Engage your customers with contests: An overview

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate goal of a social media page of any brand would be gaining huge fan followers, traffic and creating a buzz in the media. All this depends on how exciting and out- of- the- box new idea the brand would come up with in order to keep the users engaged and excited throughout the journey.

With huge number of people taking notice of the contests that are launched in the social media platform and above average number of people taking part in these contests, it clearly shows that contests can be a major part in building a brand in the minds of people.

People not only are aware of what the brands are trying to do with contests, but they also understand the promotional and communication aspects of the brand. Now- a- days, brands are not dealing with social media users, but are tapping potential as well as smart consumers of the social media.

With a contest which is simple, easy and engaging: a brand can reap the best benefits like create a social media buzz, be the talk of the social media town and pull the maximum users towards the brand and achieve the goal of being the brand that a user would recall at any point of time. A brand sure cannot ask for more.

KEYWORDS | Promotions, Twitter, Facebook, customer engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring customers is not enough for today's businesses. The goal is to deliver an amazing customer experience at every interaction so that not only one acquires and retain customers, but customers also become loyal fans and outspoken promoters. The engagement customers must be new and out- of- the- box idea along the entire journey from awareness to lead, from opportunity to cash and from request to resolution.

Marketing is a well-developed methodological science and is constantly changing its rules according to the needs and developments taking place in and around it. To establish itself in the new eta, it has begun adapting the new methods of virtues to come to terms with the new paradigms of business.

Marketing is the way companies interact with consumers to create relationships that are beneficial to both parties. Businesses use marketing to identify their audience before advertising to them.

"Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling that product or service."

Marketing can be looked at as an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, delivering and communicating value to customers, and customer relationship management that also benefits the organization. Marketing is the science of choosing target markets through market analysis and market segmentation, as well as understanding consumer behaviour and providing superior customer value.

From a societal point of view, marketing is the link between a society's material requirements and its economic patterns of response. Marketing satisfies these needs and wants through exchange processes and building long term relationships.

Review of Literature

Social media isn't about money or institutions. It isn't about stockholders making billions of dollars. It isn't about corporate ownership.

Social media is about ordinary people taking control of the world around them and finding creative new ways to bring their collective voices together to get what they want. Social Media Marketing (SMM) is primarily internet-based but has similarities with non internet-based, marketing methods like word- of- mouth marketing. SMM is the way of promoting a website, brand or business by interacting with or attracting the interest of current or prospective customers through the channels of social media. Facebook, Twitter and Youtube are the most popular social media that are widely used by the companies and the celebrities in promoting themselves and their brands.

Social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter provide unlimited means for internet users to interact, express, share and create content about anything, including brands. Such consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs) have significant consequences for firms. To effectively anticipate and direct these consequences, understanding people's motivations to engage in brand- related social media use is imperative.

The meteoric growth of community websites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, have usher the world into a new era of social media. The global reach is nothing short of marvellous.

By 2010, most big brands had figured out that they needed to get on Facebook and start engaging with their customers where they were more likely to be viewed as a "friend." Soon after, top brands created Twitter accounts, joined Instagram and, most recently, started to use Vine.

Micro blogging is a form of blogging that limits the size of each post; for instance, Twitter updates can contain only 140 characters. Twitter started to take off in terms of popularity in the first half of 2009 as a result of high-profile celebrity members and a mention on Oprah, and now it has become more main stream than other social media tools.

On Twitter, it's easy, requires very little investment of time, and can quickly prove worthwhile in increased buzz, sales and consumer insight. Twitter can also be used to announce offers or events, promote new blog posts, or keep the readers in the know with links to important news stories.

Research Methodology

Objective
- To find out the impact of the social media contests on consumers.

- To find out why consumers participate in certain contests, if they do and why the consumers do not take part in the contests, if they do not.

- To find out which social media platform among Facebook and Twitter is better for launching contests.
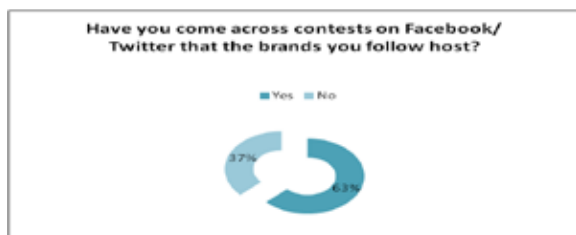
The questionnaire consisted of two sections,

- Basic demographic profile

- Quantitative questions

Simple Random sampling was used.
**The total sample size was of 200 respondents.**
DATA ANALYSIS:

Out of all the respondents and Social media users, 63% of the respondents said that they have come across contests on Facebook/ Twitter that the brands they follow host, and the remaining 37% of the social media users said that they did not come across such contests.
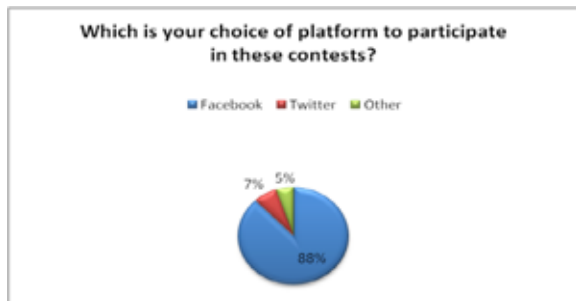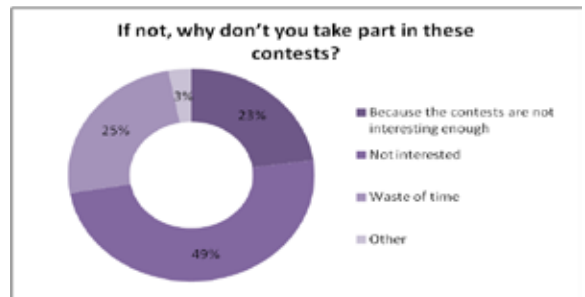

88% of the respondents said that they prefer Facebook as a platform to participate in the contests, 7% of the respondents said that they prefer Twitter as a platform to take part in these contests. The remaining 5% of the users said that they prefer online contest and sweepstakes sites and Pinterest as a platform to take part in the contests.
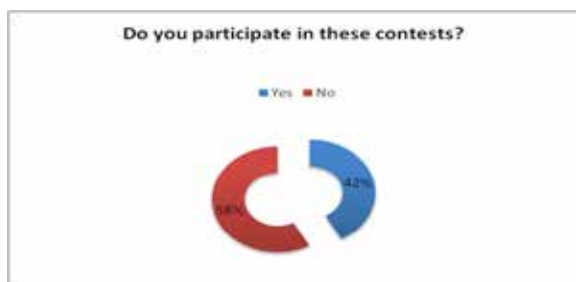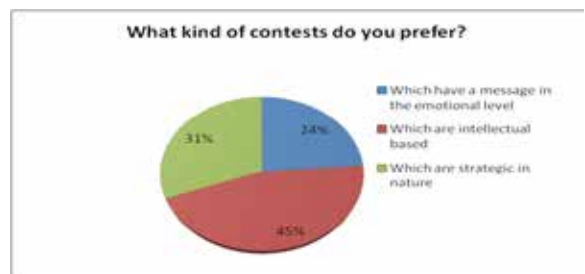

Out of all the respondents, 42% of the respondents said they take part in the contests on Social media and the remaining 58% said that they do not take part in these contests.


Out of the respondents who take part in these contests, 27% of them said that they take part in these contests because the contests are easy to take part in, 26% of the respondents said that they participate because they like the brand that hosts the contest, 25% of them said that they take part in the contests because the contest is exciting and the remaining 22% of the respondents participate in these contests because of the attractive prizes that the contests give away.

Out of the respondents who said that they do not take part in the contests, 49% of them said that they are not interested in these contests, 25% of them said that they see the contests as mere waste of time, 23% of the respondents said that they do not take part in the contests because the contests are not interesting enough. The remaining 3% of the non- participants said that they do not participate in these contests either because they do not find these contests or because they do not find enough time to participate in them.


Out of all the respondents, 45% of them prefer contests which are based on intellectual properties, 31% said that they prefer contests which are strategic in nature and the remaining 24% of them said that they prefer contests which have a message in the emotional level.
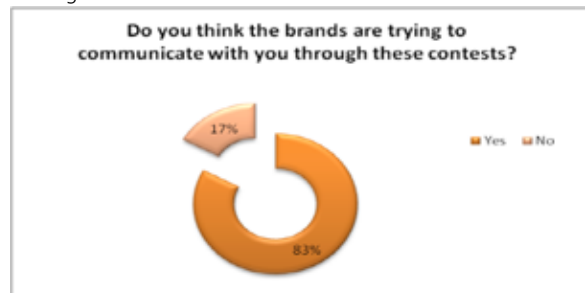
83% of the respondents said that they think the brands are trying to communicate with them through these contests and

the remaining 17% of the respondents said that they do not think so.
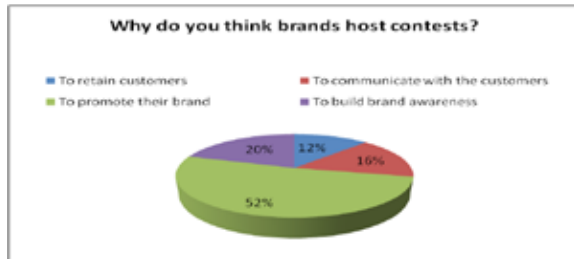
52% of the respondents think that the brands host contests in order to promote their brand, 20% of them think the brands host contests in order to build brand awareness, 16% of them said that they think the contests are to communicate with the customers, and the remaining 12% of the respondents think that the brands try to retain their customers

Major findings and Suggestions
The researcher found out that a maximum number of people are active on Facebook rather than Twitter, and there are also a good percentage of people who are active on both the social media platforms.

Maximum number people are aware of the contests and they do come across these contests that the brands launch on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Even though most of them are aware of these contests, huge numbers of people actually do not participate in these contests. Yet, the numbers of people who participate in these contests are average and are not less in number.

For the users to participate in a contest: the tone of communication of the brand, the prizes that are promised, the excitement created within the contest and by the contest, and how easy and challenging a contest is, all play a equal and important role in the success of the contest launched.

Since the number of users who do not take part in the contests cannot be neglected and the prime reason being 'Not interested', the brands should work on grabbing this social media user sections attention by launching simple, exciting and engaging contests. This will help in making the brand noticed by all. The brands must also make sure that a contest interests the 'Waste of time' and 'Not interesting enough' group as well.

The social media users prefer challenging and strategic contests over emotional based contests. So, the brands planning on launching a contest should take this aspect as a base for a contest.

The social media users are well aware of the promotion and communication factors that the brands are trying to achieve through launching contests on social media. So, the brands should keep in mind to use simple and friendly tone during the process of communication through contests as well as in the official pages of the brand in the social media platform. This will help brands tap potential customers and retain existing customers on the social media network.

Conclusion
Contests on social media is a topic that is going to stick for a long time to come. Contests will soon start trending in the social media platform and may soon be a trend that cannot be and would not be ignored.

Contests are by brands widely. Now that brands have adopted the same method on social media to steer their presence on social media as well, contests are sure to get more exciting and better.

Social media contests may not only be used as a sales promotion strategy, but they can also be used to build a brand im-

age, communicate directly with its customers, followers, fans and potential customers.

In short, Contests can now be called a multi- faceted factor. Because, not only does contests derive sales promotion strategy, but also builds brand awareness, brand image, a platform for communication, and helps in retaining and converting both existing and potential customers into brand loyal consumers.

With contest ideas in hand and several social media platforms at bay, brands often find it confusing to choose the platforms. Now that Facebook has more users than any other social media platforms, it will be smart for a brand to choose Facebook as a platform. Since other social media platforms are catching up with the number of users as well, it will be smarter for a brand to link its contests with other social media platforms as well.

If a brand focuses on driving more users to its web page or a social media page, then the brand can always link a contest back to the page where it needs more traffic.

But for the consumers to stick with a brand in the long run, the experience provided by the brand during the customers visit to its brand web page or a social media page must be an experience of a life time. To build an everlasting image, the brand has to work on engaging content, engaging graphics, engaging pictures as well as host a challenging, strategic and engaging contest.

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