Effective Use of Social Websites towards Business Among Academicians and Students in Namakkal District

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Abstract

Today Internet plays a vital role in all the functionalities of human life and is the keyword to all human beings which is growing day to day. Internet has created the world into single room where everyone is on touch with each other. The functionalities of Internet vary place to place and person to person. Today Internet has made man to carry business on Networks.

The present study, “Effective use of Social Websites towards Business among Academicians and Students in Namakkal District”, is an analysis, performed towards the population working in Colleges (Faculty Members, Clerks, and Office Assistants) and students studying in Colleges. The target population is taken among 15 colleges in Namakkal District, which is selected on random basis. For this survey based study, the staff strength is around 200 whereas the student strength is around 300 in numbers. This study focuses on the theme “towards the knowledge on business in Social Websites” among Professionals and Students who are using Social Websites frequently. The research attempts to find

a) Knowledge of Business through Social Websites.
c) Rating the various activities in Social Websites.
d) Impact of Social Websites in future.

KEYWORDS: Social Website, Internet, Business, People.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today Internet is the primary form of communication, information retrieval process, entertainment and creating relationship with one another known or unknown. Internet plays a vital role as a part of the community among the human beings. As of 2011, more than 2.2 billion people – nearly one-third of Earth’s population — make use of the services of the Internet [Internet World Stats, 8 November 2011]. Internet develops day to day, by cultivating new concepts and new websites which united the humans all over the world into one community. Gradually, Internet has moved into business. People use internet to carry out business transactions.

Social media websites now become the primary medium for marketing the product or service of a particular company. It grows rapidly than any other sources of marketing. The consumers can meet the vendor online with or without mediators. There is a possibility of direct dealing of business between them. The web has diminished expenses and time delay by providing the individuals and organizations a platform to
publish ideas and information to a potentially large audience. This can be achieved through cost-free services like publishing a web page, a blog or building websites.

The use of social networking services in an enterprise context presents the potential of having a major impact on the world of business and work (Fraser & Dutta, 2008). Social Networking websites connect people with low-cost products than from real market. Through Internet, marketers grab the people towards their products by providing attractive offers. These social websites act as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool for companies to sell their products through Internet. To operate the business globally, Companies started to provide advertisements through these types of social websites. Some of the examples of social websites used for business purpose are LinkedIn.com, Ecademy.com and Youngblackprofessionals.org. LinkedIn has over 100 million users in over 200 countries. [“Latest LinkedIn Facts", Press.linkedin.com, 2011-03-13]. The power of social networks has begun to permeate into internal culture of businesses. Here the entrepreneurs are finding the uses for collaboration, file sharing and knowledge transfer.

One popular use, for this new era of technology is, social networking between businesses. Companies have found that social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are the great sources to build their brand image. According to Jody Nimetz, author of Marketing Jive, there are five major uses for businesses and social media

- To create brand awareness,
- As an online reputation management tool,
- For recruiting,
- To learn about new technologies and competitors,
- A lead generation tool to intercept potential prospects.

These companies are able to drive traffic to their own online sites while encouraging their consumers and clients to have discussions on how to improve or change products or services.[Nimetz, Jody. "Jody Nimetz on Emerging Trends in B2B Social Networking". Marketing Jive, November 18, 2007.]

1.1 Social Media

Social media includes web- and mobile-based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Heinlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." It takes on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating, social bookmarking etc.,

Advertising a product in social media has an influence on the company, the way it reaches the customer and achieves the market. It provides a major contribution to the brand competition in the market. Consumers play an important role in social media where business is a part. Advertising through Social Network has revolutionized the online marketing. Here the new score of innovative marketing takes place. Today all the social websites have become as a corporate branding hub as well as a personal users’ market in the world.
The statistics that account for social media usage and effectiveness for individuals worldwide are:

- Social networking now accounts for 22% of all time spent online in the US.
- Twitter processed more than one billion tweets in December 2009 and averages almost 40 million tweets per day.
- In November 2011, it was reported Indians spend more time on social media than on any other activity on the Internet.
- The main increase in social media has been Facebook.
- According to Nielsen, global consumers spend more than 6 hours on social networking sites.
- "Social Media Revolution" produced by Socialnomics author Erik Qualman contains numerous statistics on Social Media including the fact that 93% of businesses use it for marketing.

1.2 Social Networking Websites

A social networking website is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. Web-based social networking services make it possible to connect people who share interests and activities across political, economic, and geographic borders.

Today people have got more awareness/exposure on business through social media. The best example is Facebook and Twitter who places advertisements of other brands through their sites. One of the most recent customer-reached advertisement is Hyundai Eon, the people car, manufactured by Hyundai Company is placed through Social Websites which has reached millions of people in a minute rather than the other media advertisement. The people tend to interact with the brand and also get awareness about the brand and its service in an interesting way [Nicole, 2007]. There should be a research to be carried out in India how people got exposed to social networking business.

Now-a-days, the recent trend in marketing through social networking sites has various brand communications that are widely used to attract targeted leads. This study is carried on social networking sites which are popular in India such as Facebook, Twitter, Hi5, MySpace etc.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the purpose of usage of social websites among professionals.
- To study the effectiveness of social websites towards business among professionals.
- To find the impact of interaction through social websites among the users.
- To find the awareness of the users on online business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media includes web- and mobile-based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals. According to Kaplan and Haenlein there are six different types of social
media: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life). Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP, to name a few. Many of these social media services can be integrated via social network aggregation platforms. Social media network websites include sites like Facebook, Twitter, Bebo and MySpace.

Lacy and Hernandez (2009), says Twitter gives the ability to share nearly 140 characters thoughts in a split second, where user can easily share links to press release and stories about their business, service or product. Making tweets interesting and diverse, there is a more possibility of increasing the followers, by consider with news sharing and the stories about the industry that they serve. Ricadela (2007) says, Coca-Cola has been running promotions on MySpace for the past two years for brands including Cherry Coke and Fanta and has promoted Diet Coke and other drinks on Google’s YouTube.

With its promise of a large audience base and contextual targeting, Social Media has become a norm with every second marketer across verticals and businesses looking to advertise online today. Its growth trends are impressive (40% growth estimated in 2010-11) with 63% marketers either using or planning to use it in the near future. Yet this medium does not seem to deliver expected results for marketers and there is a sense of dissent in its effectiveness. The reason lies in the 'one size fits all' approach adopted by most advertisers. A measure of impact on brand credibility, its reputation, and number of recommendations/brand referrals add equal value in judging the 'engagement value' of this medium. The range of options open to advertisers online has grown beyond Search and Display. It is customary for us to applaud innovation in traditional media but marketers fail to make optimum use of innovative customer engagement methods online that yield a higher return-on-investment in long-term brand building. This blinkered or tunnelled vision also decelerates growth of online marketing in India. Higher recall value, and staying 'top of mind' are equally important and add up to a brand's effort in 'reaching' out to the masses - Shweta Bhandari, Digital Research Analyst, Webchutney

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To analyze and find the effectiveness of business through social networking sites among Professionals and the Students who are there in Colleges at present as well as Tech-savvy i.e. spending most of their time in Internet. The usage of Social Websites for business in new era has to be analyzed. The aim of users towards Social Websites is also analyzed.

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

The survey method helped to identify the opportunities of business through social websites among the target population, the usage of social websites, the impact of social networking websites and the business communication like advertisement management between the companies and the targeted population is analyzed.

Also the content analysis method is used to analyze the social websites strategy to grab different users towards their websites and to analyze the future of the social websites in India.
3.2 Research Design
This research study adopted survey and content analysis in order to find the effective use of Social Websites towards business in the present era.

3.3 Survey
Survey was conducted randomly among 13 colleges in Namakkal District with 200 Professionals and merely 300 students. Questionnaire is issued directly to collect opinion from the respondents.

3.4 Sampling
Non-probability sampling technique is used to collect the opinion from the respondents directly. The target population is social networking user community and the effective data is collected from the professionals (Faculty Members) and students (UG and PG) of various colleges in Namakkal District with a sampling size of 500 in numbers.

3.5 Content Analysis
In the content analysis, most of the popular social websites in India like Facebook, Twitter, Hi5, MySpace, Orkut, LinkedIn, Flikr etc. have been selected for the present study to analyze the social websites towards the effective use of business.

3.6 Parameters and Units of Analysis
- **Target Population**: Category of the population (Professionals and Students) visiting the sites are taken.
- **Types of Business**: The business that can be carried out through social websites.
- **Advertisements**: How far and how many ads had reached them.
- **Communication Strategy**: Kinds of product promoted in the websites.
- **Usage of Sites**: The purpose and the usage of the social sites.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
a) Choice among Social Websites
It has been found from the survey through questionnaire (Table-I), most of the population has preferred Facebook rather than other social websites. It has been ranked first among all other sites with 91.2% of users. Twitter with 78.2% of users ranked second among other social websites. It shows that the targeted population use Facebook and Twitter for entertainment, business and communication. So, in the new era of technology, social networks become the emerging trend to promote business and develop communication among the people all over the world.

**TABLE – I: Choice among Social Websites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Flickr</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Orkut</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>MySpace</th>
<th>Hi5</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q.No.7</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Purpose of Account on Social Websites

From Table-II, the result has been found that most of the population in our study, uses social websites for making friends and then larger group is towards getting information. Next to these chat comes into priority. Most of the population getting into social websites for fun. Other activities like finding the co-workers, Strangers, and Sharing experience have the least priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Fun</th>
<th>Get Info</th>
<th>Co-Worke rs</th>
<th>Strange rs</th>
<th>Share Experience</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Q.No. 8</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Rating the Activities through Social Networking

From the Table-III, all the activities through social networking websites are ranked based on the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>E-Mail</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Getting News</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Making Financial Transactions</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Playing Games</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Health Information</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Browsing</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Keep-in Touch</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Part of Online Communities</td>
<td>XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Study and Research</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) Questions with Choices (YES/NO) from the Respondents

In Table –IV, the questions are based on yes or no choice to get results from the respondents. It shows that 99.9% of targeted population has awareness on Social Networking. The business approach through social websites is only 2.20% which depicts that there is a lack of interest among the professionals to utilize the social networking sites for business. But 90.78% of targeted population considers the social websites are suitable for business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL.No</th>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Awareness on Social Networking</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Membership on Social Websites</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Usage of Social Websites</td>
<td>70.20%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Trust on Social Websites</td>
<td>90.90%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Confidential on Social Websites</td>
<td>95.90%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Difficulties/ Faults experienced through Social Websites</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>For Business Approach through Social Websites</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Noticed Ads through Social Websites</td>
<td>72.01%</td>
<td>27.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Website is Suitable for Business</td>
<td>90.78%</td>
<td>9.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Surplus users for Social Website</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Marketed through Social Websites</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Future idea of Business through Social Websites</td>
<td>54.69%</td>
<td>45.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**e) Conclusion**

From the study, most of the Professionals and students are having awareness of business through social sites but most of them are not utilizing these web sites for business. Here the most of the activities in the social websites are getting around finding the friends, sharing photos, videos, fun, getting information and so on. When considering the business aspect, most of them have not tried to carry out business in social websites. Still the social websites have to try to grab the professionals and students of rural areas to concentrate on business through their sites.

**5. SUGGESTIONS & FUTURE ENHANCEMENT**

The companies have to concentrate on communications rather than advertisements of the products. Then only the user will concentrate on the business provided. The Social Websites have to make the user to carry out a business through their websites. The success of a website towards promoting business is on the hands of the users. The population taken for our study is the people who are spending most of their time in Internet. The communication done through the social websites can be highly utilized for marketing to get success in business too.

Online Forums are the right social media to reach to the target market easily as community forums. Marketing through Social Websites are the upcoming paths to the company directly to the customer. The marketing through social website will increase year by year in future and the social media has to increase the transaction security.

**6. REFERENCES**


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