period – 16th March 00:00 HRS to 19th March 23:59 HRS

1. What is the Amex Offer?

a) Get 10% instant discount on Amex Credit Card payment transactions
b) Any cancelled, rejected or returned order(s) will not be eligible for the offer and the refund amount of such order will be adjusted with the instant discount amount.

2. What is the maximum discount that I can avail?
The maximum discount possible upto INR 1,500. Refer the below table:

	Min Transaction	CC Max Discount	CC EMI Max Discount
Mobiles/ Other Categories	10000	1500	1500
Fashion	2000	500	500

3. How can I avail this offer?
There are no other special steps to avail this offer. Just go through the normal purchase process and use your saved Amex card to pay.

5. Can I get this offer with Exchange offer?
Yes, the offer is valid on exchange as long as minimum purchase value (after Exchange discount) is spent on Bank Card.

6. Can I avail discount on card payment for cash on delivery order? Are net Banking transactions also included in this Offer?
COD and Net Banking transactions are NOT included in this Offer.

7. Would I get the Bank offer even if I make a part payment using my Amazon Pay Balance?
Yes, the offer is available on partial payments as long as minimum purchase value is spent on Amex Card. The customer cannot use EMI option if Amazon Pay balance is selected.

8. Is the offer applicable on EMI?
Yes, the offer is applicable on Credit Card EMI payment.

9. What if I cancel my order?
The Offer is applicable for a successful purchase. If Instant Discount is availed on any purchase, and it is subsequently cancelled, the refund amount of such purchases will be posted adjusting the instant discount amount availed on the purchase. However, if you place another order within the offer period, you shall get instant bank discount subject to offer eligibility.

11. My payment failed while placing the order, will I be eligible for the cashback?
If your payment failed while placing the order, Amazon.in gives you an option to revise your payment. If you revise your payment within the offer duration, you will be eligible for the cashback. For more information on revise payment, [click here](#)

FIGURE 13.11 Special Discount Offer on Amazon While Payment via SBI Debit and Credit Card

Cross-promotion

When one business promotes products or services of other business along with its products, it is known as cross-promotion⁷². There are multiple ways a business can collaborate with another business for cross-promotions. Both can advertise each other on various social media platforms, create a joint advertisement for a newspaper or magazines, combine their email subscriber lists to send out a joint mail to users.⁷³ Cross-promotion is very helpful to the business that has a limited marketing budget⁷⁴.



FIGURE 13.12 Joint Advertising Campaign of Nestle's KitKat and Google's Android

Source: Android/KitKat

CASE STUDY

COMPANY: PayTM AND ZOMATO

PayTM or payment through mobile is a website that provides various user-friendly services such as tickets booking, bill payments, mobile recharge, data card recharges, DTH recharges and so on.^{75,76}

Zomato is a restaurant search and food delivery application providing delicious food at customers' doorsteps. Zomato covers around 80,000 restaurants across 120 cities in the country.

Objective

- To utilize complementary services of partner business in order to expand user base. For example, Order from Zomato and payment through PayTM.⁷⁷
- Attract new set of customers to the platform through offers and discounts.
- Improve users' experience and convenience via a partnership.

Solution

- In order to improve performance, Food delivery aggregator Zomato joined hands with the digital payment application PayTM.
- Provided attractive offers and discounts to compel the users to use their services. For example, flat 50% off on food ordered through Zomato if the users pay through PayTM wallet.^{78,79}

Result

- Monthly order of Zomato increases from **28 million to 38 million within three months**.^{80,81}

PayTM saw an increase in the total registered users in **tier II and tier III cities** such as Surat, Durgapur, Rajkot, Meerut, Imphal, Rohtak, Panipat and others.

Content that is created can also be spread using paid mediums. There are many content platforms that run native ads.

NATIVE ADVERTISING

Traditional ads use a simple banner type of structure in order to attract users. Improper placement and irrelevant content makes traditional advertising intrusive.

Native ads cleverly mimic the original content and attract the users to engage with content and enable them to share it with other users.

There are a number of 'content recommendation engines' such as Outbrains, Taboola, Optmyzr, Click cease, etc. They help businesses grow their user base by recommending their content on various online platforms through native advertising.^{82,83}

OUTBRAIN

Outbrain is a platform that attracts readers by recommending articles below the post. Relevant content for an individual user is determined by the outbrain algorithm, which uses contextual, behavioural and demographic targeting. Outbrain is having 1 billion interest profiles and provides around 275 billion monthly recommendations worldwide.^{84,85}

TABOOLA

Taboola links a user to related slideshows, articles or videos within and outside the website by providing a content discovery platform. Taboola attracts the readers by placing widgets below the content of an individual article page. Basically, Taboola uses software to predict the videos or articles for readers before they express any interest in watching them. Thus, Taboola gives readers new content, which increases customer base and

website traffic. Taboola is having around 1 billion unique users, above 22,000 premium publishers worldwide, and provides around 400 billion content recommendations every month.^{86,87}



FIGURE 13.13 Widgets Displayed on CNN Websites by **Outbrain**

While listing the content on popular websites, content recommendation engines also allow marketers to choose their target audience.

Marketers can check the content reach on a daily basis. This analysis enables marketers to make a strategy for budget and also help them in re-targeting the preferred audience.

Content Recommendation Engines charge the marketers on the 'Cost Per Click' basis. This type of cost structure makes native ads inexpensive.⁸⁸

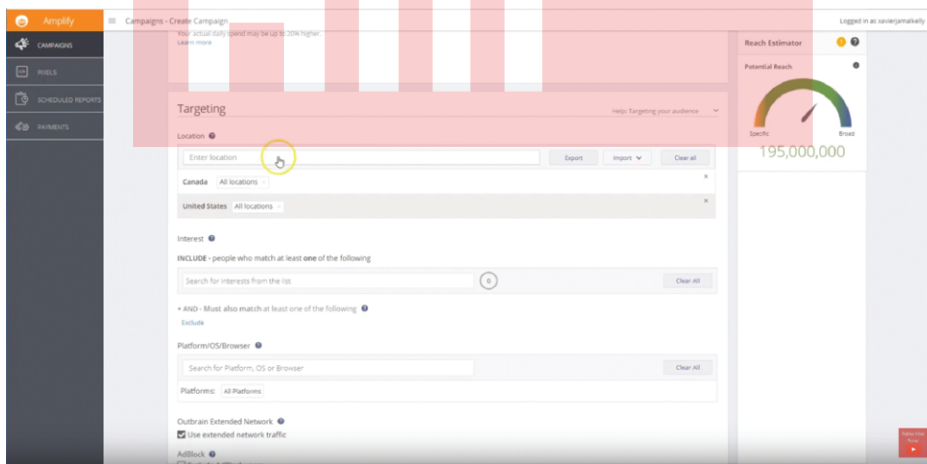


FIGURE 13.14 Target the Audience through Content Recommendation Engine – **Outbrain**

Source: Xavier Kelly

There are several types of listings as follows:

In-Feed ads

This type of ads are mostly written and developed by the publisher and they appear within the sites. These ads are created in order to generate brand engagement.⁸⁹ These ads promote the content of the same website in order to engage the user and enhance their experience.

Promotional Ads

These types of listing take the user away from the main website to the brand's content or website. Brands having an attractive website and valuable services can use promotional native ads.⁹⁰

Story format ads

Through this type of advertisement format, marketers can put small videos or posts on a popular website. Users can read or play their content without leaving the main website.⁹¹

PROMOTED LISTINGS

The marketer can promote their products on websites that are not content-based, such as an e-commerce website. Identical products with the same layout throughout the website enable buyers to differentiate between the original products and the promoted ones. Promoted listings will not take the buyers to the promoter's website. Buyers remain on the same website throughout their purchase.

Sometimes native advertisement can also be presented in the form of articles. These articles are presented in the form of news or a simple blog post, but it actually acts as an advertisement. The main advantage of a native ad influencer is that it is difficult for readers to differentiate between the news or blog articles and the advertised articles. Articles published on popular news, magazines or entertainment websites may encourage the readers to purchase the products.

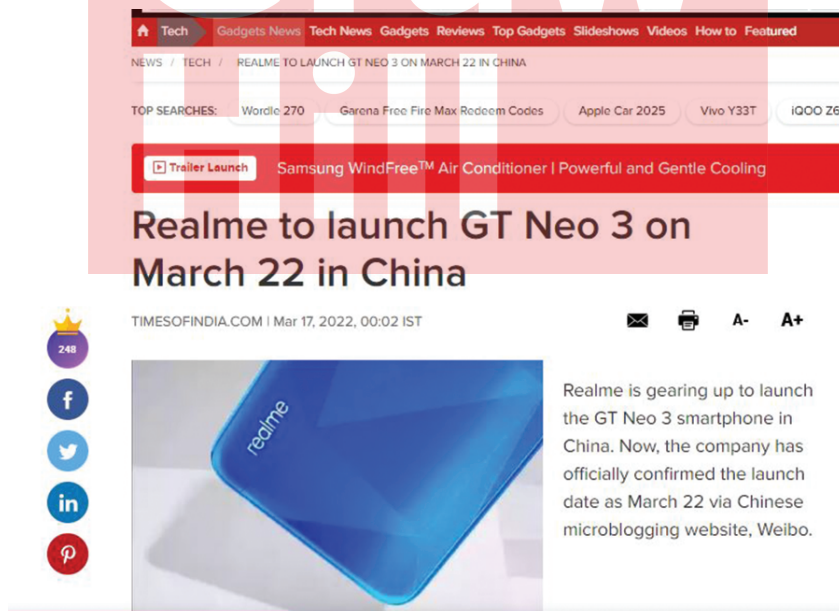


FIGURE 13.15 Native Ad Influencer – ‘The Times of India’

Exhibit

Whirlpool India^{92,93}

Whirlpool entered India in the late 1980s as part of its global expansion strategy. **Whirlpool of India Limited**, headquartered in Gurugram, is now one of the leading manufacturers and marketers of major home appliances in the country.

Objective

- The core objective was to enhance the penetration of the market and increase the brand presence across India.
- To reach and engage new customers through informative blogs.
- To entice the readers from article to article by providing valuable advice and ideas about home-care and cooking.

Solution

- Just creating blog is not enough.
- Whirlpool introduced its valuable and attractive brand content to the customer through the content recommendation engine called **Taboola**.
- Taboola serves the brand content on premium sites such as NDTV, Rediff, India Today, PMC group, BollywoodShadis, Hindustan Times and many more.

Result

- By adopting the 'Cost Per Click' price model, Whirlpool increased its CTR (Click Through Rate) by 44% across the web.
- After two months of Taboola campaigns, the blog reached **20 million visits with more than 24,000 clicks**.

When users click on ad, it takes them to the landing page where they can convert. It is important to follow best practices to have high conversions from landing page. Let us understand the principles.

LANDING PAGE

A landing page is made with the sole purpose of converting visitors into leads. It necessarily contains a lead form that seeks visitor's details in exchange of something that users value. Landing page must be well-structured with relevant information.

A landing page eliminates all sorts of distractions such as navigation, alternate links, etc. so that visitors give undivided attention to the content and to encourage them to take the desired action.⁹⁴

TYPES OF LANDING PAGE

There are many types of landing pages:⁹⁵

1. **Squeeze page** – The squeeze page is designed with the intention of seeking client's email address. After achieving this, you can target your lead with useful content, which is more customized.

A prompt or a gated content that triggers us to enter the details in return for some offers are common examples of squeeze page.

2. **Splash page** – A splash page is more like an intermediary page and not specially created for conversion, rather it is the page that suddenly appears on the screen when you click on a related link. This page opens with an announcement like ‘Grab your deal’, and often is an ad.
3. **Lead capture page** – A lead capture page is like a squeeze page but it seeks for more details about the client such as name, address, email, job title, country, etc.
4. **Click through landing page** – These kinds of pages are often designed with a CTA button, which encourages the users to click on the site for valuable offers. Once you click on the button, you are introduced to another landing page, which tells about pricing details and other payment requirements.
5. **‘Get started’ landing page** – A ‘get started’ landing page takes you to the complete details about the brand, which provokes you to take a complete analysis on the brand’s website.

Below is an example for a ‘get started’ landing page from Mailchimp describing about their marketing tools.

6. **Unsubscribe landing page** – This helps customers to successfully unsubscribe so that they do not get any future notifications from your brand. This helps them to manage their preferences. But it is always advised to provide a ‘second chance’ button next to unsubscribe button to reduce the chances of it happening.
7. **Long-form sales landing page** – These landing pages often begin with an informative video that tells about the website and gives glances on personal experiences of people who are benefited by the product.

Strong customer testimonials are provided along with a CTA button for application and programme dates to join the event.

8. **404 landing page** – 404 landing pages are used as a lead generation tool redirecting the user to the home page. A creative 404 page would not worry the user and in the meantime they can visit pages about other plans and options.
9. **‘About Us’ landing page** – About us landing page includes the mission and vision of the organization. Also, it provides links to email subscription, and other CTA buttons.
10. **Coming soon page** – Coming soon landing page is visually simple, giving information about launch date of the product, and special offers and discounts.
11. **Pricing page** – Pricing page introduces the pricing details of new products and services and links on getting started with the product.
12. **Thank you landing page** – This provides friendlier interaction with your loyal customers even though it doesn’t add any real value.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LANDING PAGE

- **Put up a clearly defined headline** – The headline must concisely express the value offered by your website without consuming too much time. This would reduce the bounce rate as the customers would grasp the value immediately.
- **Image to illustrate the offer** – The image that you put up must highlight the value that is offered to your target audience. The aim is to make it more engaging with the image.
- **Optimize the page title, URL, meta-description for search** – Meta-title and description should be thoroughly researched.
- **Write compelling text** – The body must be such that the reader must be compelled to go through the entire text. It must be clear and comprehensive.

- **Include a clear CTA** – The CTA encourages conversion rates and so it needs to be clearly visible, contrasting colours must be used to highlight CTA button.
- **Promise relevant offers** – Your offer often is the value that you give to your customers in return for the information. It must be compelling at first sight.

FIGURE 13.16 Landing Page Structure

Source: HubSpot, <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/landing-page-checklist>

- **Remove all navigation** – Navigation links would distract the reader's attention from the landing page. Make sure that landing page does not contain any internal or external links that would distract the reader.
- **Optimize your search** – Optimize your landing page with keywords that are most searched by the visitors such that as soon as they enter the keyword, your landing page must be visible to them in the first go⁹⁶.
- **Use a thank you page** – This page is presented mostly when a value is offered to the customer after they have successfully entered their relevant details in the lead form.

STEPS TO DESIGN YOUR LANDING PAGE

Landing Page Structure

A good landing page has five main elements:

- A **Headline** that grabs the visitor's attention within a few seconds of them visiting the page.
- An **image that illustrates the value** offered.
- **Lead Form**, which is concise, visible and encourages conversion.
- A **compelling CTA button**.
- A **Copy/Description** that encourages your visitor to complete your form.

Landing Page Layout

- Relevant information about your product/services must be kept at the top so that the visitor sees it in the beginning itself.
- An eye-blink test analyses the amount of content that is being grasped by the visitors in a time period that it takes to blink an eye.
- Use white space to make your lead focused, asking only for relevant details.
- Write using bullet points and make the paragraphs shorter for easy comprehension.
- Craft your content copy into an F-pattern that is the visual pattern favoured by majority of the online customers.
- Make sure your landing page is accessible in mobile devices so that people can access your landing page irrespective of the kind of devices used.

Landing Page Colours

- Every website must be presenting unique style in terms of colour, page layout, and orientation of elements. This creates a long-term relationship with customers.
- Place the CTA button where your readers' attention can be directed, such as to the right of or below the copy.
- Keep some white space around the CTA button, don't crowd the surrounding area with too much content and images.



FIGURE 13.17 Landing Page Colour

Source: vidyard

Landing Page Copywriting Tips

Include all details

The context must reflect empathy for the problem faced by the customer and a detailed analysis on ways of tackling their problem. The context must include all relevant points along with the value offered. Once the users realize the usefulness of your page, they will continue filling the form for future notifications.

Studies show that social proof encourages people to take desired action. Social proofs are the testimonials, reviews of experienced customers or even the number of people who have purchased the same product as you before. The main purpose is to convince users that they are making the right choice.

Use Click Triggers

Click triggers are created with the aim of eliminating even the minor doubt from the mind of customer in making the purchase. These are therefore placed next to CTA buttons to get noticed and encourage customers to click on these.

Marketers adopt several methods to encourage the use of these click triggers, like giving one-month free subscription or easy unsubscribe option. Reviews and other testimonials by experienced customers about the brand would trigger its usage. Such social proofs are found to be more convincing and engaging to the customers. Method of price slashing and blurting ‘what to expect’ out of these landing pages encourage the use of click triggers.

Split Testing (A/B Testing)

A/B testing or split testing is the method of segmenting your content body into a number of sections and finding out which one performs better after making little tweaks in the content to know the source of lead generation.

Champion is the term used for original content, which is put for testing and challenge is the term used for the modified content, which will be used against the original content for comparison.

Process of A/B Testing

Segment the content into various numbers of sections and make small changes in each segment at a time. For instance, do not split test the content copy and image at the same time, since you would not get to know which of these elements is garnering the actual result. Therefore, the elements must be tested one after the other. Alternatively tools can be used for multivariate A/B Testing, which can statistically determine which elements of the landing page have a significant positive effect on conversions.

Impactful elements such as headline, copy, images, etc. must be split tested to improvise the content development strategy.

LANDING PAGE METRICS TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE RATE

Page Visits

Repurpose your keywords and improvise your paid strategy to generate more leads and traffic. Let your present customers know about your offers and value proposition through emails and other social media networks.

The number of conversions increases with increase in page visits.

Submission Rate

Submission rate is the total number of potential leads that have entered their details in the lead form after getting directed from the main landing page.

Traffic Source

The source that is generating the lead traffic must be known in order to continue with the marketing strategies. Changes have to be made to the sections that need urgent rectification.

Contacts

This is about identifying those users who enter their details only to get the value offered. All duplicate contacts can be removed to get unique leads.

Heat Mapping

Heat mapping gives information about the elements that are of reader's interest. It identifies parts of the landing page that users engage with, things that they read, hover, spend time on, etc.

Bounce Rate

If the page is not capturing reader's attention and they immediately leave the page as soon as they enter the page, this increases the bounce rate. For this Google identifies your site to be less useful and thereby lowers the search engine rankings.

Form Abandonment

If many users abandon the form, then some modifications can be done to click triggers, and lead form may be redesigned to make sure that people complete the desired action.

A significant way to attract more UGC and engagement is working with influencers. This section gives insights into influencer marketing.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer marketing is a marketing technique where companies hire individuals who are specialized in a particular niche to spread the brand's message to the target audience through endorsements and product mentions. The influencers have a huge group of followers and can address the target audience across different channels. The channels may be social media, blogs, columns, ads or television⁹⁷. Choosing the right influencer for your brand could catapult its popularity among your targeted online audience, but the converse of this is also true.

Now, let's look at some statistics involving influencer marketing.

1. 17% of brands spend over half their marketing budget on influencer marketing.
2. In the last three years, Google searches for influencer marketing drastically grew by 1500%.
3. Influencer marketing is expected to reach \$10 billion by the year 2020⁹⁸.

A large number of people have started using AdBlockers to avoid online ads that make influencer marketing an effective way to communicate with customers. These statistics indicate the growing power of influencer marketing.

VIRALITY AND NETWORK EFFECT OF CONTENT SHARING PLATFORMS

Network effect means the greater the number of people who adopt the platform or network, the more beneficial it becomes for existing users. Virality, on the other hand, represents the pace or rate at which the network gets adopted by the masses.

Content sharing platforms such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter have a combined effect of network and virality. The presence of online influencers or celebrity endorsements for the brand can increase the reach of the network, i.e. it will reach many people in the initial phase of the content sharing because of the large networks of the influencer. The virality of the content created is decided by the users of the platforms; the users will share the content with their own networks if they find it interesting. This sharing and re-sharing will increase the reach of the advertised content exponentially, making it viral⁹⁹.

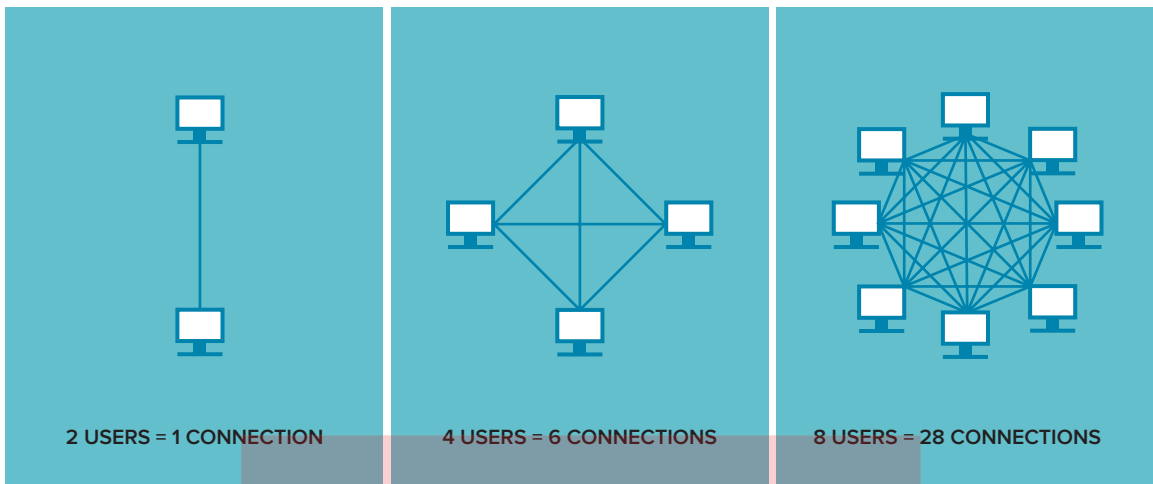


FIGURE 13.18 The Increase in Number of Connections as the Number of Users Increases

Traditionally, celebrity endorsers and brand ambassadors were hired to be a part of the brand campaign. Endorsers usually have a short-term commitment with the brand, for a specific campaign, to trigger recall and recognition of the brand. Brand ambassadors have strategic relations with the brand and are involved for the long term, participating in events, providing inputs in case of adverse situations, etc.

But in digital marketing the influencer need not be a celebrity. A person who has a good number of viewers and has credibility regarding the products that they promote, can be an influencer. ‘An **influencer** is an individual who has the power to affect purchase decisions of others because of his/her authority, knowledge, position or relationship with his/her audience’.

TYPES OF INFLUENCERS

Let’s take a look at the different types of influencers who advertise or market products for various brands.

Micro-Influencer

These are the influencers with followers between 1000 and 100,000 and who interact with them through social media platforms, blogs, websites, forums, etc. These influencers are considered experts in their respective niche, which gives them the credibility status and people trust their opinions on different products and services. The smaller number of followers allows these influencers to connect with their followers at a deeper level and generate greater engagement. Examples of micro-influencer include food blogger, traveller, a local fashionista, or a fitness guru.

You can get micro-influencers to write about your service, share an online review, post your product’s picture with an appropriate caption that appeals to the followers. Since they have a small audience, they can answer questions about the products and services. Micro-influencers are considered more effective and reliable than celebrities¹⁰⁰.

Example

@sydneyloveleigh is an influencer who works with the sports clothing brand ‘Nuxactive’ to promote their products, and spread awareness about the brand among her 21,400 followers. Her posts mainly revolve around travel, health and fitness. In her Instagram bio she includes a special coupon code for customers, and even interacts with the people who engage with and comment on her posts.

Bloggers and Vloggers

Bloggers are the influencers who write blogs reviewing different products and services and spread the word among their readers and subscribers. Blog influencers are set apart from the usual bloggers by their reach and influence on the audience.

The blog influencer can write a blog introducing a brand and sharing its story. Blogs can be made product or service-specific also.

Example

Hannah Bronfman is a popular lifestyle blog influencer who writes about beauty, health and fitness. She partnered with a local facial studio known as Face Gym to write a sponsored blog post telling about their treatments and services and even gave out coupon codes for first visits. The blog included pictures of the studio telling people what to expect at Face Gym.

Due to the popularity of various video platforms such as YouTube, vloggers began to emerge, that is, people with a video blog, who instead of writing, share their ideas, experiences and views through videos. Vloggers usually get an opportunity to become the face of a brand by being offered the position of ambassadors.

The vlog influencer can be hired to make videos featuring the brand or a certain product on a weekly or monthly basis¹⁰¹.

Example

Tanner Fox is a 19-year-old kid who has a channel on YouTube. His vlog revolves around stunts and tricks with 7.3 million subscribers.

Celebrity Influencer

These influencers are famous people with millions of followers across various industries. They are well recognized and have the potential to successfully influence their audience. For example, contestants of the American reality television series, *The Bachelor*, have attracted millions of followers on their social media platforms such as Instagram and are known to collaborate with fashion and beauty brands.

There exist a variety of ways through which a brand can work with a celebrity influencer. For instance, the brand can ask the celebrity to click pictures with the product and post it on different social media platforms or have an informal conversation with the fans about the benefits of the product and the reason for choosing a particular brand. However, due to high costs, only a few brands can afford to hire celebrity influencers¹⁰².

Example

Amazon sponsored Khloe Kardashian's baby shower. It allowed Amazon to showcase its wide range of baby and maternity products to Khloe's huge number of followers. In response to this, Khloe even mentioned Amazon in her post and shared the link of her baby registry for her fans, which led to an increase in Amazon's publicity.

Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers share spin shots of their regular lives to hold a strong reputation and influence their followers. These are people with a very high number of followers who have gained popularity solely based on their social media profiles. These influencers are not niche experts but due to the personal connections with their followers, they can influence the consumption and behaviour of consumers. These social media influencers are seen as real-life consumers, which makes their recommendations even more trustworthy.

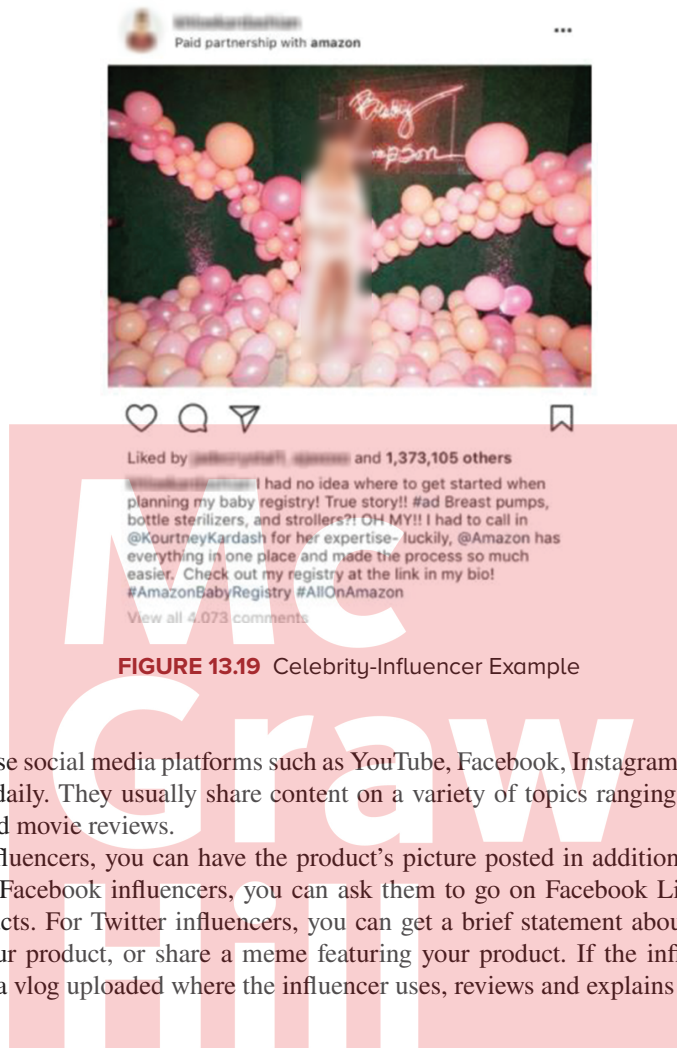


FIGURE 13.19 Celebrity-Influencer Example

The influencers use social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. to interact with their followers daily. They usually share content on a variety of topics ranging from cars, technology, travel, fashion, art and movie reviews.

For Instagram influencers, you can have the product's picture posted in addition to tagging the brand's Instagram page. For Facebook influencers, you can ask them to go on Facebook Live and share unboxing videos of your products. For Twitter influencers, you can get a brief statement about your product, upload a picture holding your product, or share a meme featuring your product. If the influencer has a YouTube channel, you can get a vlog uploaded where the influencer uses, reviews and explains the product or service.

Example

Joy Bauer works as a health expert for 'The Today Show'. She is an influencer on Twitter with more than 157k followers, which mainly consists of nutrition- and health-conscious people. They value Bauer's diet tips and healthy recipes. Recently, she collaborated with La Croix for a sponsored Twitter post featuring one of La Croix's sparkling water and posted a recipe involving the sparkling water with images, nutrition information and anecdotes.

Key Opinion Leaders

Key opinion leaders consist of individuals with a strong social status, whose opinions and recommendations influence the decisions of consumers. Political figures, columnists and social media celebrities can be considered Key Opinion Leaders. They help interpret the meaning of media content for users. Key Opinion Leaders are individuals with high-expertise on specific topics within a particular field. If your target audience is a very specific one, Key Opinion Leaders are the people to go after.

Just like influencers and celebrities, they can be present across different social media channels and blogs. You can have them use your product and post video on YouTube, share an Instagram post posing with your product, write a blog about it, and spread a WOM about the product.

Example

Kandee Johnson has more than 3.9 million YouTube subscribers and more than 1.8 million Instagram followers. She is considered an expert in the field of make-up. Her expertise makes her a Key Opinion Leader in the cosmetic and make-up industry. She shares tutorials, tips and tricks, product reviews, and recommendations. She collaborated with Boxy Charm and posted a sponsored post while promoting their services, and telling about her choice of products from Boxy Charm.

HOW TO FIND INFLUENCERS?

Let's take a look at some of the free resources available in the market to identify the right influencers for your business:

1. **Google Search:** With a simple Google search you can find various influencers in your particular industry since many of them would already be posting related content having all the necessary keywords. A brand can also try to visit industry-specific websites for finding high-impact contributors and influencers.
2. **Social Media:** Search for phrases, hashtags and keywords, and find tagged people on popular posts related to the industry that you are looking for. The influencers you are looking for should already have a presence on social media, so it should not be very difficult finding the right person.
3. **Referrals:** Your existing network, both personal and professional, likely has a lot of contacts and networks. You can ask others for referral of some influencers or ask the influencers you have already worked with for some referrals to people who would be ready to work with your business. This is a reliable method to find influencers as people tend to trust recommendations from the people they know rather than online searches.
4. **Blogs:** Reading and exploring different blogs is the best way to look for blog influencers.
5. **Influencer tools:** A drastic rise in demand for influence marketers paved the way for the development of new technologies and software to help businesses identify the right influencers for them and even monitor the engagement. Buzzsumo and Klout are the most popular tools.
 - **Buzzsumo** – One of the most popular tools used by social media marketers is Buzzsumo. It is a research and monitoring tool used to find content that is shared the most and influencers who shared the content and much more.
 - **Klout** – Klout is a website and a mobile app that ranks the people active on social media according to social media analytics and converts it to the 'Klout score'. One can download the Chrome extension as well. This extension shows the rank of every name you fill in after logging into your Twitter account. Klout ranks people 1–100 and influencers having score above 65 can be considered to work with.

Besides Klout and Buzzsumo, other applications such as HypeAuditor, Discover.ly, Tweetdeck, Crowdfire and Alltop are also used to find ideal influencer based on the requirements of the brands.

6. **Talent agencies:** Talent agencies come in handy when brands want to get in touch with a big celebrity. The celebrities often have contracts with these agencies. It is more convenient for the brand to get in touch with these talent agencies than to contact the celebrities personally.

BEST PRACTICES TO GET STARTED WITH INFLUENCER MARKETING

1. **Create viral influencing content:** Think about how your product and service can make your prospective customers' lives more comfortable. Craft some content that may induce positive emotions in the audience. Avoid any technical specifications and focus on the real-life benefits that will help the influencer as well as the customer to relate to the product on a personal level.

2. Find the right influencer: Choosing an appropriate influencer is a key to success in influencer marketing. Brands want to focus on influencers whose followers match the target audience rather than focusing on celebrities who are not related to the industry of the brand. Selection of influencers through software such as Klout has many filters that might help you to get an ideal influencer. Before hiring an influencer, the brand must make sure that they follow the same ideologies and will be willing to share the brand's point of view about the product.
3. Co-creating a product campaign: Creating a personalized campaign for the influencer keeping in mind the offering, costs, budget, purpose and target audience is a strategic technique used by many brands to market products. Limited edition products advertised by the influencer helps to increase the sale using the idea of hype economics.
4. Care for your influencers: The influencers like to feel appreciated and a small token of appreciation goes a long way. Building long-term relationship with an influencer will give you higher returns on investment as it helps in building trust between the two parties.
5. Measure: The most important step of the marketing strategy is to measure the results. The factors that need to be considered while measuring the results are as follows.
 - **Engagement** – Monitor the number of likes, shares, comments, retweets, mention, reposts, etc. being received after the sharing of content pieces by the influencers and how it impacts the position of the product or brand.
 - **Clicks** – Count the number of clicks received after the promotions are done by the influencer in every form, whether CTA, a direct link to the website, sign-up form, social media coupon or a survey.
 - **Followers** – An increase or decrease in the number of followers of the website or blog or any other social media channel is the easiest way to determine if the marketing done by the influencer is working in favour of your brand or not.
 - **Return on Investment (ROI)** – It is very important to calculate the ROI for the investment made in influencer marketing to see whether it has brought profit to you or not.

To measure the success of influencer marketing for your brand, one can even use tools present in the market. Using analytics tools such as Google Analytics, one can regularly monitor the progress made due to the influencers' work.
6. Think Outside the Box: Don't be afraid to think outside the box. You can choose someone unrelated to your industry to be your influencer and still have a positive impact on your business. The aim is to find overlaps and find a new audience and promote your products or services on various platforms.

CASE STUDY

PEWDIEPIE (FELIX KJELLBERG) AND RAZER

Pewdiepie, one of the most subscribed YouTubers, collaborated with a video game peripheral company named 'Razer'. They collaborated to make a personalized version of an existing Razer headset with a unique colour scheme, decals and artwork. Pewdiepie has a high influence in the gaming community. His channel boasts of more than 100 million subscribers with the age ranging from 16 to 45 years.

In this influencer marketing campaign, Razer found the perfect influencer as Pewdiepie's subscribers could easily relate to a product very relevant to them, which was the Razer gaming headset. This boosted Razer's sales and increased brand awareness in the gaming community.

Digital marketing has triggered issues relating to user privacy and security. Let us examine them in detail:

MEME MARKETING

If there's one thing social media has blessed us with, it's the use of memes. Meme is an image or a video that depicts an idea or a joke that is then spread across social media platforms with slight variations. Memes have cultural references which are popular and ubiquitous.

HOW DO MEMES BECOME VIRAL?

Due to the following characteristics, memes become viral¹⁰³

A Blend of Photos and Images The first thing that comes to our mind when thinking of memes is an image. But videos also form part of memes when these take a shape of challenge and are hilarious to watch. For instance, Harlem shake and Mannequin challenge were a hit on Instagram and Facebook. Video memes are also shareable but, most importantly, they encourage the users to be a part of these challenges.

Memes have also taken the form of GIFs that usually denote our current mood or what we feel about a situation. An example is the WhatsApp stickers that have become a common way of conversing instead of sending a simple text message, especially in group chats!

Short and Crisp Humour Memes are always based on an idea or an incident. What makes them unique is their ability to deliver the content without making it too complicated to understand. Everyone gets the joke because memes are designed in a way for everyone to enjoy.

Brand Building Marketers can use memes to build the brand image and engagement that is not always possible with conventional formats. Memes help in hopping on new trends and using them to promote your brand/product. This results in more impressions and engagements on your posts at a significantly lower cost.

HOW CAN YOU INTEGRATE MEMES IN MARKETING?¹⁰⁴

While there are no set rules as such to get started with meme marketing, the following tips will help you in getting the desired results.

Understand Your Brand

Memes should reflect what your brand is about and its vision. Supposedly, if you own a fast food company, memes can have images related to your menu, light humour on guilty pleasures and you can colour coordinate them with your logo.

Personalise for your Target Audience

Personalise the memes according to your target audience. Here, you also need to understand the kind of content and humour your target audience prefers. For instance, Gucci¹⁰⁵ used a renaissance painting for a meme that also represented class and luxury, which Gucci stands for. Zomato customises memes for its target audience. For working professionals, they mostly joke about office lunches, while for young adults, they have used memes that showcase familial bonds.

Relatable Content

Memes have worked because they have used the power of relatability. The memes you choose for your campaigns should be universally popular and/or funny so that more people can relate with it. If they can't relate with your content, chances are they might not also relate with your brand.

You know it's relatable when your audience is sharing and commenting on the memes and also sharing their own perspectives.

Customise the Popular Memes

You don't need to be a genius to invent memes. You can simply customise the most popular memes according to your brand ethos and values. This won't only look hilarious but will also help in spreading brand awareness.

Use any popular meme and edit it according to your own brand, making it either about the product, service or customer feedback. This way, you'll also be able to see what kind of content works well for you in the memes department.

Repost User Generated Memes¹⁰⁶

Many of the big brands like Zomato have shared memes of other content creators too in order to keep the buzz going. People are usually okay if you share their content, provided you've taken their permission beforehand as memes are meant to be shared.

You can simply repost the meme as it is or better still you can add some originality of yours in the meme and share it across.

For more buzz, you can even hold meme-making competitions. Choose a picture that is meme worthy based on the latest product of yours or anything related to your brand and ask the audience to make memes on it. As an incentive, you could repost the best ones in your feed later and give a shout out to the winners.

PROS AND CONS OF MEME MARKETING

As it is rightly said, "excess of everything is bad." The same thing can be applied to memes. While memes are generally safe for almost all campaigns, marketers should prioritise when to use it and when to refrain. Here is a list of some pros and cons.

Pros

Exposure If your brand is fairly new and haven't gained a lot of attention, memes are the best source that can rescue you. Memes are seen as an advertisement as once it catches the eye of new consumers, it is just going to spread rapidly.

Empathy As we discussed before, memes are a success when used in personal contexts and ,therefore, it helps the audience feel empathetic towards your brand. If your memes are being used by followers as jokes, there is no better way to connect with the audience than this.

Cons

Legal Rights Issue If you're taking someone else's memes without fully ensuring the legal rights process, you might be in trouble. Not to say that don't use memes but always research on meme rights and how you can use it before sharing memes on your page.

Audience Gets Bored While memes are here to stay but using a particular meme for everything can't be your strategy. A brand needs to use a variation of memes to keep the audiences' excitement level up, including other posts like images or reels to have a diversified feed.

Negative Publicity Sometimes, a brand uses memes in good intention but some groups might take offense on that. As mentioned before, any social incident can lead to memes. If a brand is using a celebrity or a well-known figure as a meme, chances are not everyone will like it due to their own personal beliefs. Therefore, it is advised to use neutral memes.

CASE STUDY

HUBSPOT¹⁰⁷

HubSpot is a popular software developing company and provides solutions for inbound marketing. They used 'What people Think I do vs What I Really do Meme'.

They used the memes to showcase the profession of sales and marketing and everyone found it to be hilarious. The meme showed that for a salesman, their friends think that they are genius sharks, while their parents think they are doing nothing more than selling a lemonade and marketing thought of them as chilling every time.

It was found so funny among all the professionals that it received 453 likes and 250 shares.

NETFLIX¹⁰⁸

Follow Netflix's Instagram page and you'll find more memes on the shows rather than updates of the shows. They use meme marketing by having their own internet lingo and an informal language with their audience to give a more personalised effect.

Instead of finding a new template for memes, they use the templates of their own shows and simultaneously promote the show as well the meme associated with it.

Interestingly, a Netflix original movie called 'Bird-Box' got so many viewers of the movie not because of the quality but the memes that followed through it. Various scenes of the movies were translated into memes on Instagram and Twitter which made viewers intrigued to watch it.¹⁰⁹



Source: Hubspot.com

USER'S PRIVACY AND SECURITY

User privacy implies securing data against unauthorized access. Users find it difficult to protect their personal data while carrying out transactions. User privacy refers to the claims of the individuals that data about themselves should not be available to other parties/organizations, and that, where data is possessed by a third party, the individual must be able to exercise substantial control over their data and its use.

The more private information a website registration requires, the more likely a user would be concerned of misuse of such personal data. In a study, researchers found that almost half of the companies across the globe did not use data protection policies on their websites.¹¹⁰ Such practices greatly hamper a brand's reputation, as we will see in the following exhibits.

CASE STUDY

FACEBOOK'S DATA PRIVACY SCANDAL

Claim

The Facebook Cambridge Analytica data scandal complicated Facebook's role in 2016 US presidential elections.¹¹¹ It was revealed that Cambridge Analytica misused user data of millions of people's Facebook profiles. They used it for political advertising purposes.

Process

In 2014, a developer Aleksander Kogen developed a personality quiz app for Facebook and about

270,000 people installed this app on their Facebook account. Kogen could access data of these users and also the profile data of other Facebook users who were friends of those who used the app. Instead of immediately deleting these personal data, these data got saved to a private database. Kogen provided that database to a London-based data mining company Cambridge Analytica. They used it to propagate personalized political ads to US citizens, thus targeting individual voters.

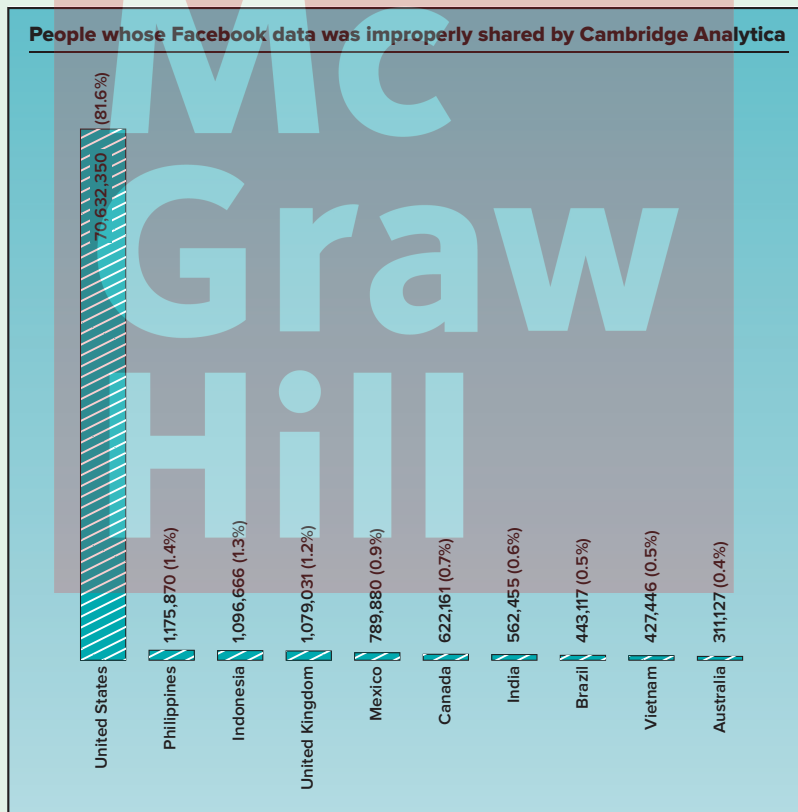


FIGURE 13.20 People Whose Facebook Data was Improperly Shared by Cambridge Analytica

After-effects

Shareholders sued Facebook in San Francisco federal court in a class action, claiming that user privacy

has been severely neglected by the company. More stringent regulation of customer privacy led to tumbling of shares, leading to a loss of more than \$60 billion.

Mark Zuckerberg admitted that Facebook has made mistake with user's information.

'We have a responsibility to protect your data', he wrote. 'And if we can't then we don't deserve to serve

you'. He also published a full-page ad in US and UK newspapers.

Facebook Scandal Timeline



FIGURE 13.21 Facebook Scandal Timeline

Source: La Loyalan, "Facebook Scandal Timeline," http://www.laloyolan.com/news/facebook-s-cambridge-analytica-data-scandal/article_702b3c7a-f972-539c-a7f8-f202fd478634.html

Remedial actions

Facebook announces introduction of new privacy settings and changes in existing ones to make them easier to find and use. It also announced that a notification

will be dropped into their news feed if in case any user data is being shared with Cambridge Analytica. Facebook began blocking apps having access to user data 90 days after non-use.

CASE STUDY

GOOGLE+ TO SHUT DOWN

Claim

Right after the global scrutiny of Facebook Cambridge Analytica scandal, Google discovered a bug in the API for Google+, which had been allowing third-party app developers to have access to user's data and also to their friend's data. In the memo obtained by *Wall Street Journal*, Google officials opted not to disclose the vulnerability of its users for fear of potential regulatory action and bad image in the public.

Google disclosed the data leak, which affected 500,000 accounts. About 438 third-party de-

velopers have had access to personal data due to the bug.

Remedies Taken

Google announced that it will shut down consumer access to Google+ and improve privacy settings for third-party developers. This would ensure that consumer will have considerable control on how their personal information is being used by third-party developers. As a result, Google+ was disintegrated from Google Places/Google My Business.

Disclosure laws may comfort users but they are largely ineffective. What is needed are new laws that govern the use of personal data by digital companies.

METHODS OF CUSTOMER DATA COLLECTION¹¹²

Since digital ecosystem entails data, let us examine what are the methods of data collection by companies:

Cookies

Cookies are small files that are sent to your software by a third party to check the user's behaviour and preferences. They record different websites that you have visited and cause problems as they don't allow users privacy on the Internet.

Spyware

Spyware is a unique system that allows one to track the details of the user without the user knowing about it – such as password, credit card details, etc., which can then be transferred to other computers.

Phishing

This is a type of Internet malpractice aimed to extract users' details to harm them. Phishing is highly illegal. There are three types of phishing: clone phishing (creating an almost similar email that was previously used by the user); spear phishing (this is directed at a particular organization or a person); whaling (this is directed at a higher official within an organization).

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Act was created as a replacement for Data Protection Directive 95/46 EC and went into effect in May 2018. The aim was to provide EU citizens greater control on their personal data that they share online¹¹³.

The figure shows two side-by-side sign-up forms for SuperOffice CRM. The left form is labeled 'Not compliant' and the right form is labeled 'GDPR compliant'.

Not compliant form (Left):

- Header: Try SuperOffice CRM for free
- Fields: Your name:*, Company name:*, Your email:*, Your phone:*
- Button: Start Free Trial
- Footnote: By signing up to a free trial of SuperOffice CRM, you agree to our Terms and you have read our privacy policy. You may receive email updates from SuperOffice and you can opt out at any time.

GDPR compliant form (Right):

- Header: Try SuperOffice CRM for free
- Fields: Your name:*, Company name:*, Your email:*, Your phone:*
- Buttons: Start Free Trial
- Consent checkboxes:
 - ☐ By signing up to a free trial of SuperOffice CRM, you agree to our Terms and privacy policy
 - ☐ Yes, please keep me updated on SuperOffice news, events and offers.
- Link: [Terms & privacy policy](#)

FIGURE 13.22 GDPR Compliance

Source: Super office

GDPR applies to businesses and organizations that collect personal data from EU residents, regardless of where the business itself is located, giving GDPR a global reach.

The penalties for not complying with GDPR Act are severe, with fines of up to 4% of organization's yearly turnover or 20 million euros (whichever is greater).

Organizations are now held to a higher level of accountability concerning the handling, protecting and processing of user's personal data where personal data now includes a wide range of information and covers everything from cookies data to Social Security numbers to biometric identifiers.

GDPR COMPLIANT CONSENT

User consent must be given under no obligation (most of the times users are obligated to provide data in order to browse a website).

The EU user consent must be specific and informed (specific about how their data will be collected and used by the website).

The EU user consent must be unambiguous. No pre-assumed consent from user will be valid under the GDPR Act. Also, no pre-ticked consent boxes or 'implied consent', which will then allow users to browse the website.

In the user consent shown in Figure 13.23, when the box is ticked by the user himself, then it is an informed consent whereas automatically ticked one is fraudulent.

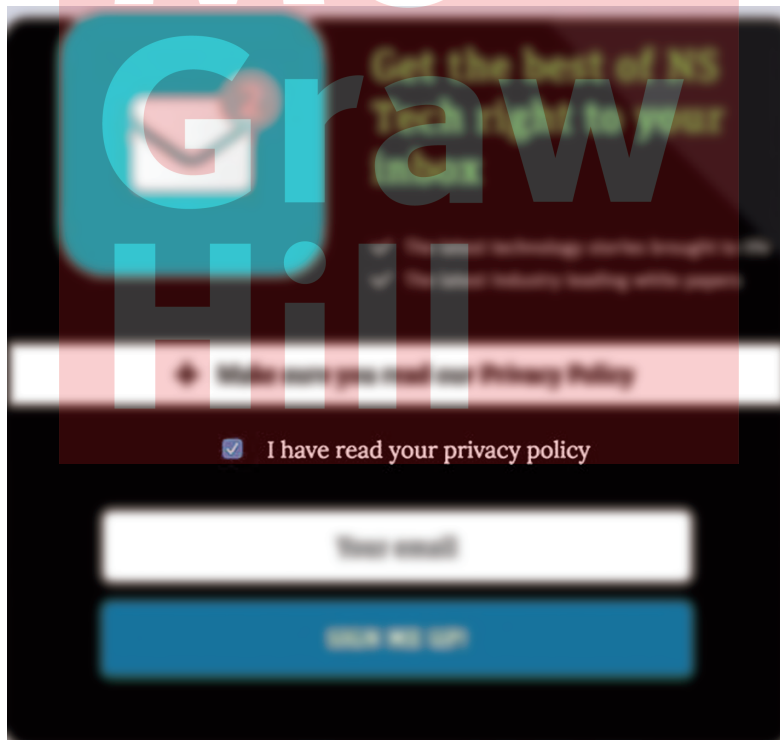


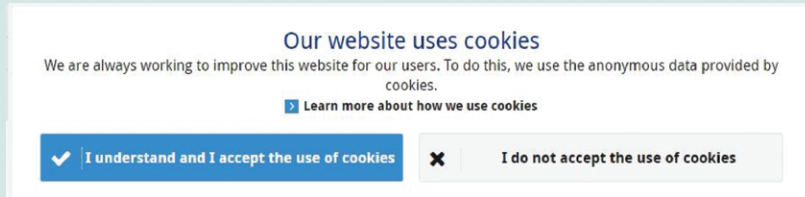
FIGURE 13.23 User Data Consent

Source: NS Tech

Exhibit

European Central Bank cookies notice

The European Central Bank cookies notice sets an example for being open, specific and unambiguous about consent.



The screenshot shows a white rectangular box with a light blue header. The header text reads "Our website uses cookies" in bold. Below this, a paragraph states: "We are always working to improve this website for our users. To do this, we use the anonymous data provided by cookies." Underneath the paragraph is a link: "Learn more about how we use cookies" with a small blue square icon to its left. At the bottom of the box are two buttons. The left button is blue with a white checkmark icon and the text "I understand and I accept the use of cookies". The right button is white with a grey border, a grey 'X' icon, and the text "I do not accept the use of cookies".

FIGURE 13.24 Consent Form by European Central Bank

Source: European Central Bank

The website clearly mentions the presence of cookies, which is used to collect user's data anonymously. Also, there is an option for them to see how the website uses cookies, before deciding whether to use cookies or to decline it.

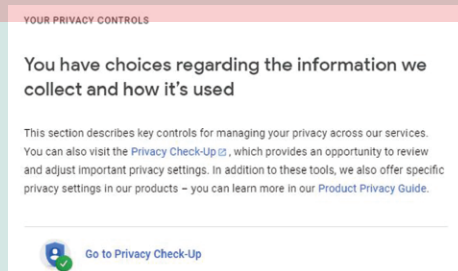
Consent Forms – When information is collected via online consent forms, attach a user consent form along with it. This will give them an opportunity to see and understand what your data handling procedures are before submitting any personal data¹¹⁴.

Repermission Campaign – Users must have the freedom to withdraw consent at any time. Repermission campaigns are emails that are sent to ask users to confirm their details and consent. This is an excellent way to update consent records.

Exhibit

Google privacy policy forms

Strategy – It informs users about how they can adjust privacy settings according to their choice.



The screenshot shows a white rectangular box with a light red header. The header text reads "YOUR PRIVACY CONTROLS" in all caps. Below this, a bold heading says "You have choices regarding the information we collect and how it's used". Underneath is a paragraph: "This section describes key controls for managing your privacy across our services. You can also visit the [Privacy Check-Up](#), which provides an opportunity to review and adjust important privacy settings. In addition to these tools, we also offer specific privacy settings in our products – you can learn more in our [Product Privacy Guide](#)." At the bottom of the box is a button with a blue shield icon and the text "Go to Privacy Check-Up".

FIGURE 13.25 Google Privacy Policy Form

Source: Google

These have been written in compliance with GDPR, thereby protecting both your company and customers.

- Cost of failing to comply

Exhibit

Flybe fined 70,000 pounds

In August 2016, Flybe sent an email to millions of customers for the confirmation of the personal details of their clients with the subject line 'Are your details correct?'

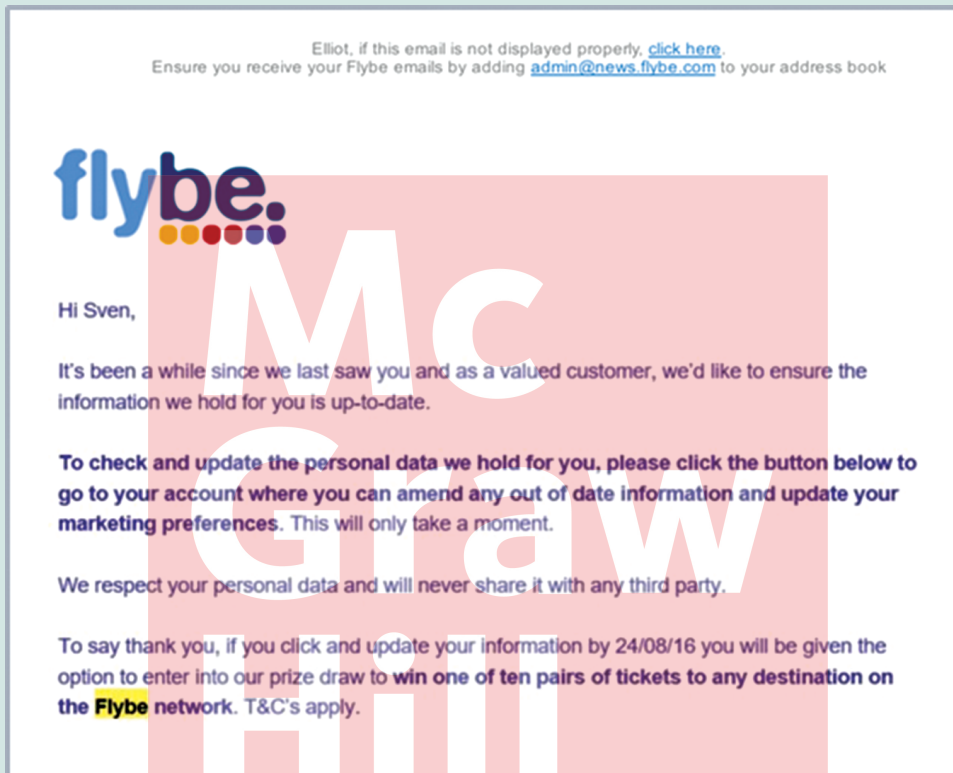


FIGURE 13.26 Flybe Email to Their Customers

Source: Flybe

This is a usual strategy opted by marketers to always connect with their customers. But unfortunately, these people already had unsubscribed from marketing emails and thereby gave no consent to be contacted again.

Result – A fine of 70,000 pounds was levied on the business firm for being non-compliant with GDPR.

Exhibit

Morrison fined 10,500 pounds

In 2016, UK supermarket Morrison's, in a bid to get more customers to their newly relaunched programme 'match & more', sent out an emails to all 230,000 members from their databases, asking the users to update their account preferences. But this included 131,000 members who had previously unsubscribed.

Result – A fine of 10,500 pounds was charged against it.

IMPACT OF GDPR ON MARKETING STRATEGIES

In order to be GDPR compliant, following rules must be followed:

Stage 1: Data Collection

Transparency – This means that any website/firm that wants to reach out to their customers must communicate clearly to them about how their personal data is going to be used. Data subjects must also be informed of their right to withdraw consent.

Data minimization – When an organization is collecting personal data from a user in order to convert the user to their lead, they must ask only for adequate and relevant information. Unnecessary data collection will constitute a breach of the GDPR¹¹⁵.

Stage 2: Data Storage and Processing

Purpose and usage limitation – Organization can only use their data for the purpose that was earlier informed to the user. Sharing of client's personal data with other entity must be done only with consent of the user.

Security – Organization must ensure that user data is protected as per security provisions of GDPR. It must be protected against unauthorized processing and accidental loss, disclosure or alteration.

Accuracy – If the information is no longer valid, user has the right to contact the organization to update their information free of cost.

Accountability – Organizations need to appoint a data protection officer (DPO) and they will also need to ensure that they implement a privacy by Design/Default policy as per GDPR Act. Controllers will have to ensure that their vendor contracts are updated from time to time.

Stage 3: End of Relationship

Retention – If the relationship with an organization is terminated for any reason by the user, they need to ensure that they have a data retention policy specifying clearly about how long they will retain the data of the user for the intended purpose.

Deletion – If an individual requests deletion of his/her personal data from their database, the organization must honour the request and confirm the deletion, the client's details must be erased from every downward vendor's systems who were processing the data on behalf of the organization¹¹⁶.

WHO ARE MAINLY AFFECTED BY GDPR IN MARKETING SECTOR?^{117,118}

Email marketing managers – For all B2B-related businesses, email addresses are the lifeblood of all lead generation programmes. As per GDPR Act, organizations must ensure users opt-in to your email marketing campaigns and also acquire proper consent for contacting them. That is, you can no longer add them to your database for any purposes.

Marketing Automation Specialists – Organizations must ensure that every name in the CRM database and every email in the automation system has given their consent to market to them.

Public Relations Execs – Even the journalists will have to give you their consent before the organization wants to pitch in their new products or company information to them.

INDIAN COMPANIES FOR THE GDPR REGIME

Indian companies need to carefully look at GDPR compliance. The main challenges faced by Indian companies in meeting with GDPR requirements are¹¹⁹

- Weak data security in India.
- Cross-border restrictions since businesses are largely inflexible when it comes to EU citizens.
- Higher risk of penalties for non-compliance of GDPR.
- It can hamper business innovations and user experience.
- Outsourcing opportunities are made difficult for EU businesses.

GDPR AS A NEW GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

GDPR has recently presented itself as a new, golden opportunity due to the following features:

1. **Gaining consent:** As per GDPR Act, businesses need explicit consent to use an individual's data. Also, customers can have access to details regarding what kind of information you have on them, and with whom it is shared and why.
The opportunity that lies here is that instead of asking typical permission granting questions (yes/no types), you could ask questions related to their interests and hobbies, providing them with a range of options.
Thus, through consent, you could gain insight into each individual's interests. Thereby you can provide them with information that they want to receive.
2. **Have a single platform to keep track of all permission data:** This allows the users to switch on/off their consent as per their wish. But this in turn, helps marketers to target them with more specific contents/campaign. Marketers must start centralizing personal data collection into a CRM system.
3. **Transparency:** When you are GDPR compliant, this means you give huge importance to user's consent and data privacy issues. This would instil a sense of trust and engagement with the customers. You have to be honest about what you are doing and why you are doing.

A higher bar for marketers has been set. This means marketers have to come up with innovative approaches. This act makes sure that customization is now the key and the data economy must be more efficient to provide better services and products, to maintain a positive image among the online audience.

CASE STUDY

UNIQLO¹²⁰

Uniqlo collaborated with TikTok to promote their UT collection, which is a collection of graphic t-shirts that features artists and pop culture references in people's wardrobes.

The collection's vision is self-expression and so users were given an opportunity to express themselves by wearing their favourite UT t-shirt and share the experience in a 15-second TikTok video. While posting, users had to use the hashtag #UTPlayYourWorld and winners will get a chance to feature in Uniqlo's digital screen stores worldwide as well as on social media channels.

The marketing team wanted to create an impact on young people and they realised that paid media would not be sufficient enough to grab their attention as long-term investment. Therefore, they used TikTok, which is already so popular among the youth. This helped users to identify with the brand and create their own brand perspective by sharing their favourite pieces.

The campaign witnessed 185,00 submissions, with over 95,000 users participating in the TikTok

challenge which resulted in 330 million views in two weeks. Young users from far off places also participated in this campaign which was always the intention of the brand.

STARBUCKS¹²¹

In 2014, Starbucks encouraged its customers to draw doodles on their white cups announcing a contest on Twitter under the hashtag #WhiteCupContest. The winning doodles will be used as a limited edition sample for the cup design of Starbucks. Within three weeks, 4000 users submitted their cup doodles.

Looking at the success of UGC, they came up with a challenge again after a few years. The name of the contest was #RedCupArt challenge which increased their engagement significantly on Twitter and Instagram.

Without spending a lot of money, they were able to engage with the audience in the most personalised way possible which also gave users a chance to do something for the brand in return. Therefore, incorporating challenges as a part of UGC works great if implemented well.

KEY TERMS

ORM – Online Reputation Management

Review Monitoring Services – Services offered by various platforms to send a real-time notification in the form of emails, texts, etc. if anybody gives a review on the product.

UGC – User-Generated Content

VLogs – The medium of this kind of blog is video and the vlogger uses a method of storytelling that is more visually appealing for the social media followers.

WOM – Word of mouth

CONCEPT REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between SEO and ORM?
2. Explain different typologies of UGC classification.
3. What is an influencer marketing? And what are their types?
4. What are the different methods of customer data collection?

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Why content co-creation is critical in ORM?
2. What are the different types of blogs and which one would you prefer over the other?
3. How to find influencers for a topic like 'customer success'?
4. What are the potential threats for violating user privacy and security measures?

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

1. Zomato, to promote its pro-membership, wants to take help of meme marketing. Create a meme strategy that they can use on social media which includes what kind of campaign will it be (the situation) , what memes can they take help of (don't design it but as a visual what you can think of), appropriate timing of posting and the frequency of memes.
2. Nike wants to use meme marketing to promote their new sneaker launch on Instagram. However, they want to mix up a challenge with meme marketing. Devise a strategy for the same by mentioning what kind of meme content is suitable for the brand and the challenge they can give their audience to. Accordingly, give an expected amount of engagement rate in terms of like, shares and comments.
3. KFC is launching a new range of burgers and to increase its hype and awareness, they want to use UGC as a part of their marketing strategy. Create a challenge or contest for the customers that will help the brand in driving awareness. Give a detailed description of the challenge with every aspect used and the reason behind it from an engagement perspective. Give an expected ROI and conversion rate also.
4. You own a clothing brand for which you have run sponsored ads. However, it is not getting the desired engagement. How can you incorporate UGC in your paid ads(videos, testimonials, reviews, etc.)? What differences do you think are there between a normal ad and a UGC applied ad?

PROJECTS

1. Describe in detail the list of activities that you are going to perform to disperse a fake negative news about your firm? Take assumptions on the news and your firm's online presence.
2. Compare different Q/A forums available on the Internet.

3. Get your article listed as a guest post on another blogger's website.
4. Design your landing page following all the best practices you've learnt in this chapter.
5. Create a sign-up form for your subscribers.

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