

Social Media in Business Communication and Literature

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ABSTRACT --*This article covers impact of social media on two aspects, viz., Business Communication and Literature. Businesses are realising the importance of social media for internal and external communication. Social media offers flexibility in time for customer interactions, and easy and cost-efficient way of reaching out to customers. Social media help two-way communication between the businessmen and their customers. Businesses should track the consumer feedback on social media and respond quickly to negative feedback. Criticism that social media kills the reading habits and English language capabilities of the modern generation stems from a misunderstanding of the nature and usage of literature. Languages benefit from adapting and adopting to changes. Writers always strive to extend the boundaries. Social media literature is a new genre not just in terms of the media, but in terms of the structure and style of writing.*

Keywords-- *social media, social media, literature, business*

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Media in Business Communication Social media is pervading all aspects of daily life. This article covers two aspects out of the diverse areas: Social media in Business and Social Media and Literature. While the former studies the importance and impact of social media on marketing strategies of businesses, the latter tries to answer the controversial topic of whether social media is compatible with literature as we understand the term. There has been a sea change in business communication over the last decade in terms of quantum, style as well as the medium of communication. Social media and advances in technology have been a major factor in this transformation.

Social media started and developed along two lines, one as a means of recording (such as Blogs) and another as a means of social networking (such as Orkut, FaceBook, or WhatsApp), Businesses saw little relevance or use for the media. There has been a dramatic change in this attitude and now it can be safely stated that social media channels are essential in business for both internal communication with employees and co-working among teams, as well as an essential external communication channel with external stakeholders such as customers, vendors, etc. Companies are realizing that they cannot afford not to invest in it.

The most common usage of social media in business is for advertisements, both for brand building as well as for sales promotions. However, social media can also be used by a business in other means. Menon(2017)describes four ways through which a business can communicate with its customers using social media, viz., Connections, Campaigns, Visualizationand Round-the-clock Promotions.

- Rather than depending solely on sales push, social media is used for connecting and continuously engaging with the customer to align the customer with the brand.

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- In the past, marketing campaigns involved a lot of time and effort. However, the advent of social media has dramatically speeded up this process and made it more efficient. Customer engagement is instant, and the tracking of campaign performance is continuous.

- Social media allows customers to visualize the products and the offerings better, by customizing the presentation of the product and offering for specific customers.

- Social media enables businesses to interact with customers even outside the normal business hours. This provides flexible timings for the customers without affecting the physical limitations on the business and its employees. Now with smartphones, potential customers can use any time to learn about the offerings, or to transact the purchase.

“Social media is a valuable asset through which a businessman is likely to get more loyal customers, interact and engage with them directly, form honest and trustworthy relationships” Menon (2017).

Apart from the benefit of flexibility in time for interactions with potential customers, social media networks also help businesses to address a wider range of customers. Costs of reaching out to customers have come down drastically. In other words, for a given marketing budget, businesses are now able to reach a much larger and geographically much larger set of target customers. However, as with any new tool, businesses must learn the right way of using social media in line with their overall business plan.

Paquette (2013) clarifies that “social media is much more to do with what people are doing with the technology than the technology itself, for rather than merely retrieving information, users are now creating and consuming it, and hence adding value to the websites that permit them to do so.”

Businesses are realizing that social media may not be the right solution for all customers. There are customer groups who are either averse to, or uncomfortable with social media and such customers will need to be targeted through other media. Retailers have also come to realize that on-line marketing does not replace the traditional retail format, but only supplements it.

Specifically, a brand community is a group of people who share the same interest in a particular brand or product, states Paquette (2013). Businesses are looking for groups of consumers on the internet who are interested in their brand or product referred to as Virtual Brand Community (VBC).

The presence of internet groups with common interests and the ability to reach them on the internet is important for marketers. It enables them to focus their promotional messages, and thereby maximize the success rate.

Consumer Attitudes/Motives: Why do consumers become part of such groups? The most obvious motive is an interest in the product or brand. Sometimes, it becomes a status symbol. For example, being part of a group of Tanishq watch and jewellery owners makes a person feel privileged as the brand is positioned that way. It is essential for marketers to fully understand how consumers perceive marketing on the social media. Often, there is user generated content which must form part of the marketing message and substantially supplement traditional marketing tactics.

User generated content describes all the ways in which people make use of social media, usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users. State Poturak and Softic (2019). Consumers typically have more faith in such content and tend to read the opinions of other

consumers. Therefore, brand managers now must consider how to react when their brand is talked about by consumers. Such consumers are reactive co-producers of value.

Businesses must understand the main data that consumers are using to assess a product or a service. This input should form the basis for planning the marketing and promotional strategies on the social media.

“Social media sites such as Facebook are better than other advertising avenues because it stores information on all its users thus ensuring marketing reaches a retailer’s specific target market.”, observes Paquette (2013). Unlike the traditional style of communication, social media like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter help two-way communication between the businessmen and their customers. Consumers post their positive and negative feedback on social media and businesses should address the negative issues raised by tweaking their product or service and find innovative ways to promote the positive aspects.

II. SOCIAL MEDIA AND LITERATURE

Is the internet killing our brains? Social media is being blamed as the root cause of all evil. Critics say that obsession with social media destroys relationships and reduce the attention span of users, especially the youth. However, such criticism is unfair. Almost every innovation, if used mindlessly, can be catastrophic: Motor cars created more accidents and increased pollution, mobile phone radiations are harmful, computer usage can harm the eyesight, internet lead to pornography, and so on and on. Anything in excess is bad. Man should be willing to embrace new developments and adapt to the changes. However, he should have the common sense to draw boundaries for usage.

One of the criticisms against the social media and the internet is that people are losing the habit of reading literature, preferring instead to watch as a play on the net, or read abridged or comic versions of the works of literature. The power of imagination from written literature is gradually waning; the use of abbreviated words and short sentences in the social media is said to be killing the reading and writing skills of the new generation; grammar and vocabulary are taking a back seat.

However, such criticism is highly misplaced and shows a misunderstanding of the nature and use of literature. The printed English literature of the 18th century is vastly different from that of the 20th century in terms of the style of language, and vocabulary. Languages benefit from adapting and adopting to changes. As Baker (2014) states, “to position social media and literature in opposition to one another.....is to misunderstand the use of literature.” ‘All media are platforms of human communication and expression, and in this sense, all media, including literature, is social.’

There is a debate on what makes ‘real literature.’ Baker (2014) describes how The December 2013 Taj Literary Festival explored the influence of social media, and the perception of literature. Not all literature need be classic literature. Many a good work of literature has been stifled in the past due to a lack of willing publishers. With the advent of the internet and the social media, authors can self-publish. This is an age when ‘each person can now be his own editor, writer and publisher,’ remarks Baker (2014)

Social media offers a lot of advantages to authors: There are sites that provide for many people to work together for a collaborative output. Microblogging allows writers to publish small parts of their work and get an instant feedback. In conventional literature, when stories are serialized in periodicals, the authors got similar feedback.

Even classic authors like Charles Dickens have benefited by writing some novels in instalments and based on the responses received, modifying the plot. Microblogging provides instant feedback.

Critics of social media often cite the short lengths of social media messages, and the ungrammatical structure to assert that such writing cannot be a form of literature. However, some of the greatest works of literature, such as the Thirukkuralin Tamil are succinct, yet profound. Many famous classic writers have taken liberties with the grammar and vocabulary, without diminishing the worth of the writings in any way. Shakespeare's "most unkindest cut of all" is a typical example. In fact, English professors refer to the poetic license as a phrase to describe such grammatical errors.

Perhaps the conventional definition of proper literature needs to be reviewed and revised keeping the changes in society and the social media. Artists and writers always strive to extend the boundaries. Social media literature is a new genre not just in terms of the media, but in terms of the structure and style of writing.

III. CONCLUSION

Businesses are seeing increasing relevance of social media: From plain digital promotions to targeted offering for specific virtual communities, as a means of reaching a larger group of customers, getting instant feedback from consumers for user generated promotional content.

At the other end of the spectrum, people are realizing that social media is not in opposition to literature. Literature has always benefited by stretching the limits of what was considered

traditional at that time. Social media offers many advantages to the writers as well as to the readers, and helps the writers get instantaneous feedback from a larger group of readers.

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