

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

***Dr. Om Prakash Sharma**

ABSTRACT

As an emerging trend of marketing, 'Influencers Marketing' is a fusion of traditional and new marketing strategies and it is based on the skill of content writing and instinctive advertising. At present, so many modern organizations are using influencers marketing as a moderately new marketing approach for promotion of sales, therefore, it is rising fast and becoming more popular at global level. This study covers all important aspects related with influencers marketing. Social media influencers and their role have been enumerated in proper manner. Category of all influencers and number of their followers have been tabulated at right place. Major challenges related with this modern approach of marketing have also been discussed at the end.

INTRODUCTION:

It is a universally accepted truth that in the present era of throat cut competition, every successful business organization must have an effective and future oriented marketing strategy for sales promotion. Such strategy spells out the current position of the organization which is based on SWOT analysis and target groups for products and services. It is also important that a marketing strategy is never complete without listing the organizational long-term goals. It also defines the methods of brand recognition and present competitive capacity of an organization.

At present, so many modern marketing strategies are being used by the organizations to achieve their long- and short-term goals of sales promotion. The biosphere of today's marketing has changed radically since the initiation of 'Influencers Marketing.' Due to the rapidly growth of digitalization and social media landscape, this type of marketing has become a prominent strategy for sales promotion of goods and services.

As an emerging trend of marketing, 'Influencers Marketing' is a fusion of traditional and new marketing strategies and it is based on the skill of content writing and instinctive advertising. At present, so many modern organizations are using influencers marketing as a moderately new marketing approach, therefore, it is rising fast and becoming more popular at global level. Sometimes this type of marketing is also treated as a 'collaboration' with content creators and social media users which includes a strategy for promotion of a particular brand of a company. In fact, 'influencers marketing' converts the idea and concept of a celebrity endorsement into a content-driven marketing movement. It's another popular name is 'Social Media

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma

Influencers Marketing’.

Actually, ‘influencers marketing’ currently helps consumers’ perceptions of their brands and it comprises in using celebrities or non- celebrities or superstar personalities, which are known as ‘Influencers’. It is very surprising fact that the share of celebrities as influencers is only 27% in our country, while non -influencers are representing 73 % sharing in Indian social media platforms. Such influencers play a vital role as an intermediary between brands of companies and followers/audiences. These influencers use metaphors, images, videos and other posts on social media platforms to affect consumers of a product. Consumers follow certain popular people/influencers/celebrities on these platforms who have expanded an enormous following because of their content and assignation. These celebrities influence consumers about their ideas, thoughts & thinking and decisions. Their following size depends on the contents, matters, themes and topics covered by them.

It can also be stated that a consumers’ desire to make a purchase directly influenced by the credibility, trustworthiness and reliability of an influencer. Considering the increasing importance of influencers, companies are realizing and recognizing the great potentials and powers of influencers in influencing buying choices and purchase decisions of the customers. It is notable that the quality and number of followers of an influencer are treated sound base of this type of marketing.

At present this strategy is successfully used with the help of different sources of social media viz- Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. According to the subject players, this type of strategy reduces the publicity cost of products by 25% in comparison to other sources of publicity. According the latest report published by ‘BEN Consulting Pvt Ltd.’, at present, in India, the total market of social media influencers is near about 400 crore rupees, which will reach at 900 crore rupees in 2018 and at global level it will reach at one lakh sixty thousand rupees in the same year. American consultancy agency named Bain & company says that at the end of 2018, 75% of total global buying will be made through social media.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The main purpose of this study is to find out the scope of influencers marketing and its impacts on customers. Moreover, to analyze the present status of this strategy in comparison to other existing techniques of sales promotion and to point out major problems/ challenges regarding this strategy are other objectives of the study.

METHODOLOGY: Data and information collected in this study are mostly based on secondary sources. But some facts and findings have been composed with the help of opinion polls, special interviews, personal observation etc.

The increasing trend of growth of ‘Social Media Influencer Market’ at global level can be seen by the following table:

‘Influencers Marketing’- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma

YEAR	AMOUNT
2010	2.6 billion US \$
2011	4.5 billion US \$
2012	7.7 billion US \$
2013	9.8 billion US \$
2014	11.4 billion US \$

Subject experts say that despite the massive impact of terrorist activities upon the world, influencer marketing is being popular and strong as ever. The global number of influencer marketing related with corporate sector grew by 26% in 2013 and 2014 saw a notable increase in brands paying huge money to the influencers. At present, more than fifty percent e-commerce stores are working with influencers. Today's youths are taking more interest in short video apps of Reels and TikTok, which are mostly concerned with beauty products, life hacks, holly wood blockbusters etc. It is hoped that in 2017 near about 80% brand marketers at global level intend to dedicate a big budget to influencer marketing. Influencers having more followers can earn a huge amount on social media.

Report published by a consultancy agency, says that at present, companies of the world use the following popular social media platforms during 'influencers marketing' for promotion of their products:

Name of Social Media Platforms	User Companies (In Percentage)
• Instagram	29%
• Facebook	46%
• You Tube	36%
• Twitter	24%
• LinkedIn	12%
• Others	72%

The above table shows that Facebook and You Tube have become the most popular social media platforms among the business organizations to promote their products/ services through 'Influencers Marketing'.

According to the concluding report of data analysis website 'Statista', at present, 1.1 hundred million Indian users follow the social media influencers and each user spends two and half hours on the above stated popular social media platforms. Near about 93 % big business houses want to use social media influencers marketing to promote their products and out of them nearabout 83% marketers realized that they are gaining more profit due to adoption of the emerging strategy of influencers marketing. On the side of respondents, 31% users of social media platforms say that they purchase the product/ brand after recommendation of influencers. Nearabout 43% users' faith on the credibility of social media influencers and 65 % users agree on the fact that influencers should appreciate and recommend only such products

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma

which are useful and important for customers and society. In addition to this, some users say that influencers should have full understandings and knowledge of algorithm, hashtag and changing trend of media platforms and they should not create anti-environment and anti-society posts or videos.

In this modern marketing strategy, the role of social media influencers can be enumerated as follows:

They create awareness about the product/service/brand,

They increase the web-traffic for the products,

Influencers lead new generation for the brands,

Influencers drive-up sales conversions,

They provide intelligibility and clarity on the products/brands, etc.

It is also notable that the growth of influencers is also not limited to sectors like food & beverage, personal care products, products related with fashion and dresses, electric instruments like mobile & other gazettes etc. but at present it is also exposed in other sectors like fintech and Banking, Financial Services and Insurance [BFSI] etc.

Types of Social media Influencers: Based on number of followers, social media Influencers can be divided in the following categories:

Mega Influencers are the popular faces or superstars and they have a significant place in the areas of film, music, entertainment, sports etc. They play an important role in their areas. They are very active at social media platforms based on their celebrity status. It is also notable that a big part of total income of such mega influencers is coming from the social media marketing.

Macro Influencers are mostly medium celebrities of sports and entertainment areas. But some persons without having any goodwill and background related with sports/entertainment areas, are becoming popular as macro influencers on the social media platforms. At present, such macro influencers are being used by the companies at large scale due to their lesser charges/ fee in comparison to the superstars or popular personalities of sports, games, entertainment etc.

Micro Influencers are mostly 'YouTubers' and brings products of small as well as lesser widespread brands on the social media platforms. Such type of influencers presents interesting posts and videos on the social media platforms and they make an appreciation/ recommendation to the users for buying the product.

Nano Influencers are not professional and skilled/ expert influencers and they are normal users of social media platforms. They present videos /photos of their friends or family.

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma

The following table shows the category of all influencers and number of their followers in a summarized manner:

Category of Influencers	Number of Followers
Mega Influencers	Followers Over 01 million (01M+ followers)
Macro Influencers	Followers between 01 lakh to 01 million (100K-01M followers)
Micro Influencers	Followers between 10 thousand to 01 lakh (10K-100K followers)
Nano Influencers	Followers less than 10 thousand (01K- 10K followers)

Major Challenges Faced by Influencers Marketers:

- To find out the right and suitable influencers
- To ensure the authenticity of the influencers
- Problems related with poor content
- To achieve the desired goals in competition
- Lack of reliable source for measurement of ROI
- Lack of standardized rates for sponsored content
- Problems related with unresponsive influencers
- Fake followers and loss of integrity
- Shortage of influencers in unconventional areas etc.

Conclusion: At present, so many modern organizations are using influencers marketing as a moderately new marketing approach, therefore, it is rising fast and becoming more popular at global level. It is a synthesis of old-style and new marketing strategies and based on the skill of content writing and instinctive advertising. Although there are so many advantages of this modern approach of sales promotion but on the other hand it also creates different type of problems/ challenges before influencers marketers as well as before customers. In this situation, major challenges should be addressed in proper manner. To protect the marketers, significant guidelines should also be issued by the Government of India and other corporate associations, welfare organizations etc.

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma

***Lecturer
Department of Bus. Admn
Govt. College
Sumerpur, Pali (Raj.)**

REFERENCES:

1. Lovett, M. J. Peres: An Empirical Analysis of Brand Characteristics, 2013
2. Social Media Report (2012-13) published by Internet and Mobile Association of India
3. Nielsen: Social media/India consumer Trust & Online Reviews (1012)
4. K. Bala: Social media and Changing Communication Practices (2014) – Published by Caluniv ltd.
5. T. Natrajan: Perceptions of Indian Consumers towards Social Media Advertisements (2014), Published by Inderscienceonline.com

'Influencers Marketing'- A Modern Approach to Sales Promotion

(An Analytical Study in the Context of Contemporary Marketing Strategies)

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma