

Role of Web Based Promotional Tools in Educational Sector: An Indian Scenario

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Abstract: *The Education Industry holds an important place in the world. The education market in India, which is presently worth around Rs 5.9 trillion (US\$ 92.98 billion), is poised for some major growth in the years to come, as by 2020, India will have the world's largest tertiary-age population, and second largest graduate talent pipeline globally. Presently, higher education contributes 59.7 per cent of the market size, school education 38.1 per cent, pre-school segment 1.6 per cent, and technology and multi-media the remaining 0.6 per cent. The higher education sector in India is poised for an average growth of 18 per cent per year till 2020 (<http://www.ibef.org/industry/education-sector-india.aspx>) [1]. The size of the education sector may double to USD 50 billion by 2015 with the rise in government expenditure along with an increase in middle-class income, an industry chamber study has said. At present, the size of the education sector is pegged at USD 25 billion, said an ASSOCHAM study. "The government is planning to spend about 5 per cent of GDP in the next five years on education," it said and noted that the middle-class has started spending more on education and no longer considers it an expense. Marketing is essential to boost the market of education Sector. In last few years the idea of buying and selling has tremendously changed. The Internet has overtaken television as the largest advertising market, as banner and pop-up advertisements showcase a vast array of products and services. The total population of India is 1,283,810,000. Out of which 13% use social media and spend approximately 2 hours 26 minutes daily. The use of social media by mobile users is 57% of total population and time spend is 2 hours 36 minutes per day. Social media marketing is one of the most important types of online marketing where small businesses are marketing their products/services and brands on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc. It enables individuals and communities to co-create, share, and modify content in an interactive, Internet-based environment. The use of social media in marketing can benefit the education industry by developing the awareness and benefits of various courses, subjects and even reducing marketing expenses, increasing the market.*

Keywords: Social Media, Education industry, Internet based. Interactive, market

1. Introduction

India's higher education segment is the largest in the world with approximately 20 million students and 36,000 institutions. Also, the higher education sector is expected to increase to US\$ 37.8 billion by 2020. The schooling segment in India is anticipated to be around US\$ 144 million by 2020 from US\$ 44 million in 2011. India has one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world with 574 universities and 35,539 colleges. It is also the third largest in terms of education enrollment with over 20 million enrollments per year. The private education sector which was valued at US\$ 50 billion in 2008 is estimated to reach US\$ 115 billion by 2015. The Government of India has planned to provide enhanced access to higher education by creating two million additional seats for each age group, in the 12th Five-Year Plan. The government has also allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the education sector through the automatic route since 2002 [2].

The remarkable developments in the field of technology have brought remarkable changes in education industry. Technological improvements also have changed the way the business was done. Among all improvements of technology, *Internet* is boon to our society. Internet operates on a set of technical protocols that enables people from around the world to access and exchange information using tools such as the World Wide Web, e-mail, chat rooms, etc. Internet opened the gateways to transform traditional way of marketing into a much more interactive and techno-market. Internet is an asset to the organizations which enables

business houses to get found by and interact with the target audience online. Business houses has started connecting with the World Wide Web and are becoming more techno savvy to bring alarming changes in modern world.

Integration of overall marketing efforts with web based promotional tools can bring new opportunities for businesses to engage in conversations with their audiences, prospective customers and followers of industry. Internet is an advantage to business people to know word of mouth spreading about the organization in the competitive market. It enables business houses to overhaul the processes and improve the functions as desired by the people in market. Web based promotional tools help the company to improve the image of company, positioning of goods and services, building brand awareness and loyalty of customers towards brand. It increases the overall momentum of the business.

Internet has many online technologies which allow users to create, share and discuss the information of common interest. Social media networking websites helps people to learn from each other by online conversations and often express opinions. The opinion of one become guideline for other and thus creates environment of teaching and learning from one another. The major chunk of capital in a business is spent on the promotional activities so that maximum people could be attracted and could be retained. However when expenses are compared with online promotions than one can easily reveal that social media is less expensive but has wide coverage and is quick in gaining response. Moreover the interesting part is that one can also track the

overall performance, lacunas, and need of improvements. In many web based promotional tools the content is user generated and not by the company, so the business houses cannot put the control over the content of the conversation. However through active participation, careful listening and response, and by providing useful information to the prospective customers, the company can guide the content for the benefit of the organization.

2. Literature Review

A Web site gives direct contact between the organization and the consumer. However, product characteristics play an important role in whether the organization benefits from utilizing the Web as a means of direct sales [4]. Research attempted to place empirical evidence upon the theoretical views that suggest that the Internet enhances business performance, in terms of sales performance and efficiency, affecting both the “top line” (total sales) and the “bottom line” (net profit margin). Studies show that the Internet facilitates product management activities that lead to product customization and innovations’ acceleration. Additionally, the findings show that market-driven product management activities are highly affected by the sales force’s use of the Internet. The benefits of interactivity in sales management activities are highly reflected upon customized product strategies [5].

There are several reasons why academic research should be done in the area of business models and e-business models. First of all, even though many people talk about them, rare are the business model concepts and nonexistent a common understanding of what is meant by a business models. The second reason why the e business model idea is interesting to study is because it can be an adequate methodology and foundation for managerial tools and IS requirement engineering to react to the increasingly dynamic business environment [6]. Internet is playing a more and more important role in the field of marketing. Understanding Internet marketing will continue to be significant for at least three reasons. From an academicians’ perspective, it not only helps gain new ideas about the Internet, but also enhances our understanding as to whether existing marketing theories can be applied to this new phenomenon. From a practitioner’s perspective, Internet marketing research provides knowledge about the online consumer’s beliefs and behaviors, thus enhancing the online firm’s opportunities to succeed. From a public policy maker’s perspective, there are a number of topics that need to be addressed, such as security, consumer protection, and tax. Future investigations can be targeted at each of these three perspectives [7].

Online trust can be approached from a stakeholder perspective that takes into account the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, distributors, partners, stockholders, and regulators. It is a multidimensional construct whose underlying dimensions include reliability/credibility, emotional comfort, quality and benevolence. [8]. Research indicates that in the case of the Web consumer a set of elements experienced during the virtual interaction are indeed the controllable factors affecting the online buyer. These three sets of factors

are the main online marketing tools under the control of the e-marketer. Despite the fact that a good deal of research has been done on identification of the individual components of the Web experience during the last five years, little attention has been paid in integrating this research endeavor [9].

3. Web Based Media

Social media enables individuals and communities to cocreate, share, and modify content in an interactive, Internet based environment. Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic through social networking sites. It is driven by word of mouth. Results come from earned, as opposed to paid media. It provide vast availability and wide reach. Unlike paper advertisement, radio, hoardings, KNOP’s, where a huge sum of money is spent to promote the product or service in a particular region or state. In this traditional method chances of conversion are low and are confined to a specific area or place. The web based promotional tools however now has facilitated to reach to the target customers beyond the frontiers of the nation thereby increasing revenue and sales. This eradicates the problems of reaching to people at far off places. Now the customer and market can reach each other at just one click. Anybody and everybody has now the access to information. Company can maintain the interaction with its customers and target audiences to occupy space in their minds.

4. Web Based Media Helps to Reach New and Growing Audiences

Internet has provided the ease to reach to people across the national frontiers in fraction of seconds. The communication and interaction through this media has got new direction. The marketers who were earlier limited to particular vicinity are now available across the globe. This business houses make presence of goods and service at this global platform to maintain presence and improve brand image. Media such as facebook, linkdin, twitter or my space are popular these days. Media sharing websites are gaining advantage and popularity as they not only show text rich but the audio video facility help to make space in mind of prospective customers. On the other hand, some websites, such as CNET or YouTube, have a more informative or commercial function, but also give consumers the opportunity to post feedback, offer comments, or simply communicate with other consumers. Therefore, web based promotional tools have reached to large number of customers and gaining much popularity. The data reveals that 65% of the population in India is of young age that is less than 35 years. The GDP of India has a huge portion of income from service industry. The office going professionals spend a huge time with the mobile phones, laptops and internet. They don’t spare enough time in watching TV or listening radio. Thus web based promotion allow them to access the information about the product and service while travelling or working in offices. Anybody and everybody have information about launch of new product or availability of similar products in same industry. Foreign transactions also became easy through this media. It enables marketers to reach to people at far off distance and drive the traffic to various other corporate channels. Social media platforms and tools are great for

collaboration— whether it's for fun, for work, or for political movements—and they are getting better and better. Social connectivity is becoming a component of every type of communication email, social networks, microblogging,

text messaging, webinars, document sharing, video and music sharing

5. Types of Web Based Promotions Tools

Table 1: Social Media Platforms and their Features

Sr. No.	Name of Web based promotional tools	Features
1.	E-Mails	It is an easiest way to be in touch of the customers and to regularly update them with timely announcements. It is estimated that roughly half of all e-commerce sites will use email registration schemes by mid-1999.
2.	Social Media	It includes Facebook, Twiter, Linkedin as an important tools to be in touch with the target customers
3.	Banners	Banners came into existence in October, 1994 which was a leading technique used to advertise online. More than 50% of the revenue is generated by this media of promotion. Banners are the prominent online advertising models which became mainstay of internet advertising.
4.	Buttons	It is one of the smallest and the simplest way to promote the product or service. It has an ease to be placed anywhere at the website. Due to the ease they are widely accepted and turned into a full size banner
5.	Affiliate Programs	The affiliate programs are a step ahead in advertisement on internet. Till this time need of the marketers was to focus on one-stop-shop advertising module. It is a sort of partnerships where merchandisers pay commission to the sites that send them paying customers.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media_marketing

Apart from above other medium of promotions are as follow:

- On rent basis banner placement
- Link exchange program
- Pay per click
- Online media sponsorship

6. Benefits of Using Social Media in Education Sector

The management process through which goods and services move from company to the customer is simply called marketing. The concept of marketing is very old but its prominence in the market is always maintained. Though the existence of marketing concept can be traced as old as transaction but still it holds the pulse of market. It is one of the most critical but important business activity for attracting new customers and maintaining old customers. Marketing is a linking activity which identifies the need of the consumers and Which products will sell more, which market should be tapped, which media should be selected to reach to customers are few important questions which declare the success or failure of any product in the market. Marketing includes the tactics by which companies interact with consumers to create awareness about the existence of the company and the availability of product. Marketing is like life blood of running an enterprise, where the small mistake or delay will put the business at risk. It is the need of the hour to uphold the market by engaging in the marketing groundcover that will keep business competitive and thriving. Successful marketing management includes, capturing marketing insights, connecting with customers, building strong brands, shaping the market offerings, delivering and communicating value, creating long-term growth, and developing marketing strategies and plans

Social media networks are a very valuable marketing tool. With the recent growth in popularity of many of the networking websites, marketers are better able to market their brands to a mass market without having to invest the

time and money that they would by marketing through other means. These sites are beneficial to companies both big and small, and allow companies to market themselves in new and creative ways. Education industry can use social media for marketing of their educational courses which can benefit the complete scholar society such as :

- 1) Education industry can use social media to provide identity and the products or services they offer. Marketing team can use it to create relationships with people who might not otherwise know about their products or service or what their industries represent.
- 2) Social media creates a feel of reality to consumers. The information regarding the services/ courses can be provided and the opinion, requirement, reviews and suggestions about the same can be considered before making the purchase decision.
- 3) Social media can be used very easily to communicate and provide the interaction that potential consumers look for.
- 4) It personalizes the "brand" and helps to spread the message in a relaxed and conversational way.
- 5) Indian education sector is always liked by the scholars of other countries. Social media marketing can help in gaining the confidence of these consumers by providing the reach and real time information at the Doorstep without involvement of intermediaries.
- 6) Social media networks are used as a marketing tool for many different purposes. Those marketing large companies use these sites to gain information on their target market, and how people feel about their products. They can also use these sites to gain information on their competition. Small businesses may also use these sites to promote their brand.
- 7) Social media networks allow thousands of people to network with each other, meeting new people that may benefit their business or services being offered. Networking with different people through these sites is an excellent way to create new contacts, and potentially create new customers or business associates.

- 8) The most valuable part of marketing using social media networks is that, it allows people to market their services to a large market at no cost. Thousands of people enter these sites daily. Therefore they are able reach a mass market free of charge.
- 9) The Facebook offers a free classifieds section where people are able to post things such as job listings, items for sale, or services available. Companies of all sorts are able to place advertisements for their products or services, as well as post job opportunities. People are also able to market themselves by listing their skills and abilities for employers to view.
- 10) Another popular social network, MySpace, is widely used by its members as a way of promoting themselves. This site also allows members to send their videos to other members, and gain more recognition and feedback.
- 11) One large benefit to marketing on social media networks is the pass along factor. Users of these networks tend to pass along items that are of interest to them, or that they believe their friends will find interesting.
- 12) Social networks are also beneficial to companies who are wishing to create e-mail lists to send coupons or advertisements through the mail. Handloom industries can post bulletins on websites encouraging people to sign up for their daily newsletters, etc. In doing this they are able to greatly increase their mailing lists.
- 13) Placing paid advertisements, such as banners, on social media sites can also benefit a handloom industries greatly based on the amount of hits the sites receive each day. Thousands of members view these pages daily which means ads placed on these sites will reach a mass audience.
- 14) Marketers of Education industry can monitor social networking sites, to read up on how people are viewing their brands. These sites allow them to see what their competitors are doing, and how customers view the competition. Receiving this feedback from customers allows marketers to understand what the target market is looking for, what people like about their products or services, and what needs to be improved.
- 15) Social media networks also allow marketers to gain information on their potential customers. By viewing user profiles, marketers are able to gather information regarding the demographics and psychographics of potential customers, making them better able to identify those that fit into their target market. This information can often be time consuming and costly. Having social

networks to help them find this information is quite beneficial to marketers. Many of the social networking sites allow users to create groups regarding specific topics. This makes it much easier for marketers to find much of the information regarding their target market, and their competitors.

7. Research Objectives

- a) To study the online promotional tools used by the educational institutes in selected districts of Chhattisgarh and measure customer response towards them.
- b) To study the selection of right keywords and phrases those are mostly used by the target customers for searching information about educational services.
- c) To do Performance analyses of all the possible advertisement publishers and help business houses in making the right selection as per the requirement.

8. Hypothesis

Based on the above objectives following hypothesis are initiated:

- H₀₁:** There are no benefits of web based promotional tools for promotion of Education Sector
- H₁₁:** There are benefits of web based promotional tools for promotion of Education Sector
- H₀₂:** There are no consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool
- H₁₂:** There are consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool

9. Data Analysis and Interpretation

To test the effect of web based promotional tools following Hypothesis is designed:

- H₀₁:** There are no benefits of web based promotional tools for promotion of Education Sector
- H₁₁:** There are benefits of web based promotional tools for promotion of Education Sector

ANOVA is used to test the null hypothesis.

To test above hypothesis A single factor or one-way ANOVA is obtained. Results of test are as follows.

ANOVA

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1(no use of web based promotional tools for promotion)	50	50	1	0
Column 2 (scores of use of web based promotional tools for promotion)	50	3254.5	65.09	132.210

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	150245.7	1	135876.8	2205.33	5.28E-68	3.8547621
Within Groups	6258.25	97	67.354			
Total	162092.6	98				

Conclusion: if $F > F_{crit}$. We reject the null hypothesis. This is the case $2205.33 > 3.95$ Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis & accept the alternative hypothesis.

- H₀₂:** There are no consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool

H₁₂: There are consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool

To test above hypothesis A single factor or one-way ANOVA is obtained. Results of test are as follows.

ANOVA is used to test the null hypothesis.

ANOVA

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1(no consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool)	50	50	1	0
Column 2(scores of consequences of social networking sites as a promotional tool)	50	2850	57	272.4271

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	879261	1	91501	701.3044	1.27E-39	3.92403
Within Groups	12600	97	272.4271			
Total	89589	98				

Conclusion: if $F > F_{crit}$. We reject the null hypothesis. This is the case $701.30 > 3.92$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis & accept the alternative hypothesis.

10. Major Findings

From the above analysis, it is found that there are benefits of social networking sites as promotional tools to attract the students. There is immense need for using this media to reach the student/ Scholars throughout the world. The education sector should use social networking sites for students to increase their market and electronically spread the word of advertisement.

Second hypothesis results show that, there are consequences of social networking sites as an promotional tool on college students. Better keywords, phrases should be used to make the website available at one click and should pop up when being searched.

11. Conclusion

The possibility of Internet as commercial medium was accepted in early 19th century. In this research we focus on the proper use of internet to attract maximum target customers through online advertisement. Online advertisement is yet new trend in the existing marketing trend and much more has to be done to make it more effective and suitable for long term. Online advertisement although reach huge number of customers at one point of time. However it will not succeed in long term if the advertisement doesn't occupy the space in memory of customers. Advertisements in Television or radio are supported by characters, the way they act and even jingle which makes them more impressive and memorable. The advertisements should be easy to understand and should pop up when customers search for the information of the same.

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