

Marketing through Social Media

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1. Introduction

In the current technological era, there is a huge demand for online marketing with increasing presence of the businesses on the internet media. With the growing usage of internet and media by the general public for their communication purposes and publicity purposes to widen their exposure to the public, many businesses have come online to utilise the benefits and advantages offered by the internet media (Simon Hudson, Li Huang, Martin Roth, Thomas Madden, 2016).

During the 1990s and 2000s digital marketing development has grown tremendously on the social media and has drastically changed the way businesses and brands use it to promote their products and services on the internet media (Cait Lamberton and Andrew T. Stephen, 2016). As the usage of technology has grown in the internet, more and more features have grown occupying the internet media and incorporated several marketing plans in their day to day life. With these changes, the traditional marketing has gone extinct and replaced to a great extent by the social media, in the current period (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016).

Some of the new age, digital marketing trends include: Search engine optimization; Search engine marketing; Content marketing; Social media

marketing; Influencer marketing; Content automation; Campaign marketing; Data driven marketing; E-commerce marketing; Social media optimization; Email marketing; Direct marketing; E-books; Optical disks; Online gaming; Display advertising (Simon Hudson, Li Huang, Martin Roth, Thomas Madden, 2016).

The paper will discuss about in detail about social media marketing, with some relevant real life applications of social media marketing by two companies, and in contrast about its implications on the activities of the company.

While the other digital marketing platforms have their own definitions in usage, the social media marketing is concerned with the usage of social media platforms and websites by various businesses in the promotion of their products or services (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016). Moreover, the academia has also proved their existence in the usage of social media marketing platforms for promoting their products and services in the internet media. Similar to the academia, many other industries have also adapted to the increasing awareness about the various social media marketing techniques (Angella J. Kim, Eunju Ko, 2012).

2. Successful Application of Social Media Marketing Techniques

2.1. Kony 2012:

For more than two decades, Joseph Kony, a reputed person in the Uganda has become the main culprit for several crimes and atrocious activities against children. The incidents have become particularly famous as the Kony crimes that include making children as the soldiers at a very tender age and also making them as sex slaves and becoming the reason for child trafficking (Christy Ashley, Tracy Tuten, 2014). During the period from 1986 to 2009, Kony has become the culprit for making a total of 66,000 children to become soldiers at a very tender age and for displacing a total of 2 million people through making them sex slaves (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016).

With this crime as the main reason to eradicate, the Invisible Children, a non-profit organisation, has taken the initiative to establish a campaign, called as Kony 2012 campaign, under which several influential people would be called upon to address the criminal activities of Joseph Kony to the general public and take an initiative to stop these crimes (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016).

In order to influence the people on the internet media and make them commit to the action against Joseph Kony, the Kony 2012 social media campaign, has prepared a list of twelve renowned political leaders and 20 cultural influencers that include Mark Zuckerberg, Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, Bono, Oprah and Bill Gates, and made them the influencers to stir the people to take action through signing the petition (Christy Ashley, Tracy Tuten, 2014).

In addition to organizing the campaign of social media in signing the petition, there is another campaign which includes an arsenal of items and also there will be several materials using which the general public can create their own campaign and use it to go against the Joseph Kony for his atrocious activities (Xi Y. Leung, Billy Bai, Kurt A. Stahura, 2013). The arsenal of items includes apparel and accessories that are available for purchase online on the website, and signs to hang and material to read and know about the Joseph Kony more personally (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016).

The campaign has followed several social media tactics and made them publicised in a more enthralling way through meeting the people on the internet media through several media including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and such other social websites (Ginger Killian & Kristy McManus, 2015).

This non-profit organisation has taken advantage of these features in the internet media, and has implemented all these features in its campaign, which include tweeting through Twitter, posting status updates in Facebook, creating a page about the campaign in Facebook, posting relevant pictures and images on Pinterest and creating slideshows on Instagram, they have successfully promoted the campaign and invited their action through signing on the petitions as a form of their support (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016).

2.2. WWF's #lastselfie, 2014

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is a not for profit conservation organization that is spread across 100 countries and operating for the past 50 years. It is supported by nearly a million in members in the US alone and more than 5 million members globally. They aim to conserve most ecologically important regions -forests, oceans and marine livelihoods, fresh water, wildlife, food and climate and collect funds for the same (WWF, 2018). In such an attempt to raise awareness about the endangered animal species, WWF collaborated with ad agencies Uncle Grey and 41? 29! using Snapchat's fleeting nature to come up with the #lastselfie campaign. (Ju,He, Chen, He, Shen and Sar, 2017)

Snapchat is a social media platform where people can exchange snaps for fleeting moments and the snap gets deleted seconds later, never to be retrieved again (Bayer, Ellsison, Schoenebeck and Falk, 2015). The #lastselfie campaign ads feature one of the five endangered animal species with captions that plea to the viewers to save these species as it could be the last selfie for these species. (Kim, 2014) The campaign followed a simple mechanism - once the WWF snapchat followers received the #LastSelfie, they needed to take a screenshot of the image before the picture vanished and share it on their personal social networks like Snapchat, facebook, instagram and twitter (Snapchat and WWF, 2014).

The campaign started off with Turkey and moved to Denmark on the second day and slowly took over the entire internet as WWF started sharing the images through their official social media channels. The species that were in these selfies were rhinos, tigers, pandas, orang-utans and polar bear which were threatened because of the speedy melting of icecaps in the Arctic (Ju,He, Chen, He, Shen and Sar, 2017). The campaign targeted the millennials by trying to reach out to them in ways they would listen and using an innovative approach for this, which was definitely not traditional media anymore as this generation spent most of their time in posting pictures. (Kim, 2014) So they resorted to Snapchat which also merged well with the theme that compared the fleeting existence of Snapchat images and the fact that these species were in danger of vanishing in seconds, hitting hard on the spot where it hurt (Edwards, Howard and Joyce, 2018). Each of these images also had call to action buttons that guided them to either share the post on social media or donate for the cause through SMS donation. It was important for the campaign's success that the users shared the screenshots, therefore, WWF partnered with some social influencers to start the trend. (Castillo and Castillo, 2018)

3. Comparison of Social Media used in the two Ads:

3.1. Platforms used:

Kony started off with Youtube and eventually used most of the popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest and even offline campaigns (Ginger Killian & Kristy McManus, 2015) to spread awareness

whereas WWF used Snapchat as the primary platform. Youtube is a video based platform where anyone with an account can upload videos and anyone in the world can view those videos. It offers professional and amateur videos and is often used to spread social messages, reason being, youtube videos are easily shared on other social media platforms and hence can spread the message far and wide in a visually appealing way. (Halpern and Gibbs, 2013) Activism/Nonprofits and education, in fact, happen to be the fastest growing sectors of youtube for which they even have a dedicated team “Youtube for Good” (Forbes, 2012). Snapchat, on the other hand is a relatively newer platform which is currently the most used by the age group between 18-25 years and is more of a socializing device than a tool to spread awareness. So the campaign by WWF was a one of its kind campaign which gave a push to other NGOs also to use this platform for social causes. But in both the cases, the message reached each and every social media platform in use and Twitter emerged as the popular social media platform for both with the hashtags #stopkony and #LastSelfie (Ju,He, Chen, He, Shen and Sar, 2017).

3.2.Call to Action:

The call to action in the case of Kony 2012 was to invite users to sign a petition against Kony as their sign of support, asked for donations and sold merchandise whereas for #LastSelfie the action expected was to either share the screenshot or donate money for the cause through SMS donations (Christy Ashley, Tracy Tuten, 2014). Both the campaigns relied on viral sharing of the messages. However, the campaign by WWF relied purely on

viral marketing and spent nothing on the campaign while there was an expense of nearly \$ 2.2 mn on the campaign by Invisible Children. (Adweek, 2014)

3.3.Message Tone and Appeal:

The message tone is an important element of a campaign for it to become viral. The video in Kony 2012 was made appealing to the emotions of the general audience by using a 5 year old kid and with the help of influencers such as Justin Beieber and Operah, it invoked a desire in people to engage with the celebrities and hence engage with the campaign. There was a simple objective to make Kony famous with clear call to actions (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016). The snaps in the #lastselfie campaign were target to a specific age group i.e. the millennials to make them more aware of the harm they are causing to the environment and conscious about what can be done to save the wildlife around them. (Edwards, Howard and Joyce, 2018) To reach this age group, WWF did it their way, they used Snapchat as well as Selfies, the two most commonly used weapons by the targeted age groups. They made them realise that the lives of these animals have become as ephemeral as their snaps on Snapchat and kept a photo with minimal text as today's generation is most attracted to visually based platforms and this makes the post easy to share. (Snapchat and WWF, 2014)

4. Evaluation of effectiveness:

4.1.Meeting the objectives:

Kony 2012: Kony 2012 had dual objectives - to make Kony famous to urge US government to intervene on humanitarian grounds as well as collect donations for cause of the Invisible Children. Let us first analyse qualitatively. The NGO wrote an open letter to the President praising the US' existing intervention on this front and appealing for further resources to be employed such as tactical airlift and cross border coordination. They wanted the government's help in delivering Kony to the International Criminal Court. However, the US government refused to be a part of the plan towards ICC, therefore, this objective was not met. (Bruno Godey, Aikaterini Manthiou, Daniele Pederzoli, et al., 2016) The campaign, however, did make Kony famous because of the viral spreading of the message but the organization and campaign faced mounds of criticism. Of the tweets for the campaign, 44% were negative and 56% positive. The negatives were majorly criticizing the over simplification of a very complex issue that the LRA and Kony were and also about the funds used for a campaign that did nothing except raising awareness and could be used for greater purposes (Ginger Killian & Kristy McManus, 2015). Raising awareness is the key in areas where awareness can lead to action but didn't fit the needs so well in this case.

The second objective of the campaign i.e. raising funds did meet the goals. Invisible Children were able to generate revenue of nearly \$15 million by selling more than 500,000 action kits for \$30 each that consisted of bracelets,

posters, buttons, T-shirts and stickers in the first week of the campaign itself. Therefore, they successfully met one of the objectives of the campaign (Christy Ashley, Tracy Tuten, 2014).

#LastSelfie: WWF's #LastSelfie was launched with the objective of raising funds by engaging with the millennial generation. They needed to create a buzz through word-of-mouth on social media and drive the traffic to their website (Castillo and Castillo, 2018). There was no budget for the campaign and spreading of these images was completely organic with some help from influencers who volunteered (Adweek, 2014). As a supporting platform, Twitter acted as the main viral medium for the campaign. They were able to generate awareness as well as funds and so much so that they met their monthly target for donations in just the first three days of the campaign without spending a penny (Castillo and Castillo, 2018). Hence, it was a successful campaign by all means.

4.2.Social Media Key Performance Indicators:

Measuring in terms of social media Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), both the campaigns were able to make a mark on that front.

Kony 2012:

5 million tweets about the campaign in the week following the video release

100 million youtube views in 6 days

58% of young adults had heard about the campaign in a US phone Survey

2300 video clips associated with the campaign were floating across the web (Antonia Kanczula, 2012)

#LastSelfie:

Posted by 40000 users of twitter in just one week and viewed by 120 million of them which at that point was 50% of the active Twitter users
WWF reached their monthly target of funding in 3 days through SMS funding (Snapchat and WWF, 2014)

5. Lessons Learnt:

5.1.Key Takeaways:

Involve Influencers:

Both the campaigns observed a sudden shoot in their KPI's once volunteer influencers were involved in WWF and celebrities in Kony 2012.

Invoke time sensitivity:

With the "Expires December 31, 2012" in Kony 2012 and "in 6 seconds, I'll be gone forever" in #LastSelfie, there is a sense of urgency invoked among the audience to act immediately.

Easy call to action:

The call to action should be crisp and direct on the way forward to avoid users from wandering to another page

Select platform and content as per the target audience:

Kony 2012 targeted to the general audience and hence used Youtube and a powerful video which is used by all age groups while WWF target the millennials and hence used Snapchat and fleeting pictures as the primary platform. Both encouraged dialogue on Twitter which is the ideal platform for Viral marketing (Bayer, Ellsison, Schoenebeck and Falk, 2015)

5.2.Example: Be The Guy Campaign:

The campaign was organized by the Non Profit called Be the Match that focuses on bone marrow donation to save lives. It was launched to target millennial men as there was a lack of men between the age of 18-24 in their registry. This is generally a hard to reach donor type but the campaign flipped this notion by showing that you could actually save a life if you are a young male. The platforms used for this campaign were Snapchat, Reddit and Twitch, popular among the target demography (Adweek, 2016). Reddit also helped by educating the audience about the bone marrow transplant and hence was an ideal platform to be used. The content was displayed in the form of gifs and banner ads where men were shown doing regular whacky things they do in this age with a simple text “this guy could save a life”, they managed to maintain the seriousness of being a donor along and at the same time captured the audience (Webby Awards, 2017). The campaign was effective and a success as it appealed to the target audience. We can say so because there was a 280% rise in donor list from the targeted age group - 17974 new donors were acquired. In terms of social media KPI's, 212 million media impressions were made i.e. an increase in direct traffic by

970%. As seen, this campaign implemented all 4 key takeaways from the other two campaigns (Adweek, 2016).

6. Conclusion:

Social media has become a quintessential marketing tool to reach different parts of the world and can be used in the most innovative ways once its full impact is realized. It is now a major element of any integrated marketing campaign and can be used as standalone or in conjunction with traditional media. It has also become an empowering tool for activists and the non profit organizations of the world as we saw in the two campaigns Kony 2012 and #LastSelfie. The two campaigns reflected how meeting the objectives were also extremely important along with the viral attention to the campaign where one of them met the objectives and the other didn't. Some of the key takeaways from the campaigns that can be implemented are - involve influencers, invoke time sensitivity, have an easy call to action and select platform and content as per the target audience.