



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Commerce

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGED THE PEOPLES SHOPPING ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIGITAL SHOPPING A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

KEY WORDS: Social media, digital buyers, digital shopping, Buying behavior.

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ABSTRACT

Social media is an internet-based form of communication. Social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content. There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. Billions of people around the world use social media to share information and make connections. On a personal level, social media allows you to communicate with friends and family, learn new things, develop your interests, and be entertained. On a professional level, you can use social media to broaden your knowledge in a particular field and build your professional network by connecting with other professionals in your industry. At the company level, social media allows to have a conversation with audience, gain customer feedback, and elevate companies' brand. Digital buyers worldwide are turning to social networks for a variety of things, like reading reviews and staying on top of fashion trends. Other social media activities such as viewing ads, staying on top of current fashion and product trends, as well as purchasing products directly via a social channel also influenced digital shopping behaviour. The study which is going to touch the points related to the social media activities changed the attitude of buyers shopping behaviour.

Introduction:

Online shopping is experiencing growth like never before especially in developing countries like India. Today almost every netizens buys things of his requirements online. As per reports there are more than 900 small and big online shopping stores or Ecommerce stores in India and many are being launched on a daily basis. Almost all things available in the traditional market are available online. We can buy fruits and vegetables, grocery, stationery, apparel, books, electronic items like mobiles, laptops, TV's, baby care items, bags, accessories and so on. Some sites have even enabled booking of cars and bikes online. You just have to submit the details and required documents and the car will be delivered at your doorstep! There are a lot of benefits of online shopping. One of the major one is ease of shopping and saving of time. When you shop online you tend to save a lot of money too as most of the online shopping sites sell their products at prices less than MRP. There are also various payment options offer to the customers like Cash on delivery, credit card, debit card, net banking etc. Online shops also offer a lot of choice and variety of products to the customers. Online shopping is one of the best things invented by mankind.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Social media is the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media.

Relationship networks

We can't talk about types of social media without first mentioning major networks such as Facebook. While personal relationship networks aren't the oldest type of social media, they can be called the most defining of them all. These channels were one of the first ones to offer public mini-sites, which later became known as profiles, with extensive information about the user, and most often require them to register with their real name. Relationship networks allowed us to keep all our communications in one place, on our Walls, Timelines or private messages, and share updates with our entire networks in one click. They vary from professional relationship networks that help you find work, connect with other professionals in the field, and share recommendations, to romantic relationship networks that help you find single users in your area.

Media sharing networks

This type of social network is defined by the primary type of media shared among users. Facebook and Twitter have amazing video and image-sharing capabilities; however, the majority of posts shared on these channels contain text. For channels such as Flickr or Instagram, however, images are the main focus—users have to choose, upload and edit image files before proceeding with anything else, such as captions or mentions of other users. Similarly, with sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, or apps like Vine and Snapchat, video is the primary mode of communication.

Online reviews

Location-based review services such as Yelp and Urban spoon are getting more traction as personal social networks adopt geolocation, and more users choose to consult the Internet along with their friends for recommendations of best dining spots. There are sites to review anything from hotels, restaurant or your latest employer—and user reviews have more weight than ever before. Sites like Airbnb and Uber, the biggest service providers in the emerging sharing economy, rely largely on host and driver reviews, respectively, to determine who benefits from the service.

Discussion forums

Discussion forums is one of the oldest types of social media. Before we connected to our first university friends on The Facebook, we discussed pop culture, current affairs, and asked for help on forums. Perhaps it's that unquenchable desire to get a share of collective knowledge that accounts for the wide reach and numerous users on forums such as reddit. "The front page of the Internet," as well as other forums like Quora and Digg, seldomly require the person's real name to register and post, allowing for complete anonymity, if desired.

Social publishing platforms

Social publishing platforms consist of blogs and microblogs, where long and short-form written content can be shared with other users. These platforms range from real-time interaction networks such as Twitter—which, while still officially placed in the category of microblogging platforms, is not normally included in the blogging category by most users—to Medium and Tumblr, which are battling it out for the title of the best interactive social publishing; to more traditional blogging platforms, such as WordPress and Blogger.

Bookmarking sites

In the early days of the Internet (think "Hosting your own site on

Geocities" era), content discovery online was a difficult task. Nowadays, there is a plethora of interesting, useful and enlightening content online, and sifting through all of it on your own is simply impossible. Of course, search engines like Google come in very handy when you know what to look for, but when you only have a vague idea of content you'd like to read or watch, there's bookmarking sites. These are web services like Stumble Upon, Pinterest, and Flipboard, where users collect content from elsewhere on the Internet, and save it to their account on the platform. This content can be private or public, and shared with other users. Often, these bookmarking sites will then suggest content similar to the links or images you have already saved on the network.

Interest-based networks

One of the most wonderful opportunities presented by social media is the ability to find people with common interests, no matter how niche these hobbies may first appear to be. In addition to Facebook and LinkedIn Groups and Google+ communities, there are whole networks dedicated to exploration of interest—such as Last.fm for musicians and music lovers, and Goodreads for authors and avid readers.

E-commerce

Last but not least, a big trend emerging across all types of social media is the ability to view and purchase desired goods with a click of a button. Sites such as Polyvore aggregate products from different retailers in a single online marketplace, and services like Etsy allow small businesses and individual crafters to sell their products without an existing brick-and-mortar location. Over the past year, e-commerce elements have been adopted by many networks whose primary functionalities place them in different categories, such as Pinterest, Twitter, and Facebook.

Here are some prominent examples of social media:

- **Facebook** is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook than any other website.
- **Twitter** is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- **Google+** (pronounced Google plus) is Google+ social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web."
- **Wikipedia** is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.
- **LinkedIn** is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
- **Reddit** is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as "subreddits." Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, "redditors," submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to

the top of the site's main thread page.

- **Pinterest** is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING

The best way to evaluate the importance of applying social media in marketing is to realize the importance of social media in everyday life of people who are likely to become your customers. Social media marketing has become a necessity, one that is imposed to the business by the overall presence and impact social networks have on the users.

In spite of the fact that social media presence has become a necessity, there are numerous ways to leverage social media presence into improving the business, and here are some of the major benefits.

BUILDING A LOYAL COMMUNITY

Ability to create a community of people who are loyal to the brand and to foster this relationship is what makes social networks such a perfect places for modern businesses. Able to gather those who are interested in the business or area of expertise by building online community. In addition, able to broadcast messages, to promote the company by introducing it to the community of loyal followers. Working on engagement and creating an authentic and valuable environment, will be able to make the most out of that community, which will result in multiple benefits for business.

LEARN FROM THE COMMUNITY

The feeling of community will allow, creating an atmosphere from which can learn about the customers and about the products as well. Interaction with buyers will help to explore their motives and needs when buying from companies, as well as what inspires them to buy. Interaction with potential buyers will help discover dilemmas they might have, as well as what drives them to make a decision to buy or not to buy.

Online community will help and learn about target audience, how they feel, how they react, what they expect, etc. This kind of feedback is valuable information, as it will affect other aspects of business in a positive way.

WORK ON PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Having learnt from the community, we can now integrate the knowledge into improving products, improving packaging or perhaps relationship with the clients. Learn the things buyers like and do not like, so that we can work on developing products even further, in order to adapt to the demanding market.

Furthermore, have to compare the trends on the global market. Staying competitive on the market is only possible to familiar with the current conditions and demands, which have tremendous impact on sales. Besides product development and improvement, social media is a good way for introducing products.

IMPROVE SALES

Another major benefit of social media marketing, which results in increasing profit of the company, is improving sales, regardless if we own an online shop or we want to encourage people to visit the business on a specific location.

When it comes to online shopping, social media can help drive traffic to online store, where we can convert the social followers into buyers. Goal is to maximize the click-through rate, which will ensure that the visitors are actually visiting online store. As a result, they are more likely to buy from you.

Local businesses can also benefit from social media, as we can ask users to share images, to check in to the location, which will increase visibility of the business on social networks.

In both of these cases, social media is good for working on branding and establishing loyal relationship with the customers, which is something that will help improve sales in the future.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS BECOMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE

Social media is becoming an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. Most traditional online media include social components, such as comment fields for users. In business, social media is used to market products, promote brands, connect to current customers and foster new business. Social media analytics is the practice of gathering data from blogs and social media websites and analysing that data to make business decisions. The most common use of social media analytics is to mine customer sentiment to support marketing and customer service activities.

Social media marketing (SMM) takes advantage of social networking to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach. The goal is usually to create content compelling enough that users will share it with their social networks. One of the key components of SMM is social media optimization (SMO). Like search engine optimization (SEO), SMO is a strategy for drawing new and unique visitors to a website. SMO can be done two ways: by adding social media links to content such as RSS feeds and sharing buttons, or by promoting activity through social media via status updates, tweets, or blog posts.

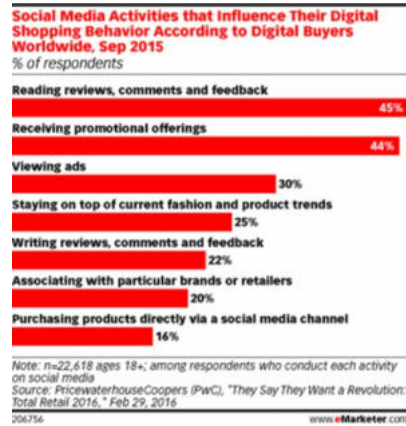
Social CRM (customer relationship marketing) can be a very powerful business tool. For example, establishing a Facebook page allows people who like your brand and the way you conduct business to Like your page, which creates a venue for communication, marketing and networking. Through social media sites, you can follow conversations about your brand for real-time market data and feedback.

From the customer's perspective, social media makes it easy to tell a company and everyone else about their experiences with that company -- whether those experiences are good or bad. The business can also respond very quickly to both positive and negative feedback, attend to customer problems and maintain, regain or rebuild customer confidence. Enterprise social networking allows a company to connect individuals who share similar business interests or activities. Internally, social tools can help employee's access information and resources they need to work together effectively and solve business problems. Externally, public social media platforms help an organization stay close to their customers and make it easier to conduct research that they can use to improve business processes and operations. Social media is also often used for crowdsourcing. Customers can use social networking sites to offer ideas for future products or tweaks to current ones. In IT projects, crowdsourcing usually involves engaging and blending business and IT services from a mix of internal and external providers, sometimes with input from customers and/or the general public.

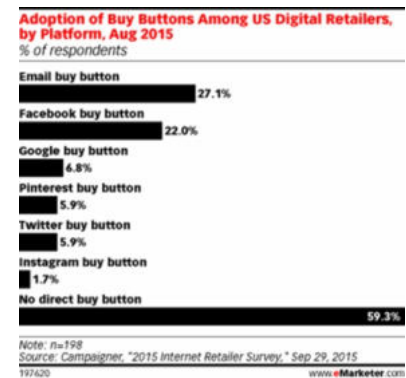
On the other hand, the integration of social media in the business world can also pose challenges. Social media policies are designed to set expectations for appropriate behaviour and ensure that an employee's posts will not expose the company to legal problems or public embarrassment. Such policies include directives for when an employee should identify himself as a representative of the company on a social networking website, as well as rules for what types of information can be shared.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCES SHOPPING BEHAVIOR:

Digital buyers worldwide are turning to social networks for a variety of things, like reading reviews and staying on top of fashion trends. According to September 2015 research; these social media activities influence their shopping behaviour.



PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) polled 22,618 digital buyers ages 18 and older. Respondents had shopped online at least once in the past year. Nearly half (45%) of digital buyers worldwide said that reading reviews, comments and feedback on social media influenced their digital shopping behavior. Some 44% of respondents also said that receiving promotional offerings also influenced their shopping behavior.



Other social media activities such as viewing ads, staying on top of current fashion and product trends, as well as purchasing products directly via a social channel also influenced digital shopping behaviour.

Indeed, consumers are increasingly turning to social media not only to be inspired, but to also buy products from. Buy buttons, which have been gaining prominence throughout 2015, are helping drive sales.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING GOES SOCIAL:

Social media has begun to replace a lot of activities that used to take place on other parts of the Internet. It seems that one of the greatest areas impacted is the way users shop online. An infographic from Crowd tap examines how social media has changed holiday shopping drastically.

The first major area of change is the in inspiration and discovery. Holiday gift discovery on social sites is up 17 percent as compared to last year. Shoppers are also finding more inspiration on social sites – they show a 25 percent Y-o-Y increase. Those finding inspiration on television and in magazines is down 22 percent Y-o-Y.

People believe their peers on social media more than ever before. The biggest influencer for holiday shopping was recommendation s from friends and family on social media, with 68 percent of survey participants ranking at the top. Sixty-three percent were influenced by Amazon reviews, and 24 percent were swayed by blogger endorsement. Traditional media and celebrity endorsements filled out the bottom three on the list.

In-store mobile use has also increased dramatically. Sixty-seven

percent use social sites on mobile devices while shopping, up from 24 percent last year. Fifty percent of those mobile users are actively comparing prices with online stores, 14 percent are sharing deals via social media and 13 percent are texting friends to validate their purchasing decisions.

WHAT INFLUENCES HOLIDAY GIFT PURCHASES MOST?

Peer recommendations on social have the most influence on holiday gift purchase. Social platforms excel at specific points along the consumer path to purchase.

- 68% - Recommendations from friends or family on social media
- 63% - Amazon Review
- 24% - Blogger endorsement
- 23% - Magazine article
- 20% - Newspaper review
- 11% - Celebrity endorsement on TV.

SOURCE: "Social influence Marketing's New Froniter"-2013

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING – 2017

1. Snap's Evolution Will Result in Interesting New Opportunities.

Snap has transformed user expectations and major trends in the social marketing world. It's helped bring back a more moment-focused view of communication, leading to more in-the-moment and live content, it's facilitated more mobile-centric app developments, and it's introduced vertical videos into the mainstream. But now, it's looking to develop products outside its main means of exchanging messages, introducing real-world glasses to help users capture first-person visual information. Expect big things from this recently-renamed company in 2017, and huge marketing opportunities to go along with them.

2. Twitter Fatigue Will Worsen.

People have been predicting the death of Twitter for the past few years, but I'm not here to say whether or not Twitter's going to survive another year (it probably will). Instead, I'd like to point out one potential factor for the app's decline, what I call "Twitter fatigue." Twitter built itself on fast, bite-sized updates, but this leads to a barrage of both incoming and outgoing tweets. This was novel and exciting at first, but now users are starting to crave something different—bigger, more detailed, more interesting pieces of content that roll out slower, like once per day. You can see this trend taking hold already in platforms like Instagram.

3. Users Will Crave More Vicarious Experiences.

People are also starting to demand social media as a conduit for more vicarious experiences. It's no longer enough to post your sentiments about an event; you have to show your users what it's like to be there. You can do this with things like live video, 360 images and video, and even just more real-time posting. The idea is to make your users feel like they're a genuine part of the experience, as it's unfolding.

4. New Areas of Communication Will Emerge.

Historically, social media existed as a way for individual people to communicate online. When brands caught on, it also became a way for brands to speak to and advertise to consumers. But now, social media is evolving in new communicative areas. Some platforms are offering means of customer service, increasing the significance and interactivity of exchanges between brands and consumers. Others, like Facebook, are delving into more professional communication. Expect to see more diversity here as more brands catch onto the potential.

5. An Ad Renaissance Will Occur.

Organic visibility has been declining for a while now, as platforms try catering to individual users over companies and organizations. But the secondary benefit for social platforms is that it forces more companies to dabble in paid advertising. Increased competition and pressure to become (or remain) profitable have also forced social platforms to come up with more ingenious and creative advertising options for businesses. The combination of these

factors may lead to a new resurgence in social media advertising in 2017.

6. Inspiration and Imagination Will Become Fashionable.

Practical posts get a lot of consumer attention. Emotionally charged posts have a greater likelihood of circulating virally. But inspirational and imaginative posts are starting to make their appearances as even stronger candidates for social media success. These are often artistic in nature, giving users something "pretty" as opposed to something pragmatic or reactive. It also forces a separation from any kind of company positioning or low-key advertising, giving users something truly valuable. In 2017, it will be valuable to forgo some pretense here, and just post beautiful images or sentiments.

7. Brands Will Choose Social Platforms According to Survival of the Fittest.

Every year, new social media platforms emerge to try and disrupt the status quo or find their place among the heavy-hitters of the social media world. But obviously, entrepreneurs and marketers can't jump on every single platform that comes along. Instead, in 2017, we'll see more of a trend toward refinement; rather than spending equal effort on five different platforms, more businesses will find one platform that works especially well for them, and narrow their focus on it. As a result, we may see greater stratification between the major platforms of our era.

These are some of the most important trends I forecast for social media in 2017. It's going to remain a strong branch for any content or SEO strategy, and is a must-have for any business attempting to market themselves on a frugal budget.

CONCLUSION:

Social media comes in different forms and structures. Mapping social media networks can enable a better understanding of the variety of ways individuals form groups and organize online. In the world with over 70% of internet users active on social networks, who spend at least one hour a day on average on those social networks, we have to conclude that social networks have become a sort of reality in which people communicate, interact, and obviously trust. We also have to be aware that over 60% of those users access social networks via mobile devices, with strong indicators that this percent will only increase in the future years.

In such world, we have to admit that social networks are a new dimension of reality that has become a part of the business world as well. Over 90% marketers report they are or will be using social networks for business, while over 60% of them claim to have acquired new customers over social networks.

Business professional and marketers support the fact that businesses can have a lot of benefits from using social networks, which is why implementation of those has become a part of business practice. This is why social media marketing is no longer considered to be on probation, but instead it has become an important part of the business world.

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