Project Dissertation

DEVELOPING A STRONG SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE AS A MARKETING STRATEGY

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CERTIFICATE FROM THE INSTITUTE

This is to certify that the Project Dissertation titled Developing a Strong Social Media Presence as a Marketing Strategy, is a bonafide work carried out by Mr. Digvijai Chandra of MBA 2013-2015 and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi - 42 in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of the Masters of Business Administration.

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DECLARATION

I Digvijai Chandra, student of MBA 2013-2015 of Delhi School Of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 declare that Project Dissertation on Developing a Strong Social Media Presence as a Marketing Strategy in Marketing and IT Management submitted in partial fulfilment of Degree of Masters of Business Administration is the original work conducted by me.

The information and data given in the report is authentic to the best of my knowledge. This report is not being submitted to any other university for award of any other Degree, diploma and Fellowship.

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ABSTRACT

In an era of technology, marketers visualize the need to pace up with the changing trend or risk being outdated. Those days are gone, when a brick and mortar business model will thrive well in current market situation. It is a futile exercise to develop a marketing strategy without keeping in mind social platforms. Social networks have become really important parameter in today's marketing mix in promotion mix. Adopting some kind of online platforms is a key node for modern businesses, especially in the period where change is demanded by consumers. The paper deals with explorative research to understand the social media as a marketing strategy and an effort has been made to study the extent of social media in consumers' buying decision. In addition strategies have been suggested for meeting out the gap between consumer and marketer.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Globalization is the shift towards a more integrated and interdependent world economy thereby merging historically distinct and separate national markets into one huge global marketplace (Hill, 2009). The Economic Times reported that during the recession in 2007, the global market place was affected by changes in exchange rates, inflation and consumer purchasing behavior. These changes in the economy forced organizations to remodel business strategies in order to promote their brands more effectively. One of an organization's most valuable assets is its brand and the modern organization needs to realize that capitalizing on its brand is important as it can help achieve growth, profitability objectives and sustainability (Davis). One of the most popular means of communicating brands during the modern times is through social media marketing; online or electronic media which facilitates participation, conversation, community and connectivity amongst online users.

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. These programs usually centre on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their online networks. A message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a reliable, third-party source, as opposed to the marketer or entrepreneur itself. Hence, this form of marketing is based on word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.

Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with comfortable internet access. Increased public communication for organizations fosters brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Additionally, social network serves as a cheapest form of platform for organizations to implement marketing campaigns. It is a relatively low cost form of marketing and allows organizations to engage end-users directly. Given the choices made available to consumers and the influential role of social media marketing, the brands and consumers have evolving role to play in the

organization's strategy in that they now have an economic impact (Lindermann, 2004).Brands influence customer choices, customers influence other customers. These chains of events affect repurchases, which further affect future earnings and long term organizational sustainability. A leading brand thus influences consumer's buying behavior and creates value by generating demand (through repurchases) and securing future earnings for the business. Therefore social media marketing represents communication opportunities and requires new and unconventional thinking to ensure that consumers experience brand orientation and product orientation.

Social Media Outlets/Platforms:

Social networking websites allow individuals to interact with one another and build their own private network. When marketers or companies join these networks, then people can interact with them. Those interactions add a personal touch for users because of their previous experiences with social networking. Social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Pinterest and blogs allow individual followers to "re-tweet" or "repost" comments made by the marketers for the product being promoted. By repeating the message, all of the user connections are able to see the message, therefore maximising their reach. Social networking websites act as word of mouth as the information about the product is being put out there and is getting repeated, more traffic is brought to the profiles or pages. Through social networking sites, products/companies can have conversations and interactions with individual followers. This personal interaction can grow a feeling of belongingness and loyalty into followers, and thus potential customers. Also, by choosing whom to follow on these platforms, products can reach a very narrow target audience.

This new period of social engagement and digital communication is paramount to business strategy. As organizations become more globally competitive it is important for marketing strategy to explore more innovative and compelling avenues to attract larger pools of customers (Laroche, 2012).

➢ Cell Phones

Cell phone usage has also become a benefit for social media marketing. Today, many cell phones have social networking capabilities: individuals are notified of any happenings on social networking sites through their cell phones, in real-time. This constant connection to social networking sites means products and companies can constantly remind and update followers about their capabilities, uses, importance, etc. Because cell phones are connected to social networking sites, advertisements are always in sight. Also many companies are now putting QR codes along with products for individuals to access the company's website or online services with their smart-phones.

➢ Engagement

In the context of the social web, engagement means that customers and stakeholders are participants rather than viewers. Social media in business allows anyone and everyone to express and share an opinion or idea somewhere along the business's path to market. Each participating customer becomes part of the marketing department, as other customers read their comments or reviews. The engagement process is then fundamental to successful social media marketing.

Type	Definition	Example(s)
Social networking	Content sharing, mainly personal and business information	Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+
Micro-blogging	Blogging(online diaries), Mainly text- based that uses hash-tags (less than 140 characters)	Twitter, Tumblr
Blogging	Online diary	Blogger
Social News	News Rating	Digg, StumbleUpon
Media	Content sharing, mainly videos and photographs	Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr

Table1.1: Types of and Popular Social Media Platforms.

Social media marketing:

Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Social media

marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more. Lazer and Kelly's (1973) define social marketing as "concerned with the application of marketing knowledge, concepts, and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with the analysis of the social consequences of marketing policies, decisions and activities."

Social media marketing is not merely about hitting the front page of Digg or any other social news website. It is a strategic and methodical process to establish the company's influence, reputation and brand within communities of potential customers, readers or supporters.

Growth of Social Media Marketing:

A recent study, "2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report" published by Social Media Examiner, points to economic struggles as the catalyst for social media's rapid popularity. The study results show that social media usage by small business owners increased from 12% to 24% in just the last year, and almost 1 out of 5, actively uses social media as part of his or her marketing strategy. In 2013, only 23% of marketers were using social media for years. Now that number has grown to 31%.

Here's a breakdown of what the small businesses reported as the main uses of social media marketing:

- 75% have a company page on a social networking site.
- 69% post status updates or articles of interest on social media sites.
- 57% build a network through a site such as LinkedIn.
- 54% monitor feedback about the business.
- 39% maintain a blog.
- 26% tweet about areas of expertise.
- 16% use Twitter as a service channel.

According to the study, different industries are adopting social media marketing at different rates, and while many industries have started using social media marketing in their efforts to reach more customers, many still have not positioned it as their top priority.

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A research shows that charitable organizations are still outpacing the business world and academia in their use of social media. In a study conducted in 2013, a remarkable eighty-nine percent of charitable organizations are using some form of social media including blogs, podcasts, message boards, social networking, video blogging and wikis. A majority (57%) of the organizations are blogging. Forty-five percent of those studied report social media is very important to their fundraising strategy. While these organizations are best known for their nonprofit status and their fundraising campaigns, they demonstrate an acute, and still growing, awareness of the importance of Web 2.0 strategies in meeting their objectives.

In just the last few months, marketers have shifted their attitudes toward social media marketing spending. A key finding: Social media marketing budgets continue to rise. According to the results, businesses currently allocate 6% of their marketing budgets to social media, an allotment they expect to increase to10% during the next year and 18% over the next 5 years.

Back in August 2013, marketers had already planned on devoting more money to social media. However, in February 2014, marketers reported that they plan to allocate one-fifth of their marketing budgets to social media marketing in the next 5 years. This is a definite increase from the 2013 projections. The study features the following comparison from August 2013to February 2014:

➢ Current marketing budget spending on social media:
    August 2013: 3.5%
    February 2014: 5.6%
➢ Marketing budget spending on social media in the next 12 months:
    August 2013: 6.1%
    February 2014: 9.9%
➢ Marketing budget spending on social media in the next 5 years:
    August 2013: 13.7%
    February 2014: 17.7%

It can be understood that even though many are still experimenting and learning how best to use social media tools, these results indicate that marketers think social media marketing is here to stay and will play an increasingly important role in their work of acquiring and retaining customers in the future.

<u>Benefits of social media marketing:</u>

Significantly different from conventional marketing strategies, Social Media Marketing (social media marketing) offers three distinct advantages. One, it provides a window to marketers to not only present products / services to customers but also to listen to customers' grievances and suggestions. Two, it makes it easy for marketers to identify various peer groups or influencers among various groups, who in turn can become brand evangelist and help in organic growth of a brand. And, three, all this is done at nearly zero cost (as compared to conventional customer outreach programs) as most of the social networking sites are free. Social media marketing helps in:

- Generating exposure to businesses.
- Increasing traffic/subscribers.
- Building new business partnerships.
- Rise in search engine rankings.
- Generating qualified leads due to better lead generation efforts.
- Selling more products and services.
- Reduction in overall marketing expenses.

Companies are investing increasingly in social media marketing to get in touch with their customers. They are indulging in constant interaction with their prospects in order to understand their needs and hence make products better. It's the best way to learn from your customers about their needs and your own shortcomings. However, social media marketing is a very personalized way of advertising and promotions can be targeted only to particular groups which are interested in a particular domain, quite unlike conventional advertising.

Understanding the Relevance of Social Media in Marketing:

The role of social media in marketing is to use it as a communication tool that makes the companies accessible to those interested in their product and makes them visible to those that don't know their product. It should be used as a tool that creates a personality behind their brand and creates relationships that they otherwise may never gain. This creates not only repeat-buyers, but customer loyalty. Fact is social media is so diversified that it can be used in whatever way best suits the interest and the needs of the business.

According to 2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, a majority of marketers (56%) are using social media for 9 hours or more each week, and nearly one in three invest 11 or more hours weekly. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs were the top four social media tools used by marketers, in order. A significant 81% of marketers plan on increasing their use of blogs. A majority of the marketers are employing social media for marketing purposes and small businesses were slightly more likely to use social media. 76% of marketers are spending at least 4 hours each week on their social media marketing efforts.

In the present context, it is increasingly becoming pertinent for companies to (1) build a favorable base of consumers, and (2) involve them in decision making. According to Softpedia, during the last quarter of 2013, 86 percent of online retailers in US had a Facebook page. It was expected that this figure would reach 99 percent very soon. During this same period, e-marketer pointed that 65 percent of its surveyed online retailers were active on Twitter. Another 26percent were planning to incorporate Twitter in their plans. E-marketer projects that by 2014, 91percent of online retailers will be Twitter ready and all of them will have a Facebook page. Presently, greater than 700 thousands businesses have an active Facebook page. And around80 thousand web portals are Facebook Connected presently.

Social media gives marketers a voice and a way to communicate with peers, customers and potential consumers. It personalizes the "brand" and helps you to spread the message in a relaxed and conversational way. Adult beverage companies, exotic automobile

manufacturers, pastry shops have been using social media tool. Pepsi Coke, Nokia and many of the top brands have effectively used social media for achieving their business objectives. Few companies that have become involved in social media are:

- *Absolute Vodka*- Online Video on YouTube and Using Facebook to house their Top Bartender page.
- *BMW*- Utilizing Facebook to promote their 1-Series Road Trip and they have created a Rampen-fest Page for fans.
- *Dunkin Donuts*- They has found value in social media and have set up a micro-blogging Twitter account.
- *General Motors*- GM leverages the social media to improve the online equity of its brand and make consumers feel more connected.

Until recent past, social media effectively served as another customer outreach activity of organizations – essentially building brand awareness and generating leads. However, trends are now changing towards utilizing social media for positively impacting sales. A mindset shift towards making social media a committed engagement channel is already underway. Analysis by Wetpaint and Altimeter – engagementdb.com, concurs that the most successful companies on social platforms were maintaining profiles on 7 or more channels.

The Pervasiveness of Social Media:

Social media is no more a fancy term; its popularity can be deduced from the findings of the latest PEW Research – as much as 70 percent of the economically active population is well entrenched in to the social media space. Similar statistics, albeit from a different source –
e-Marketer further corroborates this notion; 46 percent of people in age group of 44 – 62 years and around 61 percent under category 27 to 43 years are socially networked.

Role of social media in marketing:

Social media is now increasingly becoming an ingrained aspect of political campaigns, national defense strategies, public policy, public relations, brand management and even intra company communication. Since the major task of marketing as tool used to inform consumers about the company's products, who they are and what they offer, social marketing plays an important role in marketing.

Social media can be used to provide an identity about the companies and the products or services that they offer. Social media helps in creating relationships with people who might not otherwise know about the products or service or what the companies represent. Social media makes companies "real" to consumers. If they want people to follow them they need not just talk about the latest product news, but share their personality with them. Social media can be used to associate themselves with their peers that may be serving the same target market. Social media can be used to communicate and provide the interaction that consumers look for.

Why businesses need to consider social media marketing services?

- ➢ *Size:* Facebook has over 250 million users globally. On an average, 70-100 tweets happen by the second. An average user on Facebook has 120 friends. This is the kind of enormity Social networking sites espouse and with this comes the license to communicate powerfully. But when such large numbers are involved, there is a danger of something going wrong and when it does, it happens in a big way. An expert should be hired to do what is best for business.

- ➢ *Transparency:* No cheat code involved. No black hat techniques allowed. Everything that happens in the social networking landscape is fool proof. Companies cannot fake authenticity in an attempt to get more people involved. Members can choose to associate with the company or opt out. Opinions made on social networking platforms are taken seriously and the more authoritative the companies get, more seriously they are taken.

- ➢ *Reach:* It is possible to make mark globally and do it quickly using social networking sites.

- *Boost website traffic:* Social media is probably the fastest and easiest means of redirecting traffic to company's website. By simply placing their website URL in their profile, the company can have all their profile visitors check out their website and a percentage of traffic is sure to get converted in course of time. This is the virtual way version of "word-of mouth".

- *Branding:* Buying a candy may have been impulsive all your life, but if it is discussed one social networking site, there is likely to get brand conscious even a candy. Social media is a smart way to build brands. Social media platforms are known to be one of the most powerful and fast means of branding. Some of the big brands like Coke, Ford, Dell, IBM, Burger King are some of the well-known brands have powerfully used social media platforms to endorse themselves.

Barriers to Implementation of Social Media at companies:

On the other hand, social media use scenario is more encouraging at small businesses. According to the State of Small Business Report, social media usage by small businesses increased from 12 percent to 24 percent in the last year. Further, almost 20 percent of small businesses actively employ social media as an integral part of the marketing strategy. In fact small businesses are currently allocating 6% of their marketing budgets to social media. It is expected that this is expected to reach 10 percent by 2014 and further to around 18 percent over the next 5 years. Some of the findings from the survey are particularly encouraging from *business via social media* point of view, these include:

- 75 percent of small businesses have presence on a social networking site
- 54 percent are monitoring feedbacks
- 69 percent post updates or interesting articles on social media sites

Those are some mind boggling numbers, especially after the viewing the depth of social media penetration across big companies. But what is most striking from the two surveys is the fact that while nearly 70 percent of Fortune 100 companies are virtually inactive. However, a similar percentage of small businesses are buzzing with activity on social media. Nonetheless statistics aside, it is high time, that businesses, irrespective of their size have a social media plan that has3 C's in it, via (1) a *Company-wide* engagement

strategy that (2) ensures *Conversations* with consumers, and (3) *Causes* user loyalty across social networks.

Social Media Marketing in India - An Overview

India has 71 million active internet users. Social Media is really picking up new heights in India. According to the 2012 Regus Global Survey of business social networking, India tops the usage of social networking by business – it has the highest activity index, 127, far more than theUS'97, and 52% of the Indian respondent companies said that they had acquired new customers using social networks while 35% American companies managed that. Many companies are coming big way for Social Media Optimization for their Product or Services nowadays. During Election 2009 Social Media was used for Influence Indian Voters. Social Media Marketing in India is being undertaken by brands like Tata DoCoMo, MTV India, Channel, Clear Trip, Tata Photon, Axe deodorants, Microsoft, Naukri, Shaadi and many more. Besides numerous Indian celebrities are also using social media marketing platform to promote their movies, music and events via Twitter, Facebook and personalized blogs. Social Media Marketing is also boosting public relations business. Several PR agencies in India are undertaking brand building exercises for corporate organizations, brands and celebrities. However, to the delight of many among us, the biggest gainers from social media marketing till date have been the organizations from the Not-for-Profit sector. Several Campaigns like 'Bell Bajao' and 'Jaago Re' have been quite successful on Social Networking Sites. These campaigns have been spreading the word about their cause through blogs, Twitter and Facebook.

Social Media Marketing Strategies:

Social media marketing is still in its infancy. Most of the online retailers though appreciate its positives fallouts on the brand awareness and promotion; they are still in the early stages of adoption. For an organization willing to invest in social media marketing, it is important to understand why social media marketing is an important marketing strategy and how it can help:

➢ This is the age of consumer satisfaction. It is not about selling it is more about interacting. There is a lot to learn from the customers. Using social media one

can identify customers, listen to their feedback and use them to improve and innovate on products or services.

➢ Social media marketing is not a mass advertising strategy. It can be used to identify peer groups and advertise to that particular group. Social Media can help in identifying influencers and through them one can guide a prospective customer into making a purchase.

➢ Social media marketing calls for novel advertising methods as the attention span of online *junta* is very low. This is largely due to the multitasking phenomena. A person watching a video clip on YouTube might be simultaneously updating a blog, while reading another one and watching friend's photographs on Facebook. In order to garner their attention away from distractions the advertisement must be innovative and interesting to hold the imagination and attention of the prospect.

➢ At the same time the message must also provoke the recipient into action; like seeking detailed description of the product/service, or suggesting to a friend, or initiating purchase. So, if the advertisement is trying to sell something then it should be conveniently placed with links so that the prospect can make a purchase with least effort.

➢ Similarly Social Media can be used to increase customer loyalty through customer support services and hence improve customer retention.

➢ Social Media Marketing can also be used by brands to ward off any negative publicity. But the brands will have to be cautious here as over doing it may further aggravate their customers/stakeholders.

Companies using traditional marketing methods (e.g. surveys, focus groups, test marketing) often spend millions to locate their target markets. Establishing a social media strategy will help them see where potential customers are hanging out. The companies can search for related groups and Fan Pages through Facebook, start accounts on social bookmarking sites such as Digg or StumbleUpon, and check on who is linking to your site to find out who's interested.

Social media gives businesses on small budgets the ability to find out what people are saying about them (and others) in their industry, without paying large sums on market research. With its ear to the ground on social media, the company will be the first to know if its product is working or if changes need to be made.

To successfully implement ones social media marketing strategy the following points must be kept in mind:

➢ The company shouldn't just jump on to the bandwagon just because others are jumping into it. The market should be analyzed first to understand whether their brand would really benefit from social media marketing. It should try and find out whether social media marketing strategies fit its brand.

➢ The company shouldn't expect results over night. Social media marketing is a long term strategy. It will not happen overnight. The results might become visible anywhere from three to six months.

➢ Social media marketing is not a standalone tool for marketing. It has to be used along with all the other conventional marketing strategies.

There are many things that social media can do for business. Developing a strategy for using it means that the firms need to think about what they want to accomplish this year and determine how social media fits into the plan. One of the benefits of a social media strategy is the fact that the available tools can customized for their particular needs. The firms can choose to concentrate their efforts on the sites that seem to offer the best return on investment, while taking a "wait and see" stand on the others.

Campaigns

➢ Britannia

Britannia Industries, the bakery and dairy major, has tied up with e-tailer Amazon India for a pilot launch of Good Day Chunkies, a new chocolate chip cookie, for 15 days. The offer is currently on and closes on 5th Dec'14, after which the product goes to offline (normal retail) stores.

Britannia is the first biscuit company in the country to leverage e-commerce for brand promotions, ahead of competitors such as Parle Products and Mondelez.

> ➢ Betty White

Social networking sites can have a large impact on the outcome of events. In 2010, a Facebook campaign surfaced in the form of a petition. Users virtually signed a petition asking NBC Universal to have actress Betty White host Saturday Night Live. Once signed, users forwarded the petition to all of their followers. The petition went viral and on May 8, 2010, Betty White hosted SNL.

> ➢ Local Businesses

Small businesses also use social networking sites as a promotional technique. Businesses can follow individuals social networking site uses in the local area and advertise specials and deals. These can be exclusive and in the form of "get a free drink with a copy of this tweet". This type of message encourages other locals to follow the business on the sites in order to obtain the promotional deal. In the process, the business is getting seen and promoting itself.

> ➢ Tactics Twitter

Twitter allows companies to promote products on an individual level. The use of a product can be explained in short messages that followers are more likely to read. These messages appear on followers' home pages. Messages can link to the product's website, Facebook profile, photos, videos, etc.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- Objective 1: To examine the extent, social media that helps consumers in buying decision making.
- Objective 2: To study the gap between consumer expectation from Social media and its performance.
- Objective 3: To develop a linear model for studying the impact upon positive reaction to online advertisements.

- Objective 4: To suggest strategies to bridge the gap between expectation and performance to improve its effectiveness.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this chapter is to present the literature that serves as the foundation of this study. In particular, the literature on social media marketing and the factors that drive companies' integration of social media in to the marketing practices is discussed.

2.1. The Development of Social Media Marketing

In recent years, social networking sites and social media have increased in popularity, at a global level. For instance, Facebook is said to have more than a billion active users (as of 2012) since its beginning in 2004 (www.facebook.com). Social networking sites can be described as networks of friends for social or professional interactions (Trusov, 2009). Indeed, online social networks have profoundly changed the propagation of information by making it incredibly easy to share and digest information on the internet (Akrimi, 2012).

The unique aspects of social media and its immense popularity have revolutionized marketing practices such as advertising and promotion (Laroche, 2012). Social media has also influenced consumer behavior from information acquisition to post-purchase behavior such as dissatisfaction statements or behaviors (Mangold, 2009) and patterns of Internet usage (Ross, 2009).

Social media is ''a group of internet based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and it allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content'' (Kaplan, 2010). Social media has many advantages as it helps connect businesses to consumers, develop relationships and foster those relationships in a timely manner and at a low cost (Kaplan, 2010).

Other functions of social media involve affecting and influencing perceptions, attitudes and end behavior (Williams, 2000), while bringing together different like-minded people.

In an online environment, (Laroche, 2012) pointed out that people like the idea of contributing, creating, and joining communities to fulfill needs of belongingness, being

socially connected and recognized or simply enjoying interactions with other like-minded members.

The much higher level of efficiency of social media compared to other traditional communication channels prompted industry leaders to state that companies must participate in Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and others, in order to succeed in online environments (Laroche, 2012). Thus, more industries try to benefit from social media as they can be used to develop strategy, accept their roles in managing others' strategy or follow others' directions (Williams, 2000). Social media websites provide an opportunity for companies to engage and interact with potential and current consumers, to encourage an increased sense of intimacy of the customer relationship, and build all important meaningful relationships with consumers (Mangold, 2009) especially in today's business environment when consumer loyalty can vanish at the smallest mistake, which can additionally have online propagation of their unfortunate encounter with a particular product, service, brand or company.

Some companies are beginning to take notice of the power of social media. A few corporate social networking websites already allow consumers to not only exchange information about products or services, but also engage in co-creating value in online experiences with offline outcomes, with both current and potential consumers.

2.2. Segmentation of Social Media Users

Following the general idea that segmentation can leverage a better understanding of consumers' behavior, and therefore a better targeting, in order to obtain the desired effect of any marketing activity, several studies have been employed to achieve a segmentation of consumers who interact online, particularly to examine their online shopping behavior(Vellido, 2000),investigated consumers' opinion on online purchasing and online vendors that seem to consist of the underlying dimensions ''control and convenience,'' ''trust and security,'' ''affordability,'' ''ease of use,'' and ''effort/responsiveness.'' Using these dimensions as a segmentation base discerns seven segments: ''unconvinced,'' ''security conscious,'' ''undecided,'' ''convinced,'' ''complexity avoiders,'' ''cost conscious,'' and ''customer service wary.''

Starting from consumers' motivations to use the Internet, (Mangold, 2009) segmented the Internet audience as ''avid adventurers,'' ''fact collectors,'' ''entertainment seekers,'' and ''social shoppers (Brengman, 2008) performed a cluster analysis based on seven factors, such as "Internet convenience", "perceived self-inefficacy", "Internet logistics", "Internet distrust", "Internet offer", "Internet window-shopping".

2.3.   Traditional Vs. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing as opposed to traditional media marketing can provide interactive, innovative, novel, and dynamic communication processes among organizations, between the organizations and the consumers and among consumers. Through social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Pinterest), consumers can interact with the organizations and with each other, influence and be influenced through posting comments and products reviews, and create WOM.

McAllister and Turow (McAllister, 2002) noted that social media offer three essential elements that differentiate these media from traditional media. There is the ability of social media to empower consumers to access, send, transform, create, and store materials online. Similarly, the Internet has sophisticated software that can track, sort, and predict user activity through intelligent agents. This allows social media marketers to analyse consumers' conversations through discussion forums that are open to the public. While, for example, a consumer may be involved in a discussion about a specific sports hobby in a dedicated chat forum, the chat transcription can be stored for content analysis that can help in the creation of a custom advertising message targeted to that specific forum or individual.

These allow the social media ability to create a real-time, two-way interaction between the senders and the receivers of messages. The ongoing and instantaneous capacity by which communicators connect is a strong advantage of social media. Examples of this capacity include consumers' reviewing products online and, thus, instantaneously promoting brands through various social networks teenagers' sharing videos; and individuals' from all over the world reviewing trending topics over Twitter. Pickren (Pickren, 2010) noted the instant gratification that marketers obtain from this form of

marketing. Marketers can use forums and trending messages to determine how their messages were received, and the impact of social media campaigns can be experienced and recorded in a simultaneous manner. Pickren stated that social media marketing offers the highest return rate, and in a faster time frame, in terms of marketing campaigns.

The third, as McAllister and Turow explained, is the ability of the commercial Web to allow for expansion in a synergistic marketing communication. *Synergistic marketing communication*, a term coined in the 1990s, is the intended use of different media outlets and advertising campaigns to facilitate the marketing of products. Such communication involves the development of strategies in regard to the type and variety of channels that can be used. The systematic use of various promotional outfits, which takes research and planning, is done to send a consistent message about the company's brand among different target audiences. In the context of the study, this concept relates to the need to identify the extent of the investments of companies into the relatively new field of social media marketing which, in turn, calls for them to further understand social media marketing.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

'Research' means a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. Research is a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. Research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.

'Methodology' is defined as the study of methods by which we gain knowledge; it deals with cognitive processes imposed on research by the problems arising from the nature of its subject matter.

3.1. Need for the Study

This study was based on the acknowledgment of the growing importance of internet marketing, the important role that social media play in the marketing and sales process, and the access to a large-scale market that is never as open or as complicated. In this research, the experiences of the executives and consumes interviewed may provide other business owners, marketing professionals, and researchers with important information and suggestions to help them to make more informed decisions in the social media realm. The results of this study also will contribute to the literature by expanding the body of knowledge of social media marketing and its implementation.

Further, ROI might have a different meaning when associated with marketing online. As such, this study shed light on the concept of social return on investment (SROI), which calls for the retailers' ability to quantify this form of return on marketing investments. It is in this context that this study presented the ground work for an integrated marketing approach using social media. By identifying the decision-making tools that companies use in online marketing, this study illustrated how companies approach social media marketing.

3.2. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study involved developing a description of the role that social media plays in marketing, the goals of businesses in regard to their use of social media marketing, the social media marketing strategies and tools used by their search participants, and the metrics that participants used to determine the effectiveness of their social media marketing campaigns.

3.3. Key Assumptions

The researcher assumed that, due to the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected, and taking into consideration that there search participants were volunteers, all respondents were truthful in sharing their personal interpretations, experiences, and knowledge in regard to the field of social media marketing. Nevertheless, representatives of some companies may not have been willingto fully share their approaches to social media marketing.

3.4. Data Collection

Data refers to information or facts. It includes numerical figures, non-numerical figures, descriptive facts, and qualitative and quantitative information. The task of data collection begins after a research problem has been defined and research plan has been decided. The nature of the data is both Primary and Secondary data.

Primary Data

The primary data are those that are collected through questionnaire and direct personal interview. The questionnaire was framed in such a manner to obtain correct information, graded suitably for the study. All the questionnaires were collected through personal contact from the respondents.

Secondary Data

The secondary data consists of information that already existing somewhere having been collected for another purpose. Any researcher begins the research work by first going

through secondary data. Secondary data includes the information available with company. It may be the findings of research previously done in the field. Secondary data can also be collected from the magazines, newspapers, internet other service conducted by researchers.

Secondary data has been collected through oral communication. Secondary data about the company profile and other details were collected from the company website.

3.5. Sample Design

Stratified sampling has been used in this study. Stratified sampling is used for selection of homogeneous sample for the study. It refers to selecting a sample of study objects on defining strata, which are appropriate for the parameters to be studied. It is a non-probability sampling. Due to time and resource constraints the sample size has been taken as 90 for customer and 60 for marketers.

3.6. Tools of Data Collection

Marketing research tools give businesses the ability to monitor customers' reactions to their products, measure the impact of their marketing decisions and create an open communication loop with their customers. This useful information allows them to make informed decisions on their businesses, such as whether to launch new products or remove product lines and in which marketing activities they should invest the most time and money.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case. A good questionnaire should not be too lengthy. Simple English should be used and the question shouldn't be difficult to answer. A good questionnaire requires sensible language, editing, assessment, and redrafting.

Questionnaire Design Process

1. State the information required- This will depend upon the nature of the problem, the purpose of the study and hypothesis framed. The target audience must be concentrated on.
2. State the kind of interviewing technique- interviewing method can be telephone, mails, personal interview or electronic interview. Telephonic interview can be computer assisted. Personal interview can be conducted at respondent's place or at mall or shopping place.
3. Decide the matter/content of individual questions.
4. Overcome the respondents' inability and unwillingness to answer.
5. Decide on the structure of the question.
6. Properly arrange the questions- To determine the order of the question, take decisions on aspects like opening questions, type of information, effect on subsequent questions, logical sequence, etc.
7. Recognize the form and layout of the questionnaire.
8. Reproduce the questionnaire.
9. Pre-test the questionnaire.
10. Finalize the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

The data after collection has to be simplified and analysed in accordance with the background defined for the purpose. This is a vital step for a study and for assuring that we have the relevant data. Processing involves editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data so that it is accepted for analysis. The term analysis refers to a systematic process of examining and evaluating data or information, by breaking it into its contributing parts to discover their interrelationships. Thus in the process of analysis, relationships of differences supporting or conflicting with original or new hypothesis should be subjected to statistical tests of significance to determine with what validity data can be said to indicate any conclusions (Gatignon, 2010). Analysis of data in a general way involves a number of closely related operations and functions that are performed with the purpose of organising and summarizing the collected data in such a manner that answer the research questions.

4.1. Introduction to the case

The digital age and, in particular the Internet, has transformed the way that consumer performs their research, discover, share, and shop. Further, the Internet has paved the way for a new face of marketing; Social Media Marketing. The Internet has been one of the most rapidly growing and changing media of all time; related to such growth are social media marketing and an increase in associated spending on advertising. It has been projected that spending on social media marketing would surpass $4billion by 2016. In this regard, it was expressed the need for marketers to evaluate the impact of social media marketing practices on revenue to justify the various e-sources that companies allocate to its use (Balwani, 2009). Additionally, the recent development of the social media phenomenon created a research gap in terms of a lack of an understanding of how companies exploit various social media platforms in marketing and measure the effectiveness of their social media marketing campaigns. It was thus necessary to examine the evolution of marketing strategies and learn what benefits if any, social media can bring to marketing.

4.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study is based on Descriptive Research Design. A questionnaire was designed; it was divided into three parts. First part of the questionnaire contains information regarding demographics and usage pattern of social media of the respondents. Second part has series of close-ended indirect questions which are based on impact of social media in making consumer buy a product and expectation from such media. Simultaneously, another part has series of questions for entrepreneurs/marketers, which are based on the practices they are following related to activities followed by them on social platforms. The survey was conducted online through social networking sites and responses of 150 people were collected. The questionnaire was designed on Google docs and was circulated to users through various social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc. The respondents on different social networking sites were also requested to post the link from their profiles. So the sampling technique used was non-probability convenience sampling. We used Regression Analysis and Chi Square Test for testing of hypothesis. For graphical representation of finding and results bar charts, pie charts and tables etc. has been used.

Variable*	Classification	Total N (%)
Gender	Male	71
	Female	79
Age	Less than 18	0
	18-24	68
	25-39	72
	40-60	10

Table4.1: Profile of Respondents (*at 95% the two variables are significantly different).
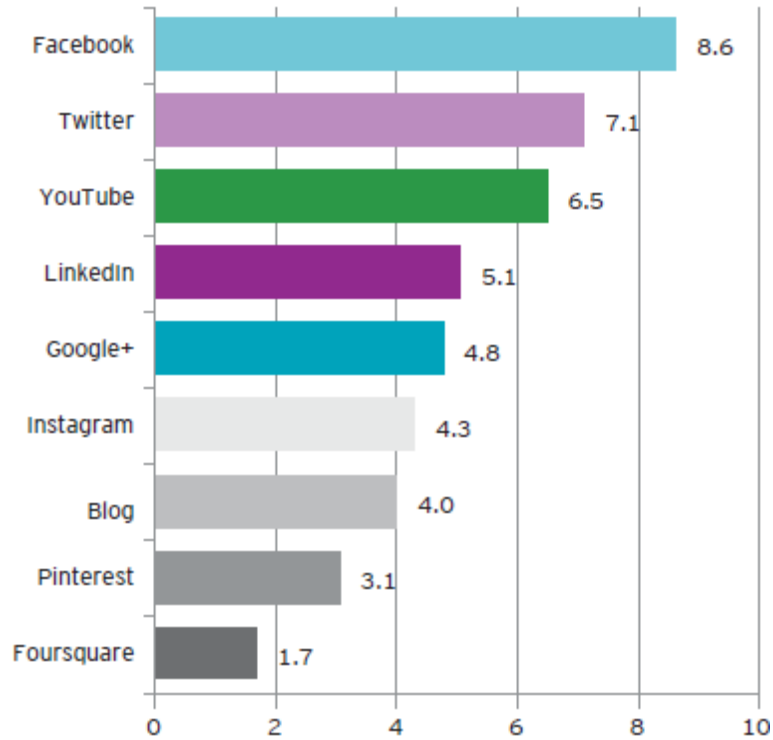
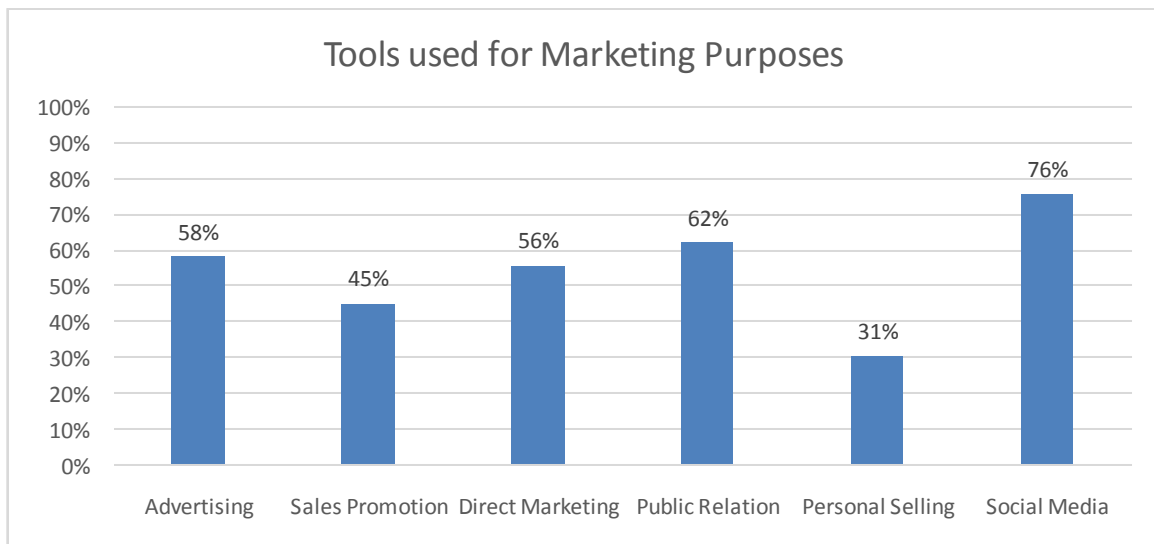Figure4.1: Chart showing preferred social platforms by consumers.

Figure4.2: Chart showing channels of communications for marketing by various marketers.

Entrepreneurs and various marketers were given the 5 elements of the Marketing Communication Mix together with Social Media, to identify the marketing communication elements which are still being used for marketing purposes. Figure 4.2depicts that 76% of the marketers agreed that Social Media is the most used tool

followed by public relations and advertising. Further to that 54% of them were of the opinion that the Social Media industry in India is at the same level as in other countries. Customers were asked if companies should use Social Media for marketing purposes; of the 87.6% of the customers who agreed that companies should use Social Media, only 39% agreed that it should be used for marketing purposes. Customers were then asked if they were fans of companies' Social Media profile; this was done to evaluate if companies/products were reaching out to customers. Results showed that only 50.7% of the customers are fans to Social Media profiles.

	Variable	Total N
Motivation to follow a Brand or Join a Brand page	Brand invitation/Advertising	68
	Friend's invitation	52
	Personal research	32
	Loyalty towards the brand	44

Table4.2: Motivational factors to follow a Brand/Product.

The factors motivating consumers to join or follow a brand on social platforms vary from person to person. The main reason behind this practice is through brand invitation/ advertising followed by a friend's invite. The explorative nature of consumes (look around method) also plays an important role, thus it is imperative for brands to be found if consumers search for them. Brand loyalty also motivates consumers to follow a brand on the social networking platform. Brand loyalists are consumers who will advocate a certain brand and promote word-of-mouth about it among their peer groups. This free word-of-mouth marketing for the brands and is often very effective.

Social networking sites are a new form of customer relationship management (to receive unique deals and offers) tool where the consumer wants to feel privileged. The attachment to brand is a dynamo to promote the brands. Public demonstration of affection for the brand; showcasing what you like; and defending the brand's values play

an important role in generating advocacy. The desire to engage with the brand either through dialog with the brand's representatives or with other consumers reaches an interesting level.

Objective 1: To examine the extent of social media that helps consumers'in buying decision making.

Initially, advertising had a significant impact on the consumer decision making process, and word of mouth had a greater impact on consumer buying decisions, but pre-social platforms, word of mouth just didn't travel very far. The impact of social media on awareness, brand attitudes, and social norms is so strong, which is often referred as viral marketing or buzz marketing to reflect tactics designed to stimulate positive word of mouth, with most people spending more than an hour online! The below chart depicts very clearly that how much it is important for the marketers to exploit the situation by making workable marketing strategies.
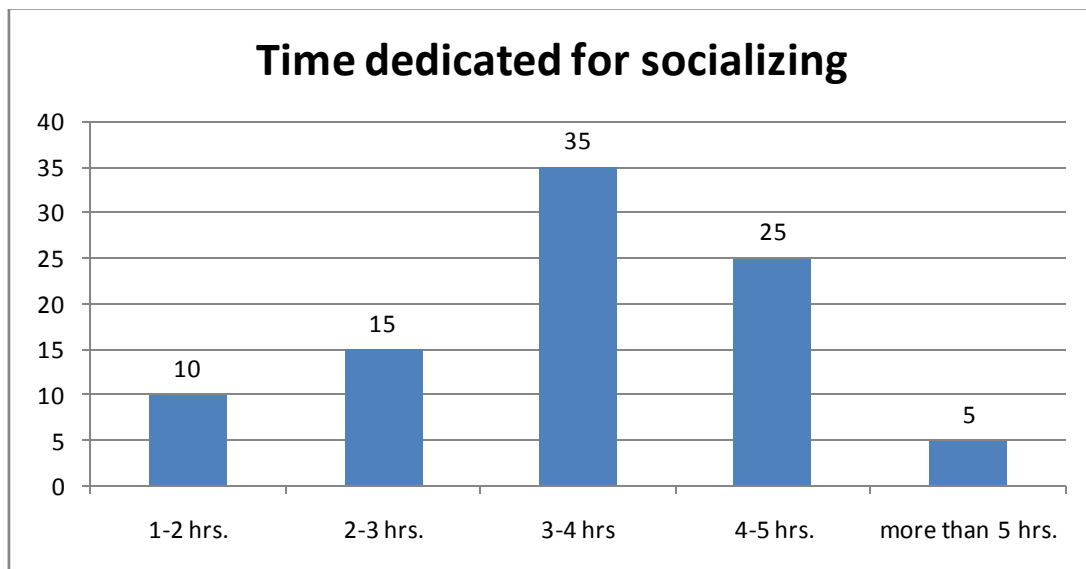
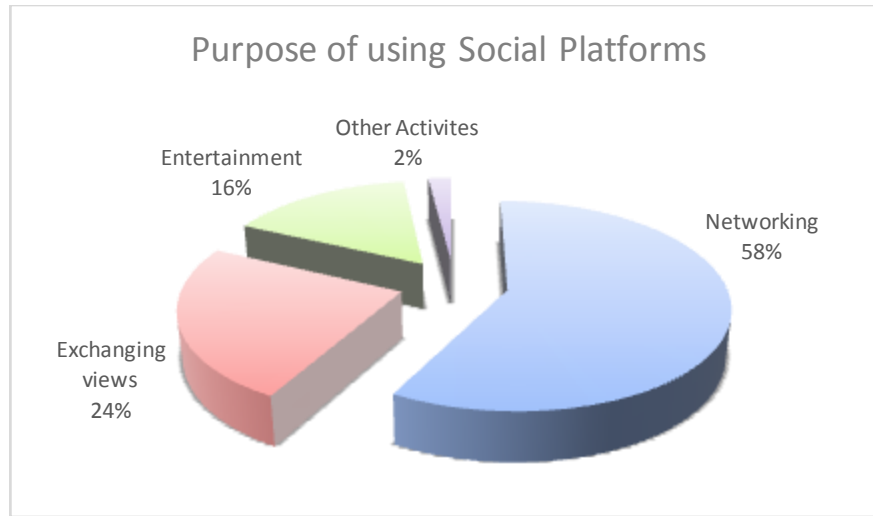Figure4.3: Time spent on social networking per day by consumers.

Figure4.4: User Trend of using social platforms.

Social media contributed people in retrieving connection with long lost friends. This is evident with 58% respondents in the survey using such platform to connect with friends, while 24% respondents believe in exchanging their views and experiences on various products/services and others apart from just playing games and participating in contests (16%).

So, here marketers have plenty of opportunity to communicate with their targets and offer them their products/services to persuade them to transact and become loyal customer for them. It has been a fast growing platform for brands in all the sectors related with customer management. It acts as an efficient tool as it is the best way to reach out market segment without incurring huge cost.

Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-18.312	.000			
	To get Information About Product Service	.622	.000	.979	.334.	.739
	To Find Friends Review	1.474	.000	2.629	-2.030.	.044
	To Get Exclusive Offers	.679	.000	1.308	1.416	.159
	To Interact With Brand	-1.097	.000	-2.338	-2.030 .	.044

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Decision

Table4.3: Regression Analysis for determining dependency on buying decision.
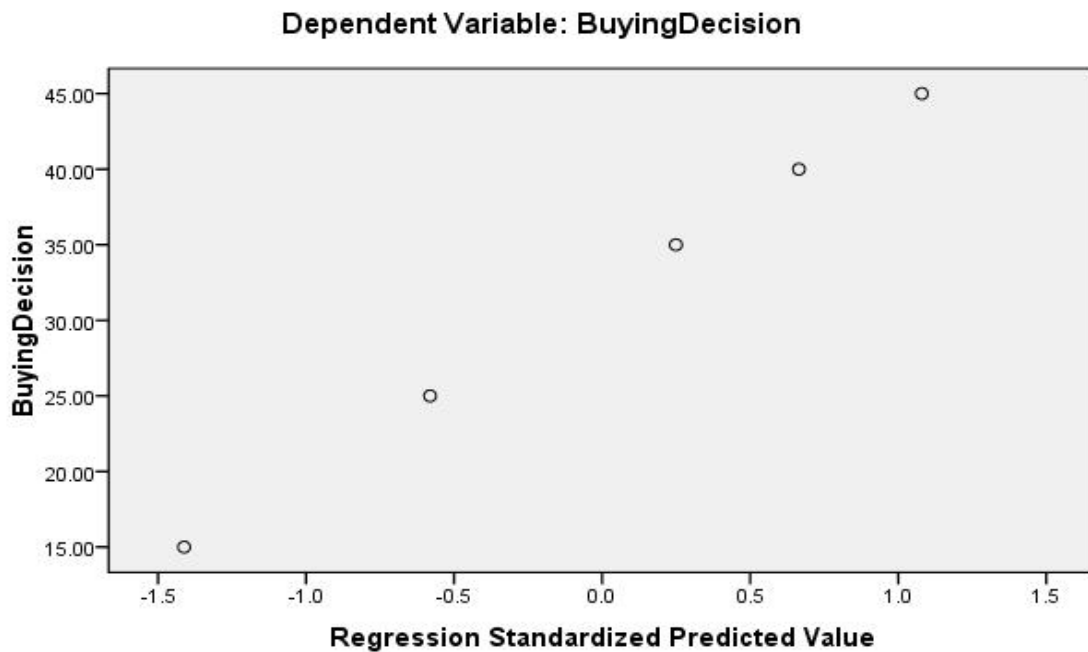
Figure4.5: Scatter Plot.

Test of regression was performed to study the relationship between Buying Decision - the motivational factor of individuals (dependent variable) and the suggestions that explain why individuals follow a brand on social networking sites as independent variables.

Since two independent factors are showing significant values, i.e.to has friend's review on certain products/services/brands and to interact with brands, having 0.044 as their significance on the dependent variable. Hence it indicates the more the companies

should instigate individuals to talk about their brands/ products the more the chances that consumer will get persuaded towards the products/brands and will try to look more about the product/brand in order to make purchase decision.

$$Y = 1.474A - 1.097B - 18.312$$

Where,

Y = Buying Decision

A = to find friend's review

B = to interact with brands

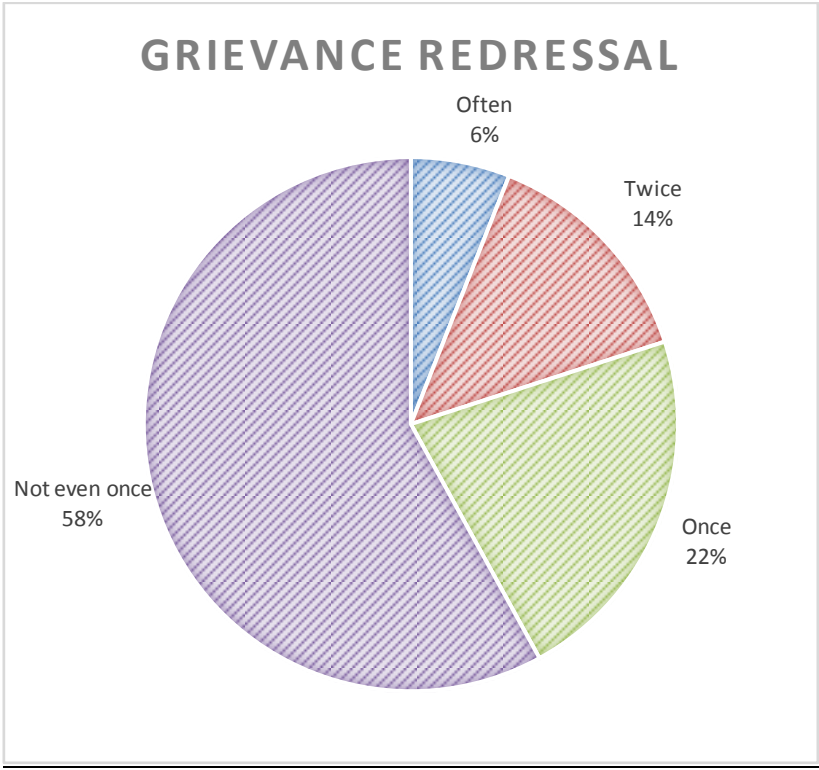Objective 2: To study the gap between consumer expectation from Social media and its performance.

Figure4.6: Grievance Redressed Distribution.

As depicted from the above figure, social media platforms are not good on grievance redressed for consumers. It means that consumers do not get addressed by brands when they seek any solution for their complaints over these social networks. At the same time

it has been found during surveys that they (consumers) are not getting what they expect out of the posts on the brand's page, such as incomplete or misleading content. In some of the cases very inappropriate and implicit information are being provided.
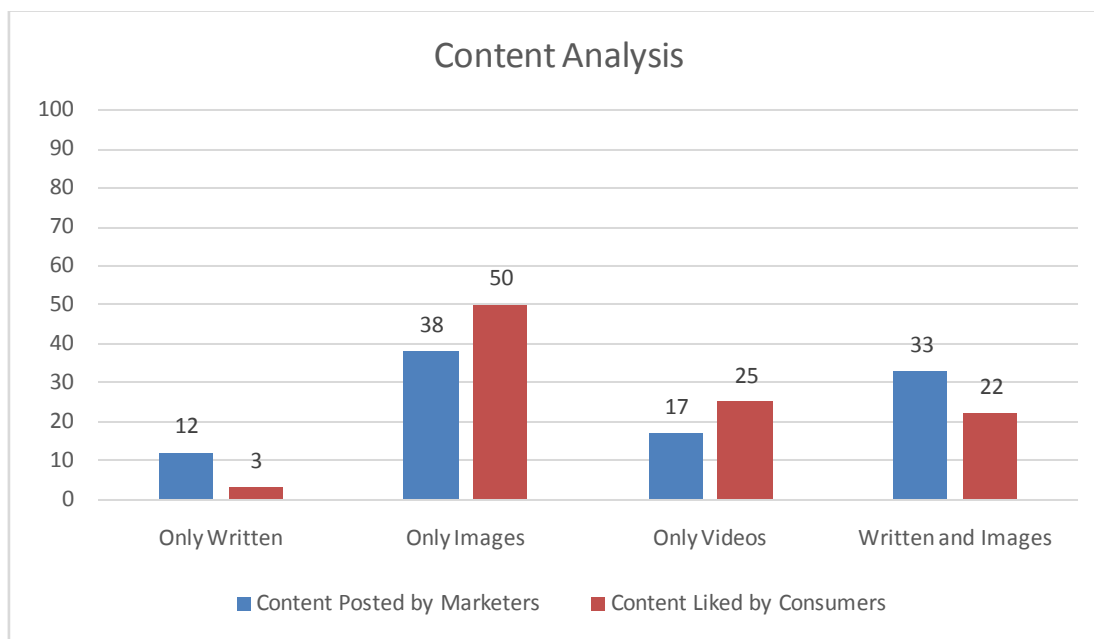

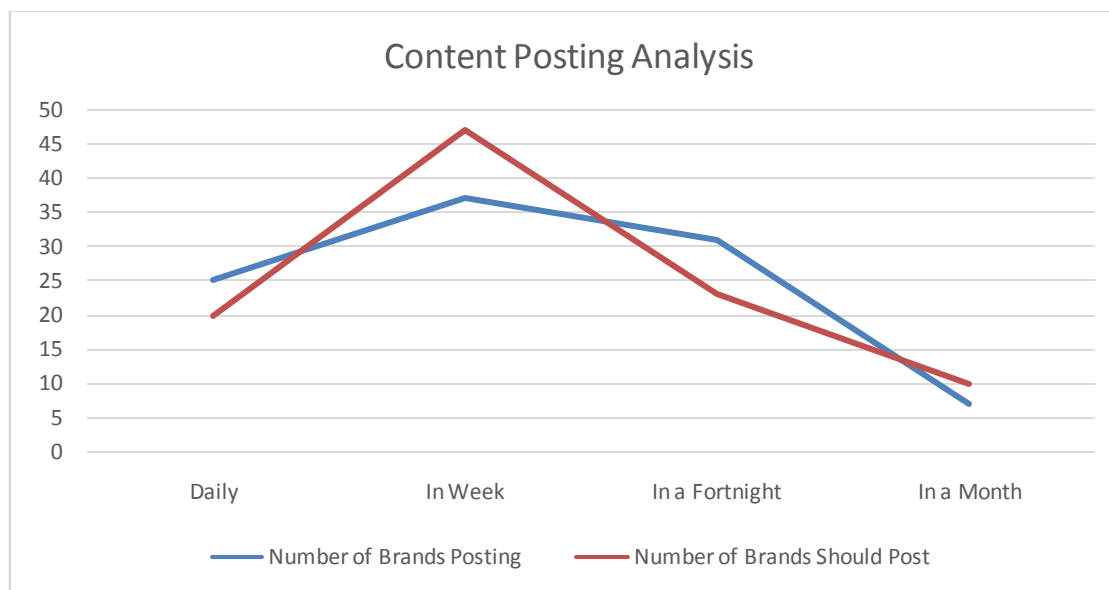Figure4.7: Comparative Analysis of content posted and liked.

Figure4.8: Comparative study of frequency of content posting by brands with expected posts by consumer.

On comparative study of content posted by brands and content expected by consumers, there has been a gap by the researcher. According to the above presented figures, the

type of content most liked by consumers are images followed by videos, while marketers posts majority of content in form of images followed by articles with some images, which shows that there is over focus on image description than required. Similarly, the frequency of posts should be weekly according to consumers' interests rather than daily or fortnightly or monthly posts. Over or under posts results in lack of following by consumers, thus decrease in social popularity of a brand/product/service by prospected customers.

Objective 3: To develop a linear model for studying the impact upon positive reaction of consumers and online advertisement.

Respondents had positive response regarding seasonal/special offers on internet. To determine the relationship between age of the respondents and special/seasonal offers in web advertisements, Chi-Square Test was conducted. Test statistics shows that there is significant difference between the two variables. Since majority of the sample size consists of respondents of age group between 18-30years hence it can be inferred that young respondents are more attracted towards seasonal or special offers. Also it was found that gender has no relation with seasonal offers. Respondents' reaction was mixed regarding price & quality of the products/services offered online 35% of the respondents agreed regarding fair price & 31% on quality of products/services offered, while 28% disagreed on the former & 33% on the later. 37% & 36% of the respondents had a neutral view on the two attributes respectively.

Test Statistics: Age Study		
	Age	Special/Seasonal Offers
Chi-Square	80.400	29.733
DOF	4	4
Sig.Level	.000	.000
Shows that the reassign if i can't difference between age of the respondents and special/seasonal offers.		

Test Statistics: Gender Study		
	Gender	special/seasonal Offers
Chi-Square	0.120	29.733
DOF	1	4
Sig.Level	0.729	.000
Shows that gender has no relation with seasonal offers.		

Table4.4: Relation between Age and Gender with positive reaction of online advertisement using Chi Square Test.

QUALITY

- Highly Agree, 10%
- Agree, 21%
- Neutral, 36%
- Disagree, 21%
- Highly Disagree, 12%

FAIR PRICE

- Highly Agree, 16%
- Agree, 19%
- Neutral, 37%
- Disagree, 20%
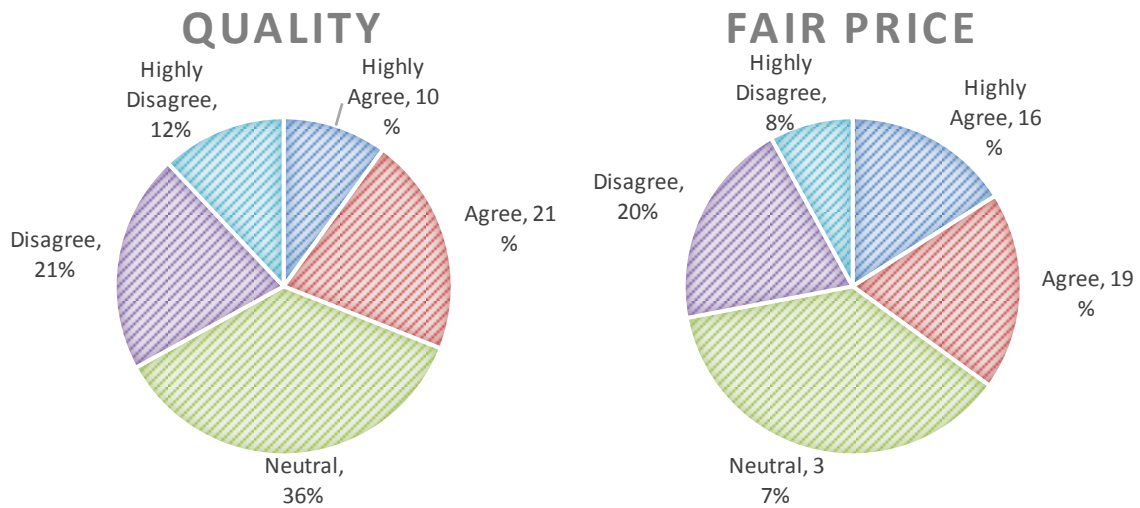- Highly Disagree, 8%

Figure4 9: Charts depicting consumers' behaviour for acceptance of quality and fair prices.

<u>Objective 4: To suggest strategies to bridge the gap between expectation and performance to improve its effectiveness.</u>

Social media platforms have a remarkable potential to attract consumers with just an idea, and they can lead your possibility and consumers to valuable content located on your website. Simultaneously, your website can spur guests to engage with your product/brand by prominently linking to the social media profile. In order to achieve this goal the following steps can be undertaken:

1. Reshape your website to support your Social Media Strategy.
2. Identify the Actions you want your consumers to take.
3. Execute the changes.
4. Provide the Content your Visitors Want.
5. Consistency in communication should be maintained.
6. Promote through Advertisements.
7. Use your internet properties to attract prospects to take the actions you are targeting.

For a continuous relation with your consumers, your marketing efforts must follow a series of tasks which delights and converts your prospects by following these steps, which must be integrated in social media marketing strategy.

a) Purpose of content should be well defined.

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b) Different types of media should be used in the content.

c) Non-probabilistic should be offered.

d) Follow-up should be ensured.

e) Sharing of media or content should be encouraged.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Findings and Recommendations

There is almost no variability among the social media network users on the basis of gender. It has been found that younger people are adopting social media like anything and with a pace that was never before in the past. It has also been found that almost every social media users who were respondent in this case use to go to brand pages to learn more about the product/services, to learn about the exclusive offers, to find the reaction of their friends and peer on the selected brands. The affectivity of social media as a marketing tool will only be possible when organisation having their presence on social media provide the concrete and timely information needed by the consumers. The main way fans come to join/ follow a brand page/ brand on social networking sites is through advertising followed by a friend invitation.

Buying Decision also plays an important role in motivation towards brand following on the social networking platforms. The desire to engage with the brand either through dialog with the brand's representatives or with other consumers (business to consumer + consumer to consumer communication) leads to advocacy and loyalty towards the brand and such consumer starts working as a brand ambassador of the product/service. The brand following over the social networking sites is converted into brand purchase either through offline or online buying channel if the marketing strategies would be designed by keeping in mind the perception and expectations of the consumers.

Consumer does research with search engines to locate their product/service and brand of interest. With more networks are more likely to gather opinions through their online network, read blogs and query the Twitter channel as early steps in the decision making process.

There is a gap between consumer expectations and actual delivery at social networking websites; Consumers don not get the information timely and adequately. The questions are not being answered by the brand pages in the speculative time frame of consumer. The consumers also do not perceive social media networks in general and brand pages in

particular as a grievance redressed platform because the brands are not promptly responding to the issues raised by the consumers.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

The present study is subjected to following limitation:

1. The sampling was restricted only to online medium. Hence the study might not be representing the general customer behaviour as life style differs from person to person.
2. The sample unit was only 150 respondents (90 customers and 60 marketers).
3. Time constraint in the study, the period was for 20 days only.
4. Cost constraint.

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ANNEXURE

Annexure -1: Questionnaire:

Figure A.1: First part of the floated questionnaire.

Social Media As a Marketing Strategy

Consumer Side

Why do you use social platforms? *

○ Networking

○ Exchanging Views

○ Entertainment

○ Other

Are you a fan of any brand page? *

○ Yes

○ No

Why do you follow a brand? *

☐ To get Information About Product/ Service

☐ To find friend's review

☐ To get exclusive offers

☐ To interact with friends

Should a company have it's page over social platforms? *

○ Yes

○ No

Figure A.2: Consumer side (Part 1) of the questionnaire.

Should they use for marketing purpose? *

○ Yes

○ No

What motivates you to follow a brand/product? *

☐ Brand Invitation / Advertising

☐ Friend's Invitation

☐ Personal Research

☐ Brand Loyal

What are your preferences for a social networking platform? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Facebook	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Instagram	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
YouTube	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pinterest	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Foursquare	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Blog	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Figure A.3: Consumer side (Part 2) of the questionnaire.

What do you prefer? *

	Highly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree
Quality	○	○	○	○	○
Fair Pirce	○	○	○	○	○

How many times your grievances has been redressed? *

○ Often

○ Twice

○ Once

○ Not even once

What type of content you like to see/share? *

○ Only Images

○ Only Videos

○ Articles with Images

○ Only written Article

How frequently you visit your followed brands' page? *

○ Daily

○ In a week

○ In a fortnight

○ In a month

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Figure A.4: Consumer side (Part 3) of the questionnaire.

Social Media As a Marketing Strategy

* Required

Marketer Side

Do you think SMM in India is comparable to rest of the world? *

○ Yes

○ No

Why do you use social platforms? *

○ Networking

○ Exchanging Views

○ Marketing

○ Other

What do you use out of the following for marketing your brand/product? *

☐ Advertising

☐ Sales Promotion

☐ Direct Marketing

☐ Public Relation

☐ Personal Selling

☐ Social Media

Figure A.5: Marketer side (Part 1) of the questionnaire.

What do you use out of the following for marketing your brand/product? *

☐ Advertising

☐ Sales Promotion

☐ Direct Marketing

☐ Public Relation

☐ Personal Selling

☐ Social Media

What type of content you like to see/share? *

○ Only Images

○ Only Videos

○ Articles with Images

○ Only written Article

How frequently you visit your followed brands' page? *

○ Daily

○ In a week

○ In a fortnight

○ In a month

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Figure A.6: Marketer side (Part 2) of the questionnaire.