



BRAND REPUTATION THROUGH ONLINE WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

V.Siva Sankaran

Asst.Professor, Department of Business Administration, Madras Christian College, Tambaram, Chennai-600059, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT A brand as a name, term, sign or design or a combination of them, to identify the goods and services of one institution or group of institutions and to differentiate them from those of competitors. A brand having a unique or highly developed personality will help it to be the prominent choice for consumers. One of the emerging techniques of products and services promotion through the use of technology is online word of mouth marketing that is becoming a popular direct marketing tool for companies and Institutes across the world. Online word of mouth marketing helps to recognize the brand in the future. The research was conducted to investigate the Brand reputation through online word of mouth marketing. The sample of 100 respondents selected using a convenience sampling method. The questionnaire prepared by five-point Likert scale method. The research found that a positive response towards online word of mouth marketing on brand reputation.

KEYWORDS : Online word of mouth Marketing, Service sector Brand, Competitors, Brand reputation.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in technology like internet and social media have helped to migrate company and consumer relationships to an interactive level, where technology contributes to brand building by creating and sustaining a long-term relationship with the customer. However, giving consumers the opportunity to voice their opinion will not always lead to positive word-of-mouth and can threaten company's good image and reputation with their consumers. The Internet plays a crucial role in building corporate brand reputation all over the world in today's market. The growth and evolution of the Internet, electronic peer-to-peer referrals have become an important phenomenon and marketers have tried to exploit their potential through online word of mouth marketing campaigns. Online word of mouth marketing can help a brand to grow quickly and cheaply, it carries more risk than that of building a brand based on relevance and relationships. This marketing strategy uses customers in a specific market to promote a product. Multiple social media formats are used in the process, which includes social networks sites such as YouTube, email communication, and many other forms of electronic media. This marketing technique on social networks and by word-of-mouth generates publicity to increase brand awareness, with the objective of using this technique being an increase in product sales through carefully designed viral processes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The lack of knowledge and brand reputation of online word of mouth marketing can be counterproductive as it can create unfavourable attitudes towards services. Therefore, this problem requires more attention; its impact needs to be clearly understood by Marketing institute Managers, Institute owners, and all affiliated stakeholders of the institutes. According to the great majority of business decision-makers feels it is now much more difficult to manage the Internet, social media, and the need to respond extremely quickly are key challenges.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the online word of mouth marketing in Educational Institutions.
- To identify factors influencing the usefulness of online word of mouth marketing
- To analyse the brand reputation through online word of mouth marketing in educational institutions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the view of **Angela Dobele (2005)⁽¹⁾** the successful online word of mouth marketing campaigns are comprised of an engaging message that involves imagination, fun and intrigue encourages ease of use and visibility, targets credible sources and leverages combinations of technology.

According to **Abed Abedniya and Sahar sabbaghi mahmouei, (2010)⁽²⁾** the role of social network websites which has influence on viral marketing, and the characteristics of the most influential users to

spread, share viral content. Structural equation modeling is used to examine the patterns of inter-correlations among the constructions and to empirically test the hypotheses.

Antony Joe Raja V. (2012)⁽³⁾ stated that how viral marketing spreads rapidly with a zero cost technique of social network and the significance of employing e-commerce strategy to it. The basic characteristics includes effortless transfer to others, scales easily from small to very large, exploits common motivations and behaviors, utilizes existing communication networks, takes advantage of others resources.

Lance Porter and Guy J. Golan, (2010)⁽⁴⁾ stated that More than traditional advertising, Viral advertising relies on provocative content to motivate unpaid peer-to-peer communication of persuasive messages from identified sponsors. While emotive content has always been the key to capturing audience's attention in advertising, viral advertising relies on increasingly raw content for actual distribution.

According to **Maria Woerndl, (2008)⁽⁵⁾** five type of viral marketing factors that may critically influence the success of viral marketing campaigns are identified. These factors are the overall structure of the campaign, the characteristics of the product or services, the content of the message, the characteristics of the diffusion and the peer-to-peer Information contents.

CONCEPT OF BRAND REPUTATION

The brand reputation is the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers as reflected in the associations held in the consumer memory. Change, driven by technology, market trends, and innovation of every type, is accelerated by the Institute media strategy. Institute brands and their reputations are important assets in enabling organisations to exploit opportunities and mitigate threats. Branding and reputation-building are key resources that allow an organization to be successful over an extended period. Today, it is crucial for marketers to listen and understand how the Institutes brand fits consumer lives and lifestyles. The managing of Institute brands needs a different approach to classic line branding. This means that while individual line branding primarily focuses on consumers and distributors and few staff interact with consumers, consumers in fact assess the brand's values from advertising, such as viral marketing campaigns, packaging, distribution, and the people using the brand. The use of the entire integrated marketing communications mix is used to create brand image and reputation, including internet and social network marketing.

SERVICE SECTORS PRACTICE OF ONLINE WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

Online word of mouth marketing is the set of techniques used to spur brand users, game participants, or advocate consumers among the target group to promote their favourite brand to friends and relatives. They are put to work to spread the word about the brand or product by using e-mail, SMS, 'tell or send to a friend' buttons, or other referral

tools on websites. As with viruses, viral marketing strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication to explode the message to thousands or millions of 'victims.' Viral marketing campaigns work best between groups with strong common interests, which implies that these campaigns allow marketers to spread selective messages to selective groups. By using viral marketing tactics carefully, marketers may avoid negative reactions and gain an excellent return on investment, increasing the reach of a marketing message to a targeted group that is much larger than the audience originally covered.

Online word of mouth marketing is increasingly popular for the following reasons:

Entire social networks are online today as a large number of everybody's friends and family members have started to use Web 2.0, or will soon.

Conducting marketing to individuals online is virtually cost-free and it is possible for each individual to contact hundreds more without much effort or cost.

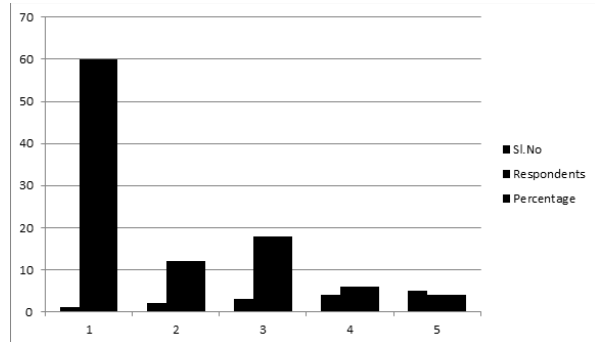
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research was conducted to collect data from students operating in different areas. Primary data were collected from 100 students and private Institutes were targeted for this study. Since a suitable sampling frame was available, from which to draw a probability sample, a convenient sampling approach was used to select respondents. The literature review was used as the source of information to formulate the questionnaire, while a combination of closed- and open-ended questions was used. A mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used to collect primary data. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to 100 students with interviews.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A survey was conducted with various Institutes students from different areas consisting of a total sample size of 100.

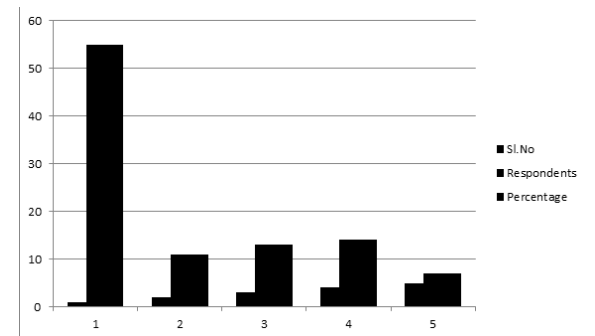
Chart 1: Institution gains more Popularity through online word of mouth Marketing



Inference:

Chart 1, illustrate that 60 (60 percent) of the respondents strongly agree that their Institutes gain more popularity through the use of a viral marketing platform. 12 (12 percent) agree with this statement, 18 (18 percent) are neutral, 6 (six percent) disagree, and 4 (four percent) strongly disagree.

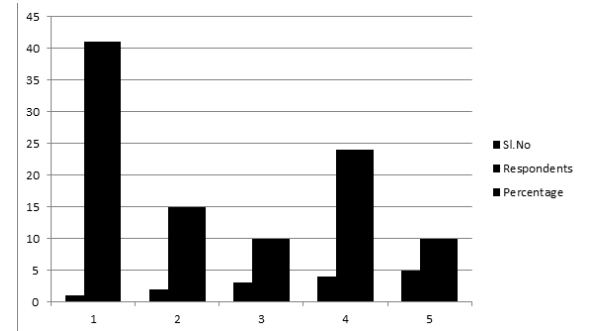
Chart 2: Online word of mouth marketing creating more brand awareness about the Institution.



Inference:

As shown in Chart 2, 55 (55 percent) are strongly agree regarding the statement that marketing creates awareness about their Institutes brands. A small percentage (11 percent) agrees, 13 percent neutral 14 percent disagree and 7 percent strongly disagree.

Chart 3: Information and Brand Reputation about the Institution has increased due to the Use of online word of mouth marketing Strategies.



Inference:

The results, as shown in Chart 3, illustrate that 41 (41 percent) of the respondents strongly agree and 15 (15percent) agree that information and brand reputation about their institutes have increased due to the use of viral marketing. 10 (10 percent) of the respondents are neutral, while 24 (24 percent) disagree and 10 (10 percent) strongly disagree.

FINDINGS

- It is observed that 60 (60 percent) of the Respondents strongly agree that their Institutes gain more popularity through the use of online word of mouth marketing platform.
- Majority of the Respondents 55 (55 percent) are strongly agree regarding the statement that on line word of mouth marketing creates more brand awareness about their Institution.
- It is observed that 41 (41 percent) of the Respondents strongly agree that information and brand reputation about their Institution has increased due to the use of on line word of mouth marketing strategies.

LIMITATIONS

This study did not cover all institutes located in all areas and was limited to only private colleges depend on online word of mouth marketing. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to all Institutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketing managers should encourage their Institutes to fully utilise viral marketing with the aid of social networking websites and other social media outlets such as Face book, Twitter, LinkedIn, and individual blogs.

Institute Marketing Managers must notify target customers/users about the Institute social network websites to minimize negative comments.

Institute newsletters should also be supplied to communities in order to teach them about good communications ethics, including communicating through websites.

CONCLUSION

Online word of mouth marketing builds a strong relationship with their target customers it will increase their brand reputation. It was further found that easy to gather information obtained via online word of mouth marketing. The use of new technologies, such as social media and social network is rapidly growing in India in both the business and service sectors. Marketing Managers, directors, owners, and all affiliated stakeholders should be made aware of the value of online word of mouth marketing in promoting their business. Less Cost benefit, High reach ability, short time duration advantages of using online word of mouth marketing as a promotional tool for strengthening the Institutes brand must be clearly understood.

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