An Empirical Study on Social Media Behaviour of Consumers and Social Media Marketing Practices of Marketers

Authors:

Dr Sandeep Vij

Associate Professor, School of Business,
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara.
M: 09876045957
E-mail: profsandeepvij@gmail.com

&

Jyoti Sharma

Project Officer, Department of Planning and Administration,
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara
M: 07508155909
E-mail: jshukla1990@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the results of a study on social media experience of consumers and marketers in the State of Punjab. The study is based upon two parallel surveys - one for marketers (N=101) and another for consumers (N=211), conducted during the first quarter of 2012. Self developed questionnaire (request to fill online questionnaire was sent through e-mail) has been used to elicit the perception about motives, beliefs, policies, specific actions, and experiences of marketers about Social Media Marketing (SMM). Another self developed on-line questionnaire containing indicators about consumer's motives, beliefs, and experiences has been used to capture their perception about reasons for their presence on social media and factors (using Exploratory Factor Analysis) determining their social media behaviour. The respondents were requested to fill online questionnaires developed on Google Documents. Based on the results of the study and reviewed literature, the paper suggests the measures for effective Social Media Marketing (SMM) strategies. The findings of the study can be used by marketers and media planners for effective marketing results.

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I.   Introduction

Social media provides a virtual network place where people can enjoy expressing and exchanging opinions, disseminate and control messages (anywhere, anytime). There is a wide variety of social media, ranging from social sharing sites such as YouTube, MySpace through social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook etc. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, the internet became a global network and with the increased usage of internet, social media emerged and got popular; especially after 2003. Social Media Marketing (SMM) also picked up all over the world by the end of first decade of 21st century. India is not an exception **(Vij, 2012).** Social media expedites conversation as opposed to traditional media, which delivers content but doesn't allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation or development of the content." In today's competitive world, brands are fighting for space in the minds of consumers.

Though the traditional modes of advertising and marketing like television, print media and outdoor media still contribute to a major chunk of the advertising budget, they cannot be solely relied upon to ensure reach to the target audience. Using social media like blogs and networking sites for marketing of products is fast increasing its importance. Social media provide marketers interactive communication environments with opportunities to enhance existing relationships with consumers. Consumers' comments about a product on social media can produce a negative or positive brand buzz and the virtual messages affect consumer purchasing decisions.

In the early 1990's, when World Wide Web (WWW) was introduced in India, the percentage of people using internet was just 0.2%. Gradually, the reach of internet started increasing and is around 10% of the Indian population at present and most of the internet users view/follow social media sites. The percentage of Indians using internet is projected to reach 19% by 2015 and to 25% by 2020. Social media marketing is creating new opportunities as well as new challenges to the marketers. Companies are looking for different ways to reach their target customers. Social Media Marketing (SMM) is the buzz word in the field of marketing and companies are adopting it to reach their customers to achieve better performance. In the context of SMM, the challenge before marketers is that they don't have sufficient idea about the consumers' behaviour on social media. Marketers are also not sure what information should they upload on social media? What performance indicator should they use to measure SMM effectiveness and how? What are the motives of Indian consumer and how do they receive the advertisements and other communication on social media is also not known. This research paper is aimed at finding answers of many questions like these.

II.   Previous Studies

Research on social media is in its infancy as yet. There is great interest in exploring the issues related to social media nowadays. Over the last few years, researchers and practitioners have written on variety of issues related with social media and social media marketing. Some studies have explored the effectiveness and measurement issues related with word of mouth in social media (**e.g. Smith et al, 2007; Trusov et al, 2008; and Fogel, 2010**). Researchers have explored the consumer behaviour and attitude toward social media sites and implications for marketers (e.g. **Chung and Austria, 2010; Hensel and Deis, 2010; Kyle and Michael, 2010; and Diffy**

and Kearns, 2011). Some authors have studies the social media in the context of promotional mix (**Mangold and Faulds, 2009;Markus and Markus,2010;Spiller, 2011 and Vij, 2012**). Others have focused on issues like measurement of return on investment on social media investment (**Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; and Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011**), predicting the product performance with social media (**Asur and Huberman, 2010; and Lica and Tuta, 2011**), effectiveness of Blogs (**Singh et al, 2008; Colliander and Dahlen, 2011**), social media mix (**Lewis et al, 2008; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009; and Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011**),

Mangold and Faulds (2009) are of the view that social media is an element of the promotion mix because in a traditional sense it enables companies to talk to their customers; while in a non-traditional sense it enables customers to talk directly to one another. The content, timing, and frequency of the social media-based conversations occurring between consumers are outside managers' direct control. This stands in contrast to the traditional integrated marketing communications mix whereby a high authority of control is present. Therefore, managers must learn to shape consumer discussions in a manner that is consistent with the organization's mission and performance goals. The purpose of social networking sites is to facilitate the talks between biggest fans of the organization. Methods by which this can be accomplished include providing consumers with networking platforms, and using blogs, social media tools, and promotional tools to engage customers. Providing information to the consumers regarding product of their company closely bounds the customer to the company.

Hensel and Deis (2010) have suggested that marketers must consider all possible avenues to positively use social media to increase advertising and improve marketing. There are benefits, drawbacks, and challenges associated with any social media strategy, and these must be addressed before a specific social media strategy is implemented. Businesses need to assist in facilitating the social media inputs and discussions. In addition, social media strategies should also be used to track a business presence online, and to make sure that clients are not degrading the branding value.

The Internet-based social media has made it possible for one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them on web. Thus, the impact of consumer to consumer communications has been greatly increased.

Colliander and Dahlén (2011) have compared the effects of brand publicity in social media advertising (blogs) and traditional media. Consumer responses towards a brand have been studied in seven popular blogs and seven popular online magazines. They have demonstrated the greater publicity effectiveness of social media and underlying factors behind it. They have examined the effects of perceived writer– brand relationship, effects of writer credibility and publicity effectiveness and the variables taken into account to compare magazine with a blog are brand attitudes, purchase intentions and social interactions. They found that blogs generated higher brand attitudes and purchase intentions. This was due the fact that blogs have higher Para-Social Interaction (PSI) with its users than traditional magazines. Given that readers perceive the blogger as a friend, it would seem likely that a blog would be evaluated differently than a magazine. Unlike online-magazines readers, who have a one-way relationship with content, blog readers socialize with bloggers besides reading their posts. This study displayed clearly how the writer–brand relationship and writers' credibility affected readers' perceptions of brand publicity on blogs.

Elizabeth *et al* (2010) have explored social media trends, including social media opportunities and mobile marketing, and the potentially lasting effects that these trends have on advertising.

In a survey of 3300 marketers conducted by **Stelzner (2011),** it has been found that 90% of the marketers agree that social media is important for their business. One third of the marketers want to know how to monitor and measure the ROI of social media marketing activities. The majority marketers (58%) are using social media for 6 hours or more each week and more than a third (34%) invest 11 or more hours weekly. 77% of marketers are planning to invest in video marketing like YouTube. 70% of the marketers want to learn more about Facebook and 69% want to learn more about blogging. 72% marketers have increased traffic and 62% marketers have improved their search rankings by using SMM. According to these marketers, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blogs were the top social media sites used for SMM.

Allocating marketing budgets in the most efficient way is one of the key challenges for any marketing executive. The executive has to choose from traditional or classic advertising (radio, television, newspaper) and online advertising (online advertising and search engine marketing) such as to create the right impact among the masses. In practice, online channels are often being favored for their direct accountability in terms of cost per click. To prove the actual value of

various channels, **Markus and Markus (2010)** conducted a study to observe the business impact of various communication channels and the role of other external factors that influence usage of the website. They have used research model such as SEO (search engine optimization) which ensures a top position in search results, and show how the Internet has opened up new opportunities for companies to raise awareness and relevance with target groups of similar needs. It has also been observed that SEM shows approximately three times the conversion success from a registration to a paying membership than TV leads do. However, they suggest that the brand alone cannot be build online you have to go offline as well.

Chung and Austria (**2010)** have conducted a study to determine the factors related with social media gratification and attitude toward social media marketing messages. The results of the study show that attitude toward social media marketing messages are strongly related to social media usage gratifications such as interaction and information, but not entertainment gratification. **Asur and Huberman (2010)** have demonstrated how social media content can be used to predict real-world outcomes. Their study demonstrates how sentiments extracted from Twitter can be utilized to improve the forecasting power of social media. Similarly, **Lica and Tuta (2010)** show how social media can be used for predicting the success of a product or service.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) have illustrated the six steps executives should take in order to dance the social media/viral marketing waltz. They suggest viral marketing as electronic word of mouth whereby some form of marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially growing way-often through the use of social media applications. They suggest three conditions that are required to be fulfilled to create a viral marketing epidemic (i.e., giving the right message to the right messengers in the right environment) and present four different groups of social media viral marketing campaigns (nightmares, strokes-of-luck, homemade issues, and triumphs). They conclude with five points of caution that managers should notice when trying to launch their own viral marketing campaign – (1) Viral marketing is only as good as the remaining marketing, (2) Viral Marketing needs to be backed up by traditional forms of communication, (3) Excessive planning and intervention kills any viral marketing campaign, (4) Highly proactive and edgy messages are tricky business, and (5) Successful viral marketing requires a little bit of luck and gut feeling.

Kunz and Hackworth (2011) studied the use of social media marketing (SMM) by top retailers (top 18 retailers using five of the social media sites were taken). The number of subscribers to each retailer's social media platforms was tracked for some weeks; and a significant change was found in sales during that period. The study also found that customers respond more favorably to marketing when they have control and consumers are happier being a part of community, rather than the target of a marketing campaign. The usage of social media has increased significantly and a large percentage of social media networking users want companies to interact with them using social media applications. Based upon the usage rate and statistics, retailers are quickly incorporating the use of social networking sites into their marketing communication strategy. Retailers created events to encourage customers to visit their online sites in order to take advantage of special promotions and sales during a festive season and for some retailers this appears to have helped boost their seasonal sales.

Spiller (2011) has examined the social media and its role in direct and interactive integrated marketing communication. The study briefly explores the evolution of direct and interactive IMC's and its more recent advances in digital and interactive channels. The most recent development is of social direct IMC, the direct and interactive marketing communication applications made possible through social CRM. The study explores how the marketers approach the social media as awareness and branding tool, rather than direct response channel; and also identifies the opportunities to use social media as relationship and sales channel.

Diffley and Kearns (2011) studied focused groups of different age groups for their perception about social networking sites. They suggest that companies must seek to integrate advertisements and engage consumers rather than disturbing on their privacy or irritate customers. Noisy ads, pop up's and roll over's not preferred by users as they are primarily using social networking sites to engage in talks with their friends. If a company can engage consumers, they will choose to listen to the messages that are being told and potentially pass these messages on to others. The potential of social networking sites (SNSs) to be utilized as an effective marketing tool is in involving consumers to participate in marketing on social networking sites. A different approach is required by companies that 'pull' consumers in rather than 'push' marketing messages onto them. Consumers are using social networking sites to be social and make them heard. Customers

can use the internet to tell marketers what they want. The customer specifies the needs and the business delivers. Thus, the customer changes roles from 'consumer' to 'prosumer'.

Nowadays, consumers are co-creating marketing content with companies and their respective brands. Organizations are looking to online social media marketing campaigns in an effort to reach consumers where they live online so that they can easily engage their customers with their marketing activities. But the major challenge facing many companies is that although they recognize the need to be active on social media, they don't understand how to do it effectively, what performance indicators they should measure and how should they measure them. Further, as companies develop social media strategy platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, these are too often treated as standalone elements rather than part of integrated system. **Hanna *et al* (2011)** have suggested a systematic way of understanding and conceptualizing online social media as an ecosystem of related elements involving both digital and traditional media. They have shared several insights and lessons related to the strategic integration of Social media marketing into a firms' marketing communication strategy.

III.   Methodology

The study is based on social media experience of consumers and marketers in the State of Punjab. It is based upon two parallel surveys - one for marketers (N=101) and another for consumers (N=211), conducted during the first quarter of 2012. Self developed questionnaire (request to fill online questionnaire was sent through e-mail) has been used to elicit the perception about motives, beliefs, policies, specific actions, and experiences of marketers about Social Media Marketing (SMM).   Another self developed on-line questionnaire containing indicators about consumer's motives, beliefs, and experiences has been used to capture their perception about reasons for their presence on social media and factors (using Exploratory Factor Analysis) determining their social media behaviour. The respondents were requested to fill online questionnaires developed on Google Documents. (Available at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dE5iNXRLVnk4eGJDX2VWS0p3OU5TdUE6 MQ#gid=0   and https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFJZVDVBZ28xQjl6aGJOSXc2VURDdFE6M Q#gid=0)

Objectives of the Study

1) To study the social media behaviour of consumers.

2) To study the social media marketing practices of marketers.

3) To suggest strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of social media marketing.

IV. Social Media Behaviour of Consumers

Good news for marketers is that 36% of consumers agree that social media advertisements influence their buying decisions.

So far as the usage pattern is concerned, the results show that 74.4% of consumers use social media for networking purpose. However, about 35% respondents also admit that they use social media to seek opinions about products/services and to view online advertisements, for making buying decisions, as shown in Table-1

Table-1 Reasons for Use of Social Media

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
I am a regular reader of blogs on internet.	5.2	9.5	34.6	35.5	15.2
I use social media to write blogs.	10.9	10.4	26.1	21.3	31.3
I use social media to view online advertisement.	9	25.6	24.6	21.8	19
I use social media for interacting with others	39.3	35.1	15.2	9	1.4
I use social media to seek opinions about product/services	12.3	26.1	21.8	23.7	16.1

Dimensions of Consumers' Social Media Behaviour

Consumers were requested to share their agreement or disagreement with 13 statements about their social media experience. For the purpose of identifying the dimensions of consumer's social media behaviour, the responses of 211 respondents to these 13 statements have been subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis. Overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was found to be .777 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant (Chi-Square = 704.096, df = 78, Significance = .000) indicating the suitability of data for factor analysis. All of these

examinations revealed that data was fit for analysis. Principal Component Analysis was employed for extracting factors. The number of factors to be extracted was finalized on the basis of 'Latent Root Criterion' i.e. factors having Eigen value greater than 1 have been selected. Orthogonal Rotation with Varimax was run. Rotation Converged in 25 iterations. In orthogonal rotation, each factor is independent of, or orthogonal from, all other factors. The correlation between the factors is determined to be factors. All factor loadings greater than .40(ignoring the signs) have been considered for further analysis.

Four factors have been extracted which together account for 60.735 % of the variance. The results of Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation are shown in Table – 2. The results show that there are four major factors/dimensions in the social media behaviour of consumers.

Factor-I [The Beliefs about Social Media Advertisements]: It includes statements- 'Advertisements through social media are more interesting than traditional advertising' with factor loading of 0.850, 'Social media advertisements are more interactive than traditional advertising' (0.790), 'Social media advertising is more informative than traditional advertising' (0.722) and 'Social media is more reliable as compared to traditional media like newspaper, TV, Radio etc' (0.641).

Factor-II [Response to SMM Effort of Marketers]: It is reflected in statements such as - 'I refer to the opinion of experts on social media sites while considering any product or service' (0.717), 'I refer to number of likes/ dislikes while considering any product or service' (0.693), 'I am subscribed to updates and alerts regarding a brand or product through social media networking sites' (0.663) and 'I respond to queries and promotional offers received through social networking sites' (0.595).

Factor-III [Beliefs about Organisations Adopting SMM]: It includes the statements – 'Organisations that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than others who are not using it' (0.823) and 'Organisations that use social media for marketing purpose are more reputed than others who are not using it'(0.808).

Table - 2 Factor Structure of Consumers' Social Media Behaviour
(Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation)

STATEMENT	FACTOR				Commu -nalities
	1	2	3	4	
Advertisements through social media are more interesting than traditional advertising.	.850				.749
Social media advertisements are more interactive than traditional advertising.	.790				.739
Social media advertising is more informative than traditional advertising.	.722				.632
Social media is more reliable as compared to traditional media like newspaper, TV, Radio etc.	.641				.477
I refer to the opinion of experts on social media sites while considering any product or service.		.717			.563
I refer to number of likes/ dislikes while considering any product or service.		.693			.557
I am subscribed to updates and alerts regarding a brand or product through social media networking sites.		.663			.511
I respond to queries and promotional offers received through social networking sites.		.595			.507
Organizations that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than others who are not using it.			.823		.737
Organizations that use social media for marketing purpose are more reputed than others who are not using it.			.808		.725
I feel comfortable in sharing my information on social media sites.				.771	.660
Tracking of my activities on social media sites by companies is not an issue for me.				.718	.519
I know that companies are tracking my activities on social media sites.				.472	.446
Eigen Value	3.786	1.739	1.240	1.130	7.895
% of Variance	29.124	13.375	9.540	8.696	
Cumulative	29.124	42.499	52.039	60.735	

Factor-IV [Consumer's Comfort Level on Social Media]: This is the fourth dimension in the social media experience of consumers. It includes the statements – 'I feel comfortable in sharing

my information on social media sites' (0.771), 'I know that companies are tracking my activities on social media sites' (0.718), and 'Tracking of my activities on social media sites by companies is not an issue for me' (0.472).

V.   Social Media Marketing Practices of Marketers

Tables 3 to 7 given below summarize the response of the marketers about experience of their organization regarding social media marketing.

79.2% of the marketers surveyed agree that they are using social media for promoting their businesses. Major motives for marketers' social media presence include - 'giving information about existing and upcoming products/Services', 'attracting new customers', 'creating awareness about business', 'creating word-of-mouth for products/services' and to 'understand the consumer behaviour'

Table - 3 Marketers Motives for using SMM

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
We use social media to give information about existing products/Services.	37.6	48.5	6.9	5.9	1
We are using social media to attract new customers.	39.6	45.5	7.9	5.9	1
We use social media to create awareness about our business.	33.7	48.5	11.9	4	2
We use social media to give information about latest products/Services.	30.7	50.5	11.9	5.9	1
We are using Social Media Marketing for our Business.	38.6	40.6	15.8	3	2
We depend on social media to create word-of-mouth for our products/services.	24.8	45.5	20.8	7.9	1
We use social media to understand the customer behaviour.	28.7	35.6	28.7	4	3

A good proportion of marketers have their own separate department to handle Social Media Marketing activities (54%), have separate budget for SMM (59.4%) and take guidance from social media marketing experts (59.4%).

Table - 4 SMM Policies of Marketers

Statements	Yes %	No %
We have our own separate department to handle Social Media Marketing activities.	54.4	45.5
We make separate budget for Social Media Marketing activities.	59.4	40.6
We are taking the guidance from Social Media Marketing Experts.	59.4	40.6

85.1% marketers believe that Social media and traditional media of marketing are going to work together. 79.2% agree that Social media is a new trend in the market, so they have to follow it. However, 63.3% marketers disagree with the statement – 'Social Media Marketing is just a fad. It will not work in the long run.'

Table – 5 Marketers Beliefs about SMM

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Social media and traditional media of marketing are going to work together.	29.7	55.4	11.9	1	2
Social media is a new trend in the market, so we have to follow it.	37.6	41.6	13.9	5	2
Social Media Marketing is just a fad. It will not work in the long run.	5.9	11.9	18.8	17.8	45.5

Specific activities which marketers undertake to implement their SMM strategy include - 'giving proper feedback to customers' queries received though social networking sites (74.2%), 'giving information about latest offers and discounts through Social media (71.3%), 'running advertisements on social media (71.3%), 'accepting queries through social networking sites (67.3%), 'updating Blogs on regular basis (62.4%), 'uploading interesting videos and images (62.4%), 'conducting customer surveys and research through social media (54.5%), 'conducting

open group discussions through social media (53.5%), 'chatting on net with our Customers (47.6%), ' running competitions on social media (44.6%), and 'conducting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Campaigns on social media (33.7%).

Marketers agree (79%) that SMM is an effective tool of marketing for their business. 72.3 % marketers agree to the fact that SMM is very cost effective. They agree (57.4%) that social media helps in identifying loyal customers. However , it is very difficult to handle the negative response of customers on social networking sites (56.5 %) and measurement of return on investment is not possible in case of social media marketing (40.6%).

Table – 6 Specific Actions of Marketers

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
We give proper feedback to customers' quires received though social networking sites.	27.7	46.5	17.8	5	3
We give information about latest offers & discounts through Social media.	31.7	39.6	18.8	8.9	1
We are running Advertisements on social media.	29.7	41.6	18.8	7.9	2
We accept quires through social networking sites.	25.7	41.6	21.8	8.9	2
We update our Blogs on regular basis.	29.7	32.7	26.7	8.9	2
We upload interesting videos and images.	22.8	39.6	28.7	5.9	3
We conduct customer surveys and research through social media.	22.8	31.7	20.8	19.8	5
We conduct open group discussions through social media.	18.8	34.7	25.7	14.9	5.9
We do chatting on net with our Customers.	22.8	24.8	27.7	13.9	10.9
We are running Competitions on Social Media.	20.8	23.8	31.7	15.8	7.9
We conduct Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Campaigns on Social Media.	11.9	21.8	38.6	20.8	6.9

Table – 7 Marketers' Social Media Experience

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
We are finding Social Media as an effective tool of marketing for our business.	35.6	43.6	15.8	3	2
Social media marketing is very cost effective.	29.7	42.6	22.8	2	3
Social media helps us identify our loyal customers.	19.8	37.6	28.7	10.9	3
It is very difficult to handle the negative response of customers on social networking sites.	11.9	44.6	30.7	9.9	3
Measurement of Return on Investment is not possible in case of social media marketing.	4	36.6	42.6	13.9	3

VI. Strategies for Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

Based on the results of the study and the literature reviewed, we suggest the following measures for effective implementation of social media marketing:

1. Set specific objectives. Your objectives should be clear in terms of financial or non-financial result you expect from SMM campaign.

2. Allocate sufficient resources in terms of time, money and man power. There should be a separate social media marketing department and budget allocated to it.

3. Conduct a research to identify the areas required to be focused during the campaign.

4. Make a Social Media Marketing Plan – What, When, Where and How of SMM campaign i.e.
- What kind of Information will you share with the audience?
  (Suggestion: Information should be real and the quality of content should be good, content and themes can be according to days and events),
- When is the time to target the traffic on social media sites?

15

(Suggestion: The frequency, reach and yield of social media marketing campaign should be based on the analysis of data collected during research phase)

- Where should you focus your effort on?

  (Suggestion: the networking sites and target audience therein should be based on the findings of data analysis during preliminary market research).

- How should you go about engaging the target audience on social media sites?

  (Suggestion: go for video advertisements, fan page, Information update and Contest etc. Find the bloggers and journalist who are talking about your Industry.

5. Make Internal Collaboration - All the employees of the organization should be part of SMM plan. They are the real advocates for the company and for the SMM campaign.

6. Integrate and synchronize the social media marketing with other marketing communication messages across the channels, online as well as offline.

7. Build Relationships.

    (**Suggested Do's :** Start- interaction, participate, be true, listen to your customers, make them feel special, provide customer services, give timely response/information, involve and engage your customers in co-creating the marketing events and content, make your customers a part of your organization, provide proper feedback and rewards to your customers, and value their interest and privacy)

    (**Suggested Don'ts:** Do not disturb your customers without their permission or interest, do not irritate your customers by passing unnecessary comments, videos, pop-ups and advertisements, do not share customer information and data without their permission, and do not interfere in their other social activities on social networking sites.)

8. Manage the SMM Campaign.

    (Suggestion: Appoint technically expert people to keep 24*7 checks on the SMM content, have control over negative word of mouth, keep check on competitors SMM activities, and present your stuff uniquely)

9. Monitor the Results.

(Suggestion: Watch the changes in financial results - sales and revenue during the SMM campaign. Keep following the non-financials like number of fans, unique visitors, comments, Likes, search engine optimization (SEO) rankings etc.)

Above all, social media marketing content should be 'interesting', 'informative', 'interactive' and 'reliable'. Marketers should align their social media marketing effort with the changing tastes and preferences of customers, especially millennials (defined as those born in the 1980s) as social networking is reported to be embraced by 75 percent of the Millennials, compared with 50 percent of the Generation X members and just 30 percent of Baby Boomers.

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