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

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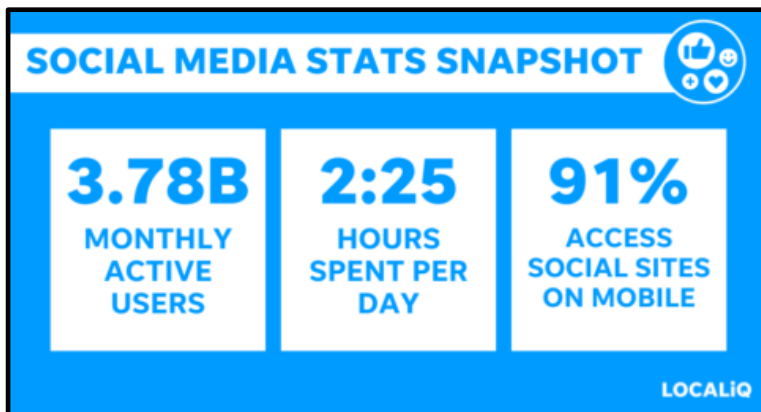
2 Introduction

Currently and most likely in the future also, social and digital media is one of the main ways that businesses reach their customers. There are many advantages to using social media but also some disadvantages. Some advantages that will be discussed in further detail in this report include factors such as the cost of using social media compared to traditional methods of reaching customers, businesses being able to target the right audience and to also increase customer engagement. Coupled with this come some disadvantages such as it being very demanding on time to create quality adverts and to stay active on social media, false and negative information spreading easily and quickly and the fact that some people may not even use social media.

3 Main Research

3.1 What is social and digital media marketing?

Social media marketing also known as (SMM) is a powerful way for any sized businesses to reach customers. People come across, learn about, follow and shop from businesses on social media. Therefore, businesses use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to take advantage of this and to boost sales. Businesses switched to 'SMM' as the majority of people nowadays spend increasingly more time on these platforms. Businesses can benefit from this and boost their visibility to potential customers. However if 'SMM' is not executed effectively and the business is not mindful of the challenges that 'SMM' brings it can result in more negative results than positive.



(LocaliQ, 2024)

3.2 What is the difference between social and digital media marketing?

The specific goal of social media marketing is to use social media platforms for advertising, targeting and engaging an audience. Digital media on the other hand takes things a step further by including a wide range of online marketing initiatives such as website, email, SEO, PPC and more. These are the ways in which each initiative is used:

- **Websites:** Establishing an online presence through company websites.
- **Email Marketing:** Engaging with leads and customers through targeted email campaigns.
- **SEO (Search Engine Optimization):** Optimizing content to improve visibility and ranking on search engine results pages.
- **PPC (Pay-Per-Click) Advertising:** Placing ads on search engines and websites, paying only when users click.

(WVU, 2024)

3.3 Advantages of social and digital media marketing

3.3.1 Targeting Specific Audiences

One of the main advantages of businesses using social media marketing is that they can target a fitting audience for their specific products. This is mainly because social media websites collect data from their users such as gender, age, geographical location, interests and many other bits of information. These can then be categorised and businesses advertisements can be targeted to different categories of people based on these factors. This is very beneficial as it increases the chance of the people seeing the advertisement to actually be interested in the product and potentially bringing a sale to the business.

(ARCA, 2012)

3.3.2 Cost Effectiveness

When it comes to advertising, social media sites are typically less expensive than traditional marketing. Social media achieves this because businesses can choose how much they want to push their advertisements by a couple of options. One of the options is 'Pay-Per-Click' where businesses pay a publisher for every click they receive on the link of their advertisement. Therefore businesses can chose the best pricing model for their budget. The way 'Pay-Per-Click' works may vary slightly across different platforms, however it will still function the same as the way just explained.

(Josh, 2023)

3.4 Disadvantages of Social and Digital Media Marketing

3.4.1 Time and resource intensive

To maintain an effective social media presence requires the business a great investment of time and resources. Generating and picking engaging content, managing multiple social media platforms, keeping the brand experience constant and answering questions from clients demand continuous effort and a dedicated team. Without proper planning, using social media marketing can become overwhelming and less successful.

(Shah, 2023)

3.4.2 Negative feedback and reputation management

Negative feedback or comments can rapidly spread across social media platforms, possibly harming the reputation of a business. A single bad incident or social media response may have a big effect on a business's reputation. Managing the effects of negative online content requires proactive reputation monitoring and effective social media crisis management.

(Shah, 2023)

3.5 Methods and Strategies of Social Media Marketing

Successful social media marketing methods and strategies will most likely be unique for every business, however there are things they will all have in common such as:

- **Understanding their audience:** what social media platforms they use, when they are active on those platforms, what content they like, who else they are following, and more.
- **Brand identity:** What message do they wish to get through to their target audience? When they watch their material, how do they want them to feel?
- **Material strategy:** Although there is some spontaneity on social media, maintaining a consistent voice and consistently producing high-quality material requires planning.
- **Analytics:** Their strategies will be guided by provable insights about who they are targeting, what material to publish, when to post, and other factors.
- **Frequent activity:** Social media is a real-time platform. They must publish often, monitor interactions with their business, respond to conversations, remain up to date on trends, and keep up-to-date profiles if they want to utilise it to expand their brand.

(LocaliQ, 2024)

4 Conclusion

To sum everything up, social and digital media can be used to reach a wider customer base through various methods and strategies. Although there are some disadvantages to using social media marketing, businesses can be mindful of them and at best avoid or minimise the impact these have on their brand and reputation. The popularity of social media combined with the cost effectiveness it holds for advertisement makes it the ideal platform for businesses of any size to connect with possible, existing or new customers on. Social media in my opinion is also very future proof meaning most customers that follow the business will not be lost due to a change in popularity of platform.

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