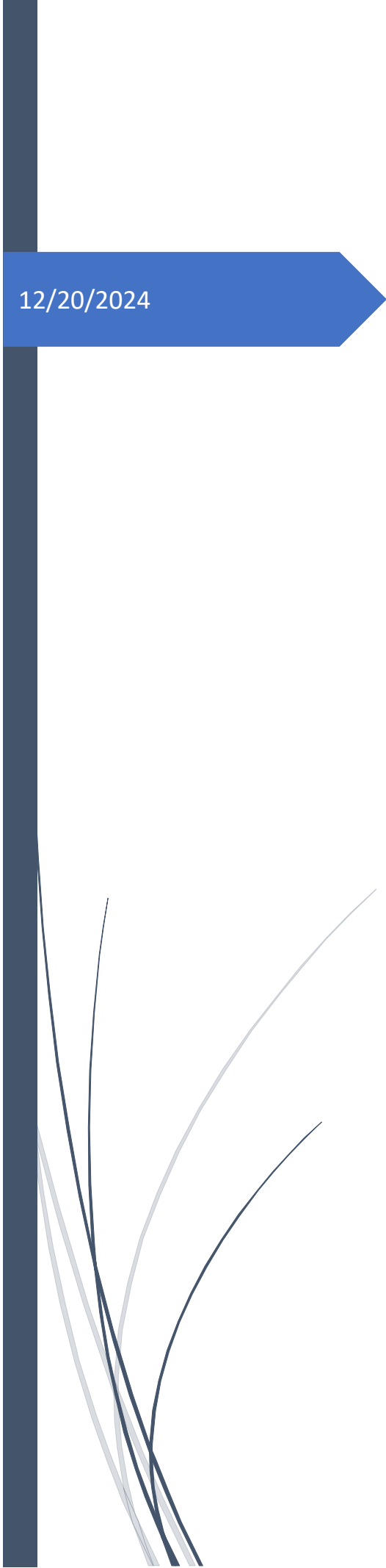




12/20/2024

How social and digital media can be used to reach a wider customer base

MODULE NAME: DIGITAL SKILLS

MODULE CODE: LCLM 4002

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Introduction

This report will outline what social and digital media is and how it can affect and increase a customer base. Social Media is 'the set of interactive Internet applications that facilitate creation, curation, and sharing of user-generated content' (Davis, 2016 ppt. 1)

This will also cover what social media is, how social media intertwines with everyday life. The different ways to utilise social media and the advantages, as well as disadvantages of using digital media.

Overview of Social Media

Social media is software that helps you utilise the web and help people, share, create and socialise online. You can build friendships, and relationships, interact with people from all over the world. Every user can use social platforms differently and share ideas with one another (the institution of engineering and technology, 2015). Social media has completely changed how we function in the modern world and has mainly positively impacted us over the recent years. It has become so mixed with our lives that we cannot function without this and has become the baseline of living and working in our daily lives.

Advertising

Marketing is the process of designing a product, pricing and then distributing the product to promote a company (Iwu, 2009). Social media has made advertising much more convenient and cost-friendly. Before social media, people would need to use newspapers and word of mouth to promote their businesses. This meant their adverts had only reached a certain area of people. Since the introduction of social media, this has never been easier. People will be able to search for your products in the comfort of their homes. Social media can be accessed by people all over the world, therefore giving you more audience traffic and a wider base of operations, the more customers you could reach the better chance of selling your brand.

Influencers

Being able to work with those who have built a follower base already can help your business. This is because depending on the influencer, you can have those who follow influencers to visit your business and buy your products, this can also help build a customer relationship.

Feedback

Using digital media to show your products can also show you ways to improve that you may not have thought about. You can ask consumers to complete surveys to help get even more feedback for your business. Listening to popular opinions can help change and improve your product, as the customers will be who you will be selling to. You will be able to analyse from the data that you have collected what needs improvement and which areas to focus more promotion on, what is selling more and what is unpopular.

Cross-promotion

Using several different platforms can help your customers reach your products. Using TikTok for short snippets and videos can be very different from using YouTube which is for longer content. Using Facebook will have a different audience demographic compared to Instagram. Most platforms also have their own stores that you can utilise to sell your products across various platforms, again making this more accessible and easier for customers. These days the major social media platforms are becoming more flexible with the type of media you can use on these, e.g. YouTube recently added YouTube Shorts. This helps those who don't have access to TikTok for example.

Advantages

Social media can be incredibly cost-effective. Making an account on any major platform is completely free and gives you access to build your portfolio of products, as well as the freedom to choose how to advertise this. You are able to hear from viewers and their opinions in the comments. Using more than one platform as well as their built stores can be useful to spread the reach of your products, which gives ease of access to the customers. Using social media can also take less time, as you can simply take a short video and post it to your account, giving you time to concentrate on other areas of your business.

Disadvantages

Relying too much on social media can sometimes limit you to what you can sell online. Selling fresh produce may be difficult to advertise worldwide, as this can lessen the quality of your products.

Not being able to see your products in person for certain things, such as clothes, can be difficult for the customer. This is because they won't be able to see and try on the product in person. They would need to buy the product first and if it doesn't fit, would have to go through the trouble of returning the product. This can be costly for both the customer and seller.

There may be issues such as server malfunctions, which can be troublesome to those who want to visit or buy your product.

If you choose to promote your business worldwide, you will need to have a diverse team who can speak other languages. This will improve your business's quality of life. Customer service needs to be 24hrs. It may be frustrating for the buyer if they do not get customer service or understand you.

People who haven't grown up with technology can find this very difficult to navigate, so those who are older will most likely not buy your products.

Another disadvantage for selling worldwide, could be If you choose different base of operations in different areas or the world, you will not be able to monitor and supervise everything, therefore making it less in your control.

Conclusion

To summarise, social media and its effect to reach a wider customer base can be a significant tool to your business. Almost all places that are popular use social media to advertise their businesses. It is cost-effective, has many diverse platforms and is used by most people all over the world. Social media is vital to reach customers and know how to better your company, take feedback and make changes to suit your customers' preferences. However, just relying on social media does have its drawbacks. Customers not being able to see certain products in person can be difficult to purchase and give them uncertainty. Those who don't have access to social media or can't navigate this, will not be able to buy your products, making it less accessible. Overall social media will mostly be a positive outcome to your business.

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