Digital Marketing and Social Media: A Review

1ST Yüksel Akay Ünvan
Finance and Banking
Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University
Ankara, Turkey
aunvan@ybu.edu.tr and
0000-0002-0983-1455

2nd Yuliya Badlo
Finance and Banking
Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University
Ankara, Turkey
ljulia.adler.7777@gmail.com and
0000-0003-2522-1988

Abstract— **Nowadays it is not possible to foreseen future prospects of business and trade development without realizing the role and importance of platforms that thousands of people use on a daily basis, for both: producers and consumers. Social and digital marketing offers great opportunities for companies to increase their brand awareness and sales. The use of social media has changed customer behaviour and consequently the way companies do business. That is why it remains necessary to further analyse current state of the existing platforms that determines success of online marketing. It is proposed to overview current and future trends in this field. Obtained results state that the communication of the consumer with brands through social media has a positive effect on customer-based brand value. It is considered that it creates a strong connection between customers and the company.**

Keywords— digital marketing, social media, marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

Different resources propose different ways of views over the concepts of digital marketing and social media.

Some researchers propose to see social media platforms as a part of digital marketing strategy [1]. According to another opinion, digital and social media marketing is a single concept for carrying out businesses [2]. Others separate social media marketing (SMM) and define it as a functional part of online marketing that has become quite important in recent years [3]. Even though, definition of digital marketing is broader than online marketing. Internet marketing only includes advertising on the Internet - improving the position of websites, contextual or display advertising on social networks. In addition to Internet channels, digital marketing also uses offline means - advertising on any electronic medium outside the Internet [4].

SMM (Social media marketing) is becoming increasingly widespread - the distribution and promotion of a company, its products/services in social networks, various forums, blogs and websites. SMM is used both for commercial purposes (attracting an audience to the site, creating demand, increasing sales) and for branding purposes (increasing brand awareness, audience loyalty, working with reputation) [5].

SMM is a type of modern advertising focused on direct interaction with the target audience that is loyal to the brand. SMM is a set of advertising and presentation of a brand in social media. Main SMM concept is to create fine content, both textual and visual. Social media promotion allows for segmenting the audience and identifying the factors that influence it in places where it is mostly presented [6].

In recent years, a number of the following most relevant directions in SMM have been adopted:

1) Online and offline: It becomes easier to attract users to offline company events on social networks. Conversely, the audience of an offline event can come to social networks and subscribe to brand news. The event itself becomes an excellent informational occasion for publication on social networks.

2) Situational SMM: The most popular is viral content that is tied to a news feed or an event that is actively discussed on the Internet. An interesting brand can instantly spread across social networks and attract the attention of millions of users.

3) Increasing the value of involvement: SMM ceases to be an additional promotion tool, but turns into the main one. Brands are paying more and more attention to engaging audiences on social media, creating two-way communication and interactive activations with loyalty program [7].

Statistic data shows that digital population as of January 2021 consisted 4.66 billion active Internet users which is 59.5% of the global population (as of January 2020 the number increased on 0.5%). Among them 4.32 billion people are active mobile internet users, 4.2 billion people are active social media users and 4.15 billion are active mobile social media users. At the same time, Northern Europe ranking first with a 96% internet penetration rate among the population (the highest internet penetration rate worldwide are the UAE, Denmark, and Sweden) [8]. Monitoring social networks allows to quickly respond to the needs of the audience, and also provides the necessary information to make a decision on how the company's brand should function in social media spaces.

It has also become important to realize that modern platforms used to have different value among active users. Referring to [9] users respond differently to social media activities across platforms.

There are numerous of reasons why social media became an essential part of today's commerce activity. Social media enables companies to connect with their customers, improve awareness of their brands, influence consumer's attitudes, receive feedback, help to improve current products and services, and increase sales [10], [11].

Social media and digital marketing are also considered to be useful for predicting the future, doing prevention of crisis, and creating innovations, because by using social media and digital marketing it is becoming possible to track brand's competitors. It also about to know people's opinion on a product and to build up a brand reputation. These are things that conventional marketing hardly achieved effectively [12].

II. METHODOLOGY

Within the scope of the study, various academic articles and related literature on social media were examined. In this sense, the most basic research method of the study was document analysis technique. The data compiled from the current literature were processed based on the characteristics of the subject, such as the way it was written, and the date of writing.

Briefly, in this study, examples of literature related to the subject have been examined in detail. In the results and evaluations section, all the data obtained are interpreted and comments and suggestions regarding the subject are presented.

An analysis of recent literature

Actually, the term "social network" was first used back in 1954 by sociologist J. Barnes, and in the modern sense it was implemented in 1995 in the United States in the form of the Classmates website, and since the second half of the twentieth century it has become a central concept in the concept of Web 2.0 and already since 2005 gained great popularity around the world, thanks to Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Odnoklassniki.ru, VKontakte, etc. [13].

The task of marketing is to be where there the audience is [14]. The marketing potential of using web resources is extremely high, and the rapid development of the web and its capabilities changes every year and makes more accessible the methods by which companies can contact their target audience [15].

Digital marketing has many channels. For each customer, the channels are selected in a way that will establish a strong relationship between the company and the customer and increase profits. Digital marketing involves the complex use of tools. Digital marketing allows you to bring offline audiences to the online marketplace - for example, through email newsletters, SMS links, and QR codes in handouts. It is very important to consider the specifics of the Internet audience. It is fundamentally different from the offline advertising audience and requires a special approach. These are active and involved users who are purposefully looking for different information. And they can always protect themselves from unnecessarily irritating advertising. The attention that can be paid to an advertisement of a company can be counted in seconds. During this time, the company needs to formulate its proposal as clearly as possible, interest them and encourage them to further study their product.

Social media marketing is the latest trend that evolved since last few years when it started ruling online communication. It is a form of internet marketing that uses various social media platforms in order to achieve marketing and advertising objectives. Social media marketing basically involves sharing of content, videos, and images for advertising reasons. The various marketing techniques adopted by business is focused on targeting the right audience, Consumer Online Brand related activities, and electronic word of mouth [16]. If the majority of customers engage with social media, firms must engage with it as well [17].

For that reason, marketers are those specialists whose service is counted to be valuable these days all over the world. Positions like marketers, content-managers, target-managers, visual managers, advert-creators, story makers etc. became professions in high demand for supporting well-being of company's e-business success. In a society that's more connected to social media than ever before, ensuring a brand's name stands out from the crowd is top of mind for social marketers. Social marketers say increasing brand awareness is their number one priority.

Social Media Examiner's annual reports on the state of social media marketing provide evidences for the need for an SMM presence. This is the longest-running study in the social media marketing industry [18]:

- 2% of all survey participants and sellers claim that social media promotions have increased their brand awareness;

- 80% of marketers said that effective work in social networks provided traffic growth of up to 90%;

- 72% of marketers use social media to build and increase brand loyalty;

- social media helped increase sales by more than 60% to everyone who used them to promote their business for at least three years;

- 74% of marketers who devote 40 hours a week to social media have promoted new brands and increased their return on investment (ROI).

- 46% of SMM managers confirmed information about reducing marketing costs by at least 20%.

At the same time, from the side of such professionals the basic principles of work in social networks are also highlighted. Analysed scientific researches, trainings, seminars and publications commonly include the following basic principles of using social networks to promote business:

1) *Customer value* - when developing a strategy for promoting business on social networks, it is important to focus on the requirements, interests and priorities of the user, it is important to know the audience;

2) *Content quality* - content for business promotion on social networks must be high quality, which means that it should be useful, attractive and interesting for the target audience of the business;

3) *Selectivity and targeting* – orientation on the selected group of audience, in order to become original and popular in its content for the selected observers;

4) *Regular content posting* - due to the complexity of ranking publications on social networks, the intelligence of publication processing systems and their posting in the user feed, because the content should be scheduled;

5) *Communication* – openness, readiness for dialogue, preparation for operative communication with customers, considering ethical and moral principles, honesty, creating an interactive communication platform, reaction on feedbacks.

The main components of social media marketing communications are strategy, content and brand platform [19]. The initial stage in the formation of the company's strategy in social networks is the analysis of consumers and competitors from the marketing point of view. The main focus of SMM is creating relevant and initiating communication between content users. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to periodically repeat the study of the needs of the audience. A brand platform is a collection of all communities in social networks where the brand operates and communicates with the target audience.

The major social media platforms (at the moment) are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat. By January 2021, the most popular social network worldwide is considered to be Facebook, whose number of active users reached 2.74 billion people, after that is YouTube – 2.29 billion, WhatsApp – 2 billion, Instagram –1.22 billion, Tik Tok – 0.69 billion etc. [20]. All these numbers only confirm the need for marketers to use social media as a key approach to attract attention of new potential customers to their products, or, to increase loyalty of the existing customers.

Researchers indicate various advantages of using social media marketing, among them are the following [21]:

- Social media posts can be used to drive targeted traffic to a specific audience of people.

- Social media can act as a very useful tool for boosting the business site's SEO. The traffic building on social media pages of one's business will help their websites get better search engine results.

- Social media may help to build real producer consumer relationship as the tweets on Twitter and posts on Facebook get an insight into the daily lives of their customers and thus help them build better marketing strategies.

- While maximum users take, Twitter and Facebook as simple social networks and not as advertising and marketing platforms which makes them respond to one's business idea in a more open way.

- The most important advantage of using social media is the recognition of a brand, as the media itself becomes brand's content and voice.

Where advantages arise disadvantages also exist. The online environment creates not only opportunities, but also complications and challenges for the social media marketing process [22]. Using social media to promote one's brand, products, or services can also implicate trust, privacy and data security issues. It is important for companies to aware of these issues and takes appropriate measures to minimize their exposure to liability related to personal data collection, use, and maintenance. It is of the utmost importance for companies to protect their own trademarks and copyrights when using social media to promote their brands and products. When using social media, whether via a third-party outlet or a company's own social media platforms, marketers should regularly monitor the use of their trademarks and copyrights [23]. Social media, in a way, converts consumers into marketers and advertisers, and consumers can create positive or negative pressure for the company, its products, and its services, depending both on how the company is presented online and on the quality of products and services presented to the customer [24].

In the digital landscape, social media offer a great opportunity to reach large audience easily and at a relatively low cost. But, that comes at a price of a weaker control over brand reputation online or what termed to be e-reputation. Consumers can easily become value destroyers instead of value creators for companies [25].

That's where a strong link between customers and the company takes its place.

Current state and development prospects of social media marketing

Nowadays, many marketers are wondering about the place of the SMM strategy in the marketing strategy of companies.

The research carried out by Salesforce (May, 2018), demonstrated that 77% of all marketers say their organization uses a form of social media marketing, 64% of marketers are focused on providing a consistent customer experience across all channels. Social media is still seen as a must-have investment [26].

Fig. 1 represents the distribution of SMM benefits in accordance with the data of the report "2021 Social Media Marketing Industry Report" [27].
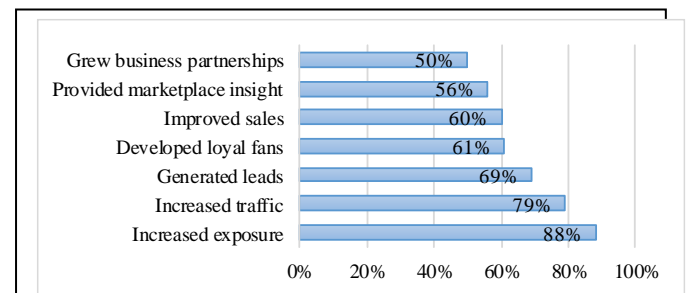

Fig. 1. Benefits of social media marketing.

According to information above, it is seen that use of social media product promotion does make a positive impact for companies. Developed loyal fans as one of a positive criteria on the figure comfirms the fact that customers provide loyal brand value for the chosen sellers.

Numbers of social media users are not less important than tendencies that arise among marketers themselves. Platforms, chosen for ellectronic business development, are also having tendencies to changes. Marketers have been diversifying away from Facebook steadily since 2019. When asked to select their single most important platform, only 54% selected Facebook, down from 67% in 2018. 78% of marketers are using Instagram. It's the second most important social platform for marketing (behind Facebook). Short-form video is growing. More than half of all marketers regularly use Instagram and Facebook for video-based stories. A significant 71% of marketers plan on increasing their use of YouTube video and 72% want to learn more about organic video marketing on the platform. TikTok is ignored by most marketers: Only 9% of marketers are using TikTok [27].

Social media has influenced the e-commerce buying behaviours because of its capability to enhance customer's experiences. Social media can help in conveying ideas, shaping perceptions and modifying buying intentions of the targeted audience [28]. Therefore, up to this point, until now one of the problem left for the effective rooting of e-businesses through social media is the consumer's mindset.

The digital shopping behavior is a growing aspect among the customers especially among young customers. Data of reference [29] that include information on online shoppers in several countries who have made a purchase via social media in the past six months in 2020, by age group, show us that people older then 55 years are the less active customers, while people of age between 18 and 34 are active users. For the latest period India is leading among selected countries. Consequantly, it is fare to admit, which, at the same time, has logical ground, that e-commerce use behaviour among youth is prevail. In Fig. 2 above mentioned information has been graphically represented.
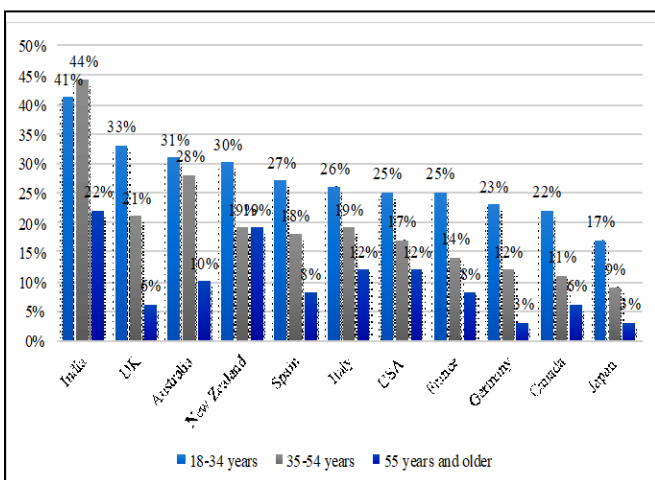

Fig. 2. Online shoppers in selected countries who have made a purchase via social media in the past six months in 2020, by age group

Another survey evidence [30] shows approximately same outcomes where 18-25 years group made up over 40% of digital and social media marketing users population. Within this age group, over 63% show positive behaviour for checking online reviews in social media. This age group is also found to be very active when it comes to sharing experiences and influencing buying decisions of others in family, friends and social group. This is evident from the fact that over 68% are more positively inclined to share experiences and influence buying decisions of others. It leads us to the conclusion that social media engagement activities should also attract and encourage consumers of higher age groups to be more interactively engaged in terms of sharing experiences and influencing their peers and social groups.

In 2020 Instagram creators have also shared an information confirming an impact of its social media advertisement on buying decision. According to it 55% of fashion shoppers have purchased a fashion item after seeing a creator promote it [31].

Therefore, the implementation of effective marketing communication campaigns in social networks is a significant factor in the effective promotion of a company, brand or product, aimed at increasing the target audience, developing, improving and protecting the company's reputation through the formation of consumer loyalty to the enterprise.

In social networks, the widest and fastest possible dissemination of information is possible thanks to word of mouth (WOM), as users are ready to share interesting and useful information with their friends and subscribers. In this aspect, the use of viral marketing is considered the most effective [32]. Digital WOMM through the Internet can spread more widely and much faster at a significantly lower cost as compared to most if not all traditional methods [33]. Electronic WOM has two key advantages over traditional WOM [34]. First, electronic WOM provides a higher speed of information dissemination. In traditional face-to-face communication, diffusion is limited by the size of the social network of each individual. Considering the fact that, on average, each person has only three close friends, and an overall social network of not more than 150, the "chains" of WOM communications and consumer recommendations are disappearing rapidly. On the contrary, electronic WOM can cover a much larger group of other consumers. Second, electronic WOM is easier to follow.

In accordance with recent data from reference [35], customers by following firms on social media creates a positive outcome for them, which is represented in fig. 3. The communication of the consumer with brands through social media has a positive effect on customer-based brand value. Gathered information from Sprout Social Index should serve as a wake-up call for retailers skeptical about what social media is worth. Whether it's a digital or in-person purchase, social followers signal potential business for brands of all shapes and sizes.
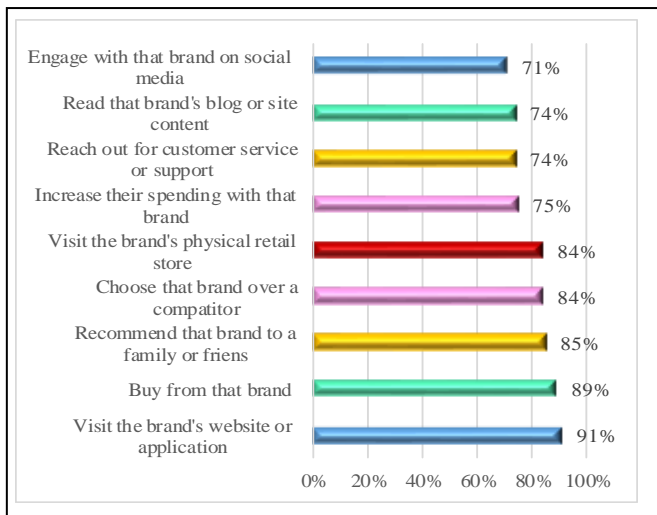
Fig. 3.   Actions consumers take when they follow brand in social media

A fact that besides of mentioned actiones commited by potential consumers modern brands do also positively interact with them through social media resources. Consumers may follow brands on social media for several reasons - that's where nowadays named "strong connection between customers and the company" is born [35]:

- to learn about new products or services;

- to stay up to date on company news;

- to learn about promotions or discounts;

- to be entertained;

- to be educated;

- to connect with people with similar interests;

- to be inspired;

- to communicate with the brand.

As well as great digital marketing opportunities that are proposed for customers, unefficient use of social media by companies may also cause a negative impact for its further development. Analyzed resources mention that poor quality of product or support may increase a possibility of unfollowing brands pages in social medias. Irrelevant content, privacy concerns, poor customer service, too many ads or redundant content, corporate scandals (including negative press) may also negatively impact a brand. Therefore, in order to obtain business' revenue goals a wise digital marketing approach should be built by company's team and professionals. Outcomes of reference [36] indicate that service quality of the digital marketing plays an important role in the determination of customer's satisfaction and service loyalty. The marketers are trying to perform more in digital marketing but they are having some problems related to navigation, interactivity, logistics and payment. The highly experienced marketers are having lesser problem than the lesser experienced marketers. The marketers in digital marketing are having a better scope in near future. They have to estimate their customers needs and wants properly at each segment. The marketers should design appropriate strategies to satisfy their customers at various

segments simultaneously. The lesser experienced marketers should learn the prospects and problems in digital marketing through the stories of successful marketers in digital marketing. The winners will be those organisations and brands that seek out the commercial opportunities presented by social commerce and embrace the changes required to adapt to the changing norm around them [37].

Another matter of interest regarding curiosity on what is going to happen with social media in marketing in the future is the answer on question: is there any "ceiling point" for the development? What we diffinetely do understand that the future of social media in marketing might not be merely a continuation of what we have already seen.

It is important to consider the future of social media in the context of consumer behavior and marketing, since social media has become a vital marketing and communications channel for businesses, organizations and institutions alike, including those in the political sphere. Social media as a set of platform businesses and technologies is interesting, but it is how people use social media and the associated technologies that is ultimately of interest to marketing academics and practitioners [38]. What is clear is that companies in the social media space need to continue to innovate and excite users while demonstrating the value of using social media in their life [39]. Reference [40] emphasises that any future trends will most likely be centered around improving privacy and delivering dynamic content to the right people - this means that, in the end, more developments are in store for everyone. Therefore every company should have at least one online department which is responsible for the company's web presence. It has to be conformed to the environment and updated as often as possible to reach the maximum of customer loyalty also in the continuous developing online world. So a main goal for companies is to create a clear defined brand which represents companies' values and strengths and catch potential buyers' and loyal consumers' attention offline as well as online. This interaction of both worlds enables a maximum outcome for a company concerning monetary as well as un-monetary profit [41].

Digital marketers predict various shortlist changes that are likely to happen in the nearest future in e-commerce and social shopping. They indicate that direct payments through social media platforms is not far away from realisation. Instead of redirecting customer to busines'es official web-site for making an order, pay it and track, social platforms might easily introduce purchasing part into them. This is a functionality that's not just applicable to Instagram, but it could be introduced on Facebook Marketplace, added to YouTube videos, and much more. Augmented Reality (AR) will be introduced as an effective social media marketing tool in the coming year. AR technology will allow brands and influencers to apply filters that create an ultimate immersive shopping experience for the end-user. In 2020, consumers in all age groups will embrace social media as the primary way to communicate with businesses and brands. In order to get rid of long-waiting dialing to call centres or unresponded emails, the customers of the 2020s may use instant and accountable, public communication with

businesses. Another small, but not less valuable expectation is that more social platforms will allow advertisers to run ads where users can complete a lead form directly on the platform [42].

Concluding the obtained information and results, in 2021 the development of the digital marketing and social media landscape will definitely continue to grow by taking on new roles, creating new trends and shaping the world both outside and inside the channels. While most consumers today see social media as a way to communicate with friends and family, at least one in four use it to discover, learn, purchase or recommend products, services or brands. Social media is already widely used across all aspects of business, and its usage is poised to increase in the next three years [43].

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