BUSINESS INSIGHTS }

LATEST HAPPENINGS, DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT

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MARKETING

Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) model – What it is and why it matters

By 2025, the total addressable D2C market is forecast to grow almost threefold and reach $100 billion, with fashion and accessories leading as one of the largest D2C segments in India.

In today's evolving shopping landscape, the term 'Direct-to-Consumer' (D2C) often comes up. But what does it actually mean, and why is it important? In India, the total addressable direct-to-consumer (D2C) market is expected to grow by over 15 times from 2015 to 2025, as per market research firm Statista. In 2020, the total addressable D2C market was valued at $33.1 billion. By 2025, the total addressable D2C market is forecast to grow almost threefold and reach $100

billion, with fashion and accessories leading as one of the largest D2C segments in India. Here's an explanation.

What is Direct-to-Consumer (D2C)?

Direct-to-consumer (D2C) is a business model where brands sell their products directly to consumers, bypassing traditional retail intermediaries such as stores or distributors. This means that instead of purchasing through a third-party retailer, you buy straight from the brand's own website or store.

In India, with roughly over 600 million internet users and 185 million online shoppers, the country has the third-largest digital shopping base after the United States and China. This means that D2C, or digital-first brands, which use the online platform to sell directly to the consumers without the traditional distribution network of wholesalers, stockists, and retailers, are experiencing an upsurge. Currently, India is home to 600 or more direct-to-consumer brands with estimated market size of over $66 billion in 2023, as per market research firm Statista.

Why D2C Matters Control over branding and quality

D2C brands maintain full control over their products and branding. This ensures that the product you receive is exactly as the brand intended, without any alterations or compromises made by third-party retailers. This direct relationship often results in higher quality control and a more consistent brand experience.

Enhanced customer experience

With a D2C model, companies can focus on creating a personalised shopping experience. This might include tailored product recommendations, exclusive offers, and dedicated customer support. By interacting directly with consumers, brands can quickly adapt to feedback and enhance the overall shopping experience.

Better data collection and personalisation

D2C companies gather valuable data on consumer preferences and behaviours. This data helps them offer personalized marketing, product suggestions, and promotions. For consumers, this means receiving more relevant and customized offers that align with their interests.

Cost efficiency

By eliminating intermediaries, D2C brands often reduce costs associated with traditional retail partnerships. These savings can translate into better prices for consumers or higher-quality products at the same price point. This cost efficiency benefits both the brand and the customer.

Stronger brand relationships

Direct interactions with consumers allow D2C brands to build deeper relationships. Through channels like social media, email newsletters, and loyalty programs, brands can engage with their customers more effectively. This direct communication fosters a stronger connection and greater brand loyalty.

Examples of D2C brands

BoAt: A popular brand for audio products, BoAt has grown rapidly by selling its headphones and speakers directly to consumers, leveraging its strong online presence and customer engagement strategies.

Lenskart: This eyewear company offers a wide range of glasses and lenses directly to consumers, making use of its online platform and physical stores to reach customers.

Mamaearth: Known for its skincare and personal care products, Mamaearth has established a strong D2C presence through its website and social media, focusing on personalised customer experiences.

Likewise, the Indian online marketplace Nykaa experienced exponential growth since 2018. Starting with a revenue of only a little more than five billion Indian rupees, the yearly revenue amounted to Rs 51 billion in the fiscal year 2023.

Why it matters

The D2C model represents a shift towards more efficient and engaging interactions between brands and consumers. It offers advantages like better pricing, higher product quality, and a more personalized shopping experience. As consumers, recognizing the benefits of D2C can help you make more informed decisions about where and how you shop. (FE19082024)

What is the composable revolution?

By leveraging the best of the available solutions that can be easily integrated and switched out as needed, organizations can achieve greater flexibility, efficiency and innovation in their marketing strategies.

The world of marketing technology is ever evolving. With businesses slowly moving away from monolithic, all-in-one platforms in the favour of more modular and customisable approaches, martech might be witnessing what is called a Composable Revolution which is attempting to transform how companies build and manage their martech stacks. By leveraging the best of the available solutions that can be easily integrated and switched out as needed, organisations can achieve greater flexibility, efficiency and innovation in their marketing strategies.

But, what is a composable revolution?

Imagine it this way, suppose you have a music playlist, but instead of listening to one album from start to finish, you can pick out your favourite songs and put it into another playlist and enjoy the whole experience. Similarly, the composable martech stacks lets businesses choose the best parts from different tools to create a custom system that works exactly the way they want.

With the help of modular and interchangeable components within the martech stacks, the composable revolution allows businesses to create highly customised tech ecosystem that can adapt to the changing requirements and the market conditions that the business survives in instead of the business struggling to fit in their modules into a comprehensive suite of tools that martech companies provide.

According to a report by Statista, the global martech market's value in 2023 was estimated at nearly $ 670 billion. Another report states that over 14.1 thousand martech solutions were available to industry professionals in 2024. The shift towards composable martech is supposedly driven by several factors such as the need for greater agility in an increasingly digital world. According to a 2023 report by Gartner, 60% of organizations are expected to adopt a composable approach by 2025 to increase their digital capabilities and respond more effectively to customer demands. This trend reflects the growing recognition that a one-size-fits-all solution is no longer sufficient in a complex and rapidly evolving market.

No more one size fits all

One of the most significant advantages of the composable approach is the increased flexibility that it offers. As new technologies and marketing channels emerge, businesses can quickly integrate these innovations into their tech stacks

without disrupting existing systems. This agility is crucial in a world where customer preferences and behaviours are constantly changing.

For example, a company might decide to integrate a new AI-driven personalization tool into its existing martech stack to improve customer engagement. With a composable architecture, this can be done with minimal disruption, allowing the company to stay ahead of the competition and deliver more personalized experiences to its customers. (FE16082024)

Responsive marketing is the new normal! How brands are harnessing real-time insights for building trust

In times when data is available in abundance, it is becoming increasingly important to cut through the clutter and deliver relevant, timely content. Utilising real-time data to understand and respond to customer preferences and behaviours quickly, responsive marketing enables brands to do just that.

By Swagat Sarangi
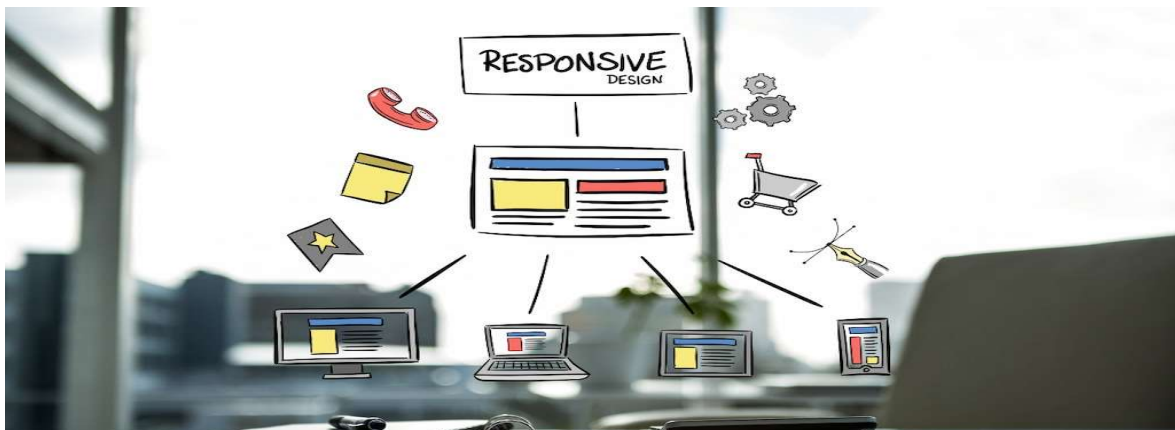
In an era where consumer preferences and marketing dynamics shift in the blink of an eye, it has become essential for marketers to tap into real-time marketing insights. Advanced analytics and AI have enabled brands to connect with their audiences and craft personalised messages, creating and building consumer trust. For brands looking to remain competitive and relevant, responsive marketing—driven by real-time insights has become the new standard.

A glance at responsive marketing

Responsive marketing is the ability to adapt marketing strategies quickly based on real-time data and consumer behaviour. The aim is to combine traditional approaches with real-time insights to resonate deeply with the target audience. It entails organising marketing campaigns around market forecasts and modifying the strategy in response to shifting consumer preferences. Along with improving targeting accuracy, responsive marketing also enhances the effectiveness of ad purchasing. An excellent example of responsive marketing is Amul's topical ads. Amul has been making timely and witty content for decades that highlights political and sports-related observations about current affairs. These ads are frequently updated and distributed across various media platforms, keeping Amul consistently relevant and beloved by the public. Through smart, timely content that strikes a deep chord with its target audience, Amul uses real-time data and consumer sentiment to effectively engage its audience, strengthen its brand identity, and increase marketing effectiveness.

In times when data is available in abundance, it is becoming increasingly important to cut through the clutter and deliver relevant, timely content. Utilising real-time data to understand and respond to customer preferences and behaviours quickly, responsive marketing enables brands to do just that. In a recent report, 49% of people said they get annoyed when a large national brand communicates generically, while 83% said they prefer to receive marketing messages that are

hyper-personalised. Brands can segment their audience with enhanced precision and ensure elevated consumer engagement levels.

Examining the shift to responsive marketing

The transition to responsive marketing represents a significant change in how brands approach their marketing strategies. Traditional marketing methodologies, characterised by their reliance on static campaigns and historical data, often need to catch up. While carefully planned, these static campaigns lack the flexibility to adapt quickly to emerging trends and shifting consumer behaviours. In contrast, fluid strategies are designed to evolve with the market. It is defined by its agility and real-time data integration, allowing brands to remain relevant. For instance, in India, Zomato's approach to real-time marketing on social media. Zomato leverages current events, trending topics, and real-time consumer behaviour to craft engaging and timely content.

Brands can now harness live data streams, which provide immediate insights into consumer interactions and market conditions, allowing brands to make informed decisions quickly. Using advanced AI and data analytics, brands can monitor real-time consumer behaviour, social media trends, and web analytics. For example, social media platforms offer a wealth of consumer preferences and trend data, which can be invaluable for shaping marketing strategies. Similarly, web analytics and customer interactions also provide crucial insights. By analysing how customers interact with a brand's website or respond to marketing messages, companies can identify areas for improvement and adjust their strategies accordingly.

This instant feedback loop ensures that marketing efforts remain relevant and effective. For instance, if a social media campaign is underperforming, they can quickly identify the issue and tailor their messages to resonate with their audience

better. Responsiveness enhances the strategies' effectiveness and ensures that brands can swiftly capitalise on new opportunities, setting them apart in a competitive marketplace.

The power of responsive marketing

Enhanced customer engagement and satisfaction are among the most significant advantages of responsive marketing. By delivering personalised and relevant content, brands can build stronger customer relationships and foster loyalty. Key benefits include improved campaign effectiveness and return on investment (ROI). Real-time data allows brands to optimise their marketing efforts, ensuring that resources are allocated to strategies that yield the best results. More and more brands are adopting responsive marketing as it slowly becomes the new normal.

The Future of Responsive Marketing

As technology continues to evolve, responsive marketing's capabilities will only expand. As brands seek innovative ways to connect with their audiences, integrating cutting-edge technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), augmented reality (AR), and advanced AI algorithms will play an important role in driving the next wave of responsive marketing strategies.

This will offer brands new opportunities to connect with consumers meaningfully and innovatively. As these technologies continue to advance, brands that embrace responsive marketing will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern digital landscape, delivering timely, relevant, and personalised experiences that drive engagement, loyalty, and growth. (FE18082024)

Social Media Marketing

How can brands build a global social media presence?

Understanding your target demographic is crucial in the segmented world of social media.

By Abhijeet Sonar

In today's interconnected world, social media has become an indispensable tool for brands seeking to establish a global presence. With nearly 4.8 billion users worldwide, representing about 60% of the global population and over 90% of internet users, social platforms offer unprecedented reach and impact. The landscape is dynamic, with 150 million new users joining in just one year, equating to roughly 410,000 new users daily. As individuals engage with an average of 6.6 different social networks each month, dedicating 2 hours and 24 minutes daily to these platforms, the opportunity for brands to connect with their audience is immense.

However, building a global social media presence requires more than just creating accounts on popular platforms. It demands a strategic, nuanced approach that

considers cultural differences, platform preferences, and audience behaviours across diverse markets. Here's how brands can effectively build and maintain a strong global social media presence:

1. Develop a SMART Strategy

Establish clear objectives using the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This framework provides a clear roadmap for your global social media efforts. Define concrete targets for followers, views, and shares, ensuring these objectives are realistic and aligned with your overall business goals. Consider objectives like increasing market share, enhancing brand awareness and reach, or addressing brand reputation. The concept of 'share of voice' can be a valuable metric in assessing your social media impact.

Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure meaningful engagement, not just vanity metrics. By setting a timeframe for assessing campaign success, you can regularly evaluate and adjust your strategy as needed.

2. Know Your Audience

Understanding your target demographic is crucial in the segmented world of social media. Each platform caters to different user groups. For instance, younger audiences gravitate towards Instagram and Snapchat, while older demographics might prefer Facebook. B2B communications often find their home on LinkedIn. Differentiate between key stakeholders and the general community in your targeting strategy. This nuanced approach ensures more effective communication with each group. Utilise tools like audience targeting to pinpoint criteria such as location, age, gender, and interests, allowing you to reach the segments most relevant to your brand.

3. Adopt a Global-Local Approach

While maintaining brand consistency is important, a one-size-fits-all approach rarely works in global social media. Implement a global-local (or "glocal") strategy that balances centralised brand messaging with localised content. Core brand communications, such as product launches or major campaigns, can be created centrally and adapted for local markets. However, to truly resonate with local audiences, empower in-market resources to create locally relevant content from scratch.

Understanding and respecting local cultural norms is crucial. Be aware of cultural sensitivities to avoid missteps that could damage your brand's credibility. For instance, content that works in one market might be inappropriate or offensive in another.

Ensure your local community managers are well-versed in your brand's tone of voice, product knowledge, and market-specific goals. Provide them with clear engagement guidelines that are culturally appropriate and aligned with local market objectives. This approach allows for authentic, real-time engagement with local audiences while maintaining overall brand consistency.

4. Tailor Content to Each Platform and Market

Resist the urge to simply translate your primary market's social content for international audiences. While this may seem efficient, it often falls short in engaging local users effectively. Instead, research the preferences and behaviours of users in each target market. For example, German consumers might engage more with data-driven content, while Japanese audiences may prefer video content on YouTube.

Consider working with local influencers where appropriate. In markets, like the UAE and India, influencer partnerships can be crucial for social media success. Collaborate with in-market experts or experienced localisation partners to gain insights into local preferences and create content that truly resonates.

5. Choose Platforms Strategically

While Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram may dominate in many markets, it's essential to look beyond these platforms when expanding globally. Research the most popular social networks in each target market. For instance, XING is preferred over LinkedIn for B2B networking in Germany, while VKontakte and Odnoklassniki are popular in Russia. In China, WeChat is the dominant platform, while Instagram and Facebook are popular with Indians.

Additionally, consider platform-specific user behaviours. South Korean internet users, for example, are highly engaged with live streaming on platforms like YouTube and Naver. Tailoring your platform strategy to local preferences can significantly boost your brand's visibility and impact.

6. Optimise Posting Cadence and Content Type

User behaviour on social platforms can vary significantly across markets. In France, for example, users tend to engage with Facebook in the morning but shift to Twitter and Instagram around midday. Adapt your posting schedule to align with these habits for maximum engagement.

Content preferences also differ across cultures. While visually-driven content might perform well in some markets, others may respond better to text-based posts or interactive content. In markets like China, where users expect immediate, personalised communication with brands, consider implementing chatbots or dedicating resources to real-time engagement.

7. Leverage Paid Strategies and Influencer Partnerships

While organic growth is valuable, supplementing your efforts with paid strategies often yields the best results in building a global social media brand. Utilise social ads, sponsored content, and boosted posts to extend your reach across different markets. Most businesses allocate between 10% and 30% of their annual budget to marketing activities, with a significant portion dedicated specifically to social media. This investment can significantly accelerate your brand's growth in new markets.

Influencer partnerships are equally crucial. The global influencer marketing market value reached $21.1 billion in 2023, more than tripling since 2019. This growth underscores the power of influencer collaborations in today's digital landscape. Partnering with influencers allows you to tap into engaged followings and create authentic content that positions your brand alongside trusted personalities. These collaborations go beyond simple endorsements, helping develop direct relationships with customers – invaluable in the social media sphere.

When selecting influencers, prioritise those who align with your brand values and resonate with your target audience in each market. The key is to create content that feels natural and adds value to the influencer's audience, rather than appearing overly promotional.

8. Ethical Considerations

Maintain high ethical standards in your global social media strategy. Be mindful of how your content might be perceived across different cultures. Campaigns that disregard local sentiments or values can backfire, potentially causing significant brand damage. Always prioritise respect for your audience over pushing brand preferences.

Final Words

A recent study revealed that 80% of consumers said brand familiarity on social platforms increases their likelihood of making a purchase. This statistic underscores the critical role social media plays in building brand recognition and driving consumer behaviour on a global scale.

Undoubtedly, building a global social media presence is a complex but rewarding endeavour. It requires a deep understanding of diverse markets, a willingness to adapt, and a commitment to authentic engagement. By implementing a thoughtful, research-based strategy that balances global brand consistency with local relevance, brands can effectively connect with audiences worldwide, fostering loyalty and driving growth in the international marketplace. (FE17082024)

E-COMMERCE

E-commerce drives 16 million jobs and boosts consumer spending, reveals Pahle India Foundation study

E-commerce vendors employ 54% more people and nearly twice as many female employees compared to their offline counterparts

E-commerce has significantly reshaped India's economic landscape, generating approximately 16 million jobs across various roles such as marketing, management, customer service, warehousing logistics, and delivery. According to a report released by The Pahle India Foundation (PIF) titled Assessing the Net Impact of e-Commerce on Employment and Consumer Welfare in India, e-commerce vendors employ 54% more people and nearly twice as many female employees compared to their offline counterparts. This underscores a notable boost in employment opportunities and gender inclusivity within the sector.

Launched by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, the report provides a detailed analysis of e-commerce's transformative role in India's economy, with a focus on job creation and consumer benefits. Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry iterated the need to look at the medium-to-long term socio-economic impact of the growth of eCommerce. He said, "I don't deny that e-commerce has a role, but we have to think carefully what that role is, and how it can evolve in an organised fashion."

The study reveals that management roles within e-commerce have seen a 42% net increase in employment, while marketing roles have grown by 39%. Additionally, 73% of vendors report that management tasks have become more

digitally enabled, and 63% have outsourced management functions. In other areas such as HR, Administration, and Merchandising, at least 25% of vendors have outsourced tasks, highlighting the sector's broader impact on employment patterns through indirect job creation and technological advancement.

"E-commerce has revolutionised India's retail landscape. Our study provides a data-driven understanding of its impact on employment and consumer welfare, offering invaluable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders," Rajiv Kumar, Chairman of PIF and former Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, said.

Offline vendors, by contrast, have only 41% engaging in digital upskilling or creating new direct or indirect employment opportunities. This disparity underscores the transformative effect of e-commerce on employment structures.

Consumer benefits have also been significantly influenced by e-commerce. On average, 30% of respondents in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities spend more than ₹1000 per month on online shopping, with 40% of Tier 3 city respondents reporting similar spending patterns. Notably, 60% of vendors in smaller cities have experienced increased sales since moving online, and 71% of these vendors have seen a rise in online sales value and profits in the past year.

Convenience is identified as the primary factor driving consumer welfare gains from e-commerce. Consumers are attracted to the ease of online shopping, product variety, and access rather than just low prices. Despite these benefits, there is a call for improvements in grievance redressal, as many consumers feel that this aspect needs significant enhancement.

The Pahle India Foundation's study underscores that e-commerce is playing a crucial role in shaping employment and consumer behaviour in India. By creating job opportunities, particularly for women, and enhancing consumer experiences

through convenience and variety, e-commerce is driving a dynamic and robust retail environment. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders aiming to support sustainable growth in India's digital economy. (FE22082024)

Brand Management

What are brand archetypes?

Originating from Carl Jung's psychological theory, brand archetypes represent universal symbols or personas that convey specific traits and values.
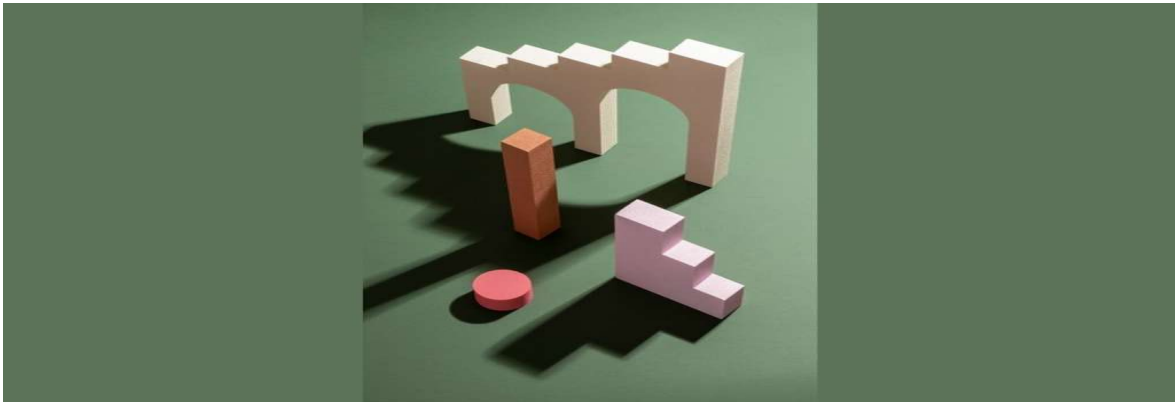
If one is any way in the world of brand marketing, one might have heard the term 'brand archetypes.' But what exactly are they, and how can they transform a brand's identity? Brand Wagon Online explains to help you understand and apply brand archetypes effectively.

What are brand archetypes?

Originating from Carl Jung's psychological theory, brand archetypes represent universal symbols or personas that convey specific traits and values. These

archetypes are designed to resonate across cultures, providing a framework for brands to establish their identity and connect with their audience in a meaningful way.

Brand archetypes are essential for crafting a brand's persona. By adopting an archetype, a brand can establish a distinctive and memorable identity. This strategic clarity aids in consumer recognition and connection, making the brand stand out amidst competition. Moreover, aligning with an archetype fosters a deeper emotional bond with the audience, potentially driving brand loyalty and reinforcing market presence.

A brand archetype provides a consistent structure for messaging and visual identity. This alignment ensures that all communications and visual elements reflect the brand's core values and personality, maintaining a cohesive presence across various channels. This consistency strengthens the brand's overall message and identity.

The twelve common brand archetypes each represent unique attributes and values. The Innocent archetype, for instance, signifies purity and optimism. The Explorer is associated with adventure and discovery, while the Sage embodies wisdom and knowledge. The Hero is marked by courage and determination, inspiring audiences to overcome challenges and achieve success.

Conversely, the Outlaw challenges norms and embraces rebellion, resonating with those who value individuality. The Magician symbolizes transformation and wonder, creating innovative and magical experiences. The Regular Guy/Gal focuses on relatability and authenticity, connecting with people through simplicity. The Lover centres on passion and intimacy, evoking feelings of romance and desire.

Additionally, the Jester brings an element of fun and humour, ensuring memorable experiences. The Caregiver emphasises compassion and support, conveying empathy. The Creator values creativity and originality, driving innovation. Finally, the Ruler represents authority and control, conveying prestige and leadership.

Effectively applying brand archetypes involves identifying the brand's core values and selecting an archetype that aligns with these values. Understanding the target audience is crucial for choosing an archetype that resonates with their preferences. Consistent messaging and visual elements that reflect the chosen archetype help create engaging stories and experiences. Ongoing evaluation and adjustments based on audience feedback and market trends are essential for maintaining relevance and impact.

Brand archetypes are a powerful tool for defining a brand's identity and establishing a meaningful connection with its audience. By leveraging these archetypes, brands can develop a robust and coherent persona that enhances their overall branding strategy. (FE21082024)

The future of personal branding: Trends and predictions shaped by technology and authenticity

AI has emerged as an important tool for personal branding, offering a wide arena of tools for drawing content based on user engagement.

PERSONAL BRAND DEVELOPMENT

The future of personal branding in India is an ever-evolving space that depends on technological advancements and rapidly changing consumer behaviour in the present technocratic-led society. As a result, several emerging trends are shaping brands' strategies nowadays.

Emerging trends in personal branding in India highlight the increasing importance of digital presence, strategic storytelling, and authenticity as individuals utilise online platforms to establish unique identities and connect with their audiences more effectively. And with the advent of AI, landscape has also changed a lot.

AI-driven personalisation

AI has emerged as an important tool for personal branding, offering a wide arena of tools for drawing content based on user engagement. In India, platforms like Zomato use AI to provide customers with personalized restaurant recommendations, eventually allowing Entrepreneurs, Influencers and Bloggers to connect efficiently with wider audiences. This strategy to adopt AI-based personalization presents compelling personal branding strategies.

Authenticity and transparency

For the Indian consumer base, especially the contemporary generation of millennials and Gen Zs, authenticity and transparency are increasingly becoming integral to the core value system. Many entrepreneurs are building their brands by presenting compelling and relatable real-life experiences. This strategy helps the brand to build trust and loyalty among its audiences. This highlights the importance of relatability in today's technocratic era in personal branding.

Video content dominance

Social media's rise has allowed entrepreneurs to present their content in a multi-model framework, inculcating compelling storytelling with video authorship. So many Entrepreneurs bank on storytelling through engaging videos, significantly improving their brands. This audio-visual content trend will continue to live streaming, and podcasts are increasingly becoming niche in personal branding.

Sustainability and social responsibility

All the panegyrics about globalization since the late 20th century are now giving way to obituaries that there is an imperative need to reflect upon social and environmental concerns; based upon research, brandings that include these issues resonate widely with the Indian consumer base. For example, some fashion brands that promote eco-friendly products are increasingly aligning their brand with social justice against contemporary vices. This trend reflects that personal brands should incorporate social responsibility into their core messaging.

Virtual and augmented reality

As the line separating reality from fiction is blurring rapidly in today's neoliberal era, Augmented reality (AR) And Virtual Reality (VR) are the new technological developments in the field as they offer state-of-the-art opportunities for brands to develop an immersive personal branding experience. Indian startups are

increasingly exploring AR to make engaging marketing campaigns, allowing the brand to showcase innovative, engaging branding opportunities.

The evolution of personal branding in India suggest a growing focus on video content, AI-driven analytics, thought leadership, and consistent cross-platform presence.

Rise of thought leadership

However, leadership is increasingly becoming a key component of personal branding. It is helping to promote individuals to become authorities in their field. Individuals trying to bridge the gap between trends of industry requirements are expected to gain prominence.

Holistic branding approach

Branding today is not restricted to professional skills; it is increasingly moving towards a holistic approach of blending personal values and lifestyle. So many fashion entrepreneurs blend their expertise with personal stories to create a multifaceted-holistic brand identity. This approach to branding will soon become an increasingly important facet of brand identity.

Data privacy and ethical consideration

We must understand the ethical considerations in personal branding when strategies related to it are increasingly becoming data-driven. Transparency about data usage is crucial. Indian startups have to abide by ethical practices related to data privacy and ethical considerations to build trust between them and their audience. This will eventually shape the future of personal branding in India.

Adaptation to new platforms

With the emergence of new social media platforms like Clubhouse or Threads, brands must remain on their toes to be agile and adapt their strategies to the new platforms to maximise their reach. This essential quality for adapting to new platforms will be a key reason for successful branding within the Indian context.

Within India, brands must blend technology with personalised content to present more relatable content that eventually attracts a larger audience. By blending various approaches, brands can resonate more with their audience and create a niche for them in an ever-competitive digital landscape. (FE17082024)

DIGITAL MARKETING

Influencer marketing fatigue: Are consumers losing trust?

At the heart of influencer marketing fatigue is the issue of authenticity

Once hailed as the future of digital marketing, influencer marketing seems like facing a wave of scepticism. As consumers become more discerning, brands are beginning to question the effectiveness of influencer partnerships. But is influencer marketing truly losing its sheen, or are we witnessing an evolution in how it's approached?

The rise and plateau of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has seen exponential growth over the past decade, with brands eagerly partnering with social media personalities to promote products and services. The appeal was clear—reach a targeted audience through trusted voices. However, as the industry has matured, so too has consumer awareness. What once felt like genuine recommendations from relatable figures now often feels

like another form of advertising, leading to what many are calling 'influencer marketing fatigue.'

Signs of fatigue: The data speaks

Recent studies suggest that consumer trust in influencers is waning. A survey by Global Web Index found that nearly half of social media users are becoming increasingly wary of influencer content. The same study revealed that consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from friends and family than from influencers, regardless of their follower count.

This shift is further evidenced by declining engagement rates across influencer posts. According to a report by Influencer Marketing Hub, average engagement rates have dropped significantly in recent years, particularly among mega-influencers with millions of followers. Consumers are becoming more selective, engaging less with content they perceive as inauthentic or overly commercial.

The authenticity problem

At the heart of influencer marketing fatigue is the issue of authenticity. Early on, influencers gained followers by sharing genuine, unfiltered glimpses into their lives. However, as brand partnerships have grown, so too has the prevalence of sponsored content, often leading to a disconnect between influencers and their audiences.

Consumers are increasingly able to spot disingenuous endorsements, and the backlash can be severe. The recent controversy involving a popular fitness influencer promoting a detox tea—despite it being widely discredited—highlights how quickly consumer trust can erode when influencers prioritize profit over authenticity.

The micro-influencer advantage

In response to these challenges, many brands are shifting their focus from mega-influencers to micro-influencers. These smaller, niche influencers tend to have more engaged audiences and are often seen as more relatable and authentic. A study by Experticity found that micro-influencers have 22 times more conversations about recommendations than the average consumer, making them a valuable asset for brands looking to build genuine connections.

By partnering with micro-influencers, brands can tap into communities that are highly engaged and more likely to act on recommendations. This approach also allows for more personalized campaigns that resonate on a deeper level with the target audience.

Navigating the new landscape

For brands, the key to overcoming influencer marketing fatigue lies in rethinking their approach. Rather than chasing high follower counts, brands should focus on building long-term partnerships with influencers who align closely with their values and can authentically represent their products.

Transparency is also crucial. Consumers appreciate honesty, and influencers who are upfront about their partnerships and selective about the brands they work with tend to maintain higher levels of trust. By emphasising quality over quantity in their influencer collaborations, brands can mitigate the risk of fatigue and create more impactful, resonant campaigns.

The future of influencer marketing

While influencer marketing may be facing growing pains, it is far from dead. Instead, it is evolving. As the industry matures, we can expect to see a greater emphasis on authenticity, transparency, and deeper, more meaningful partnerships between brands and influencers.

Ultimately, influencer marketing fatigue is not a death knell but a call to action. Brands that adapt to these changing dynamics, prioritize authenticity, and build trust with their audiences will continue to find success in this powerful marketing channel. As consumers become more discerning, the onus is on brands and influencers alike to rise to the challenge and deliver content that truly resonates. (FE20082024)

The role of digital marketing in fintech growth

Unsurprisingly, the power of digital marketing in fintech has extended beyond just multinational financial giants.

By Dipal Dutta

The increased access to faster and cheaper internet access on mobile devices in the past decade has provided massive opportunities for companies to target customers with custom advertisements in mass. Furthermore, the widespread adoption of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter has led to a rise in audience-driven digital marketing campaigns in all sectors including fintech. Digital marketing has allowed fintech companies to reach specific demographics with tailored messages, addressing their unique financial needs and concerns. This precision has not only improved customer acquisition rates but has also led to higher retention and engagement levels.

As a result, fintech sector has seen an explosive growth in the past decade. According to a report by Vantage Market Research, the global fintech market size was valued at USD 112.5 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.8% from 2022 to 2028. Another study by Statista revealed that the number of fintech users worldwide is projected to reach 4.81 billion by 2028, up from 2.5 billion in 2022. As per Fortune Business Inside, Companies such as Rapyd Financial Network Ltd. (U.K.), Stripe, Inc. (US), Mastercard (U.S.), Finastra (U.K.), and Block Inc. (formerly Square Inc) (U.S.) are at the forefront of this growth, utilizing AI and machine learning to maximize their engagement with users.

Companies like Mastercard and Finastra are adopting sophisticated digital marketing techniques to attract customers. For instance, personalized email marketing campaigns have been shown to generate an average return on investment (ROI) of 122% in 2023 by eMarketer, while social media advertising has helped fintech brands achieve a 52% increase in brand awareness as per Lyfe Marketing.

Unsurprisingly, the power of digital marketing in fintech has extended beyond just multinational financial giants. It has played a crucial role in democratizing access to financial services for small businesses. For example, the ability to set up accounts for receiving card payments in a matter of seconds has been a game-changer for many entrepreneurs. Digital marketing has been instrumental in spreading the word about these solutions, enabling small businesses to take advantage of them and truly participate in the economic uprising. In addition, gen-Y led fintech companies have forced legacy banking systems to modernize their user interfaces and incorporate AI-driven features to remain competitive.

As fintech continues to grow, digital marketing will undoubtedly remain a critical driver of growth, innovation, and financial inclusion in the industry. As more people will gain access to affordable internet in the coming time, digital marketing will play a crucial role in enabling and empowering individuals and businesses to participate in the economy. As technology continues to advance and consumer behaviours evolve, government policies and regulatory frameworks will be instrumental in sustaining this growth and ensuring that the benefits of fintech are widely distributed. (FE10082024)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

How Generative AI is revolutionising creative ad campaigns

According to a report by McKinsey, companies that leverage AI in their marketing are witnessing a revenue uplift of up to 15% and a sales ROI (return on investment) uplift of up to 20%.

Like every other industry, the advertising industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by advances in technology like Generative AI. The new wave of AI technology, like Open AI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini, is changing the methodology of how creative ad campaigns are conceptualised, designed and executed as well. As brands seek to capture consumer attention in an increasingly crowded marketplace, GenAI is offering new opportunities to enhance creativity, streamline processes and deliver segment wise personalised content. A report by Salesforce has revealed that 75% of marketers are either experimenting with or have fully implemented AI into their workflows.

The Creative Process 2.0

Gen AI is reshaping the creative process by automating tasks that were traditionally considered time consuming and labour intensive. According to a report by McKinsey, companies that leverage AI in their marketing are witnessing a revenue uplift of up to 15% and a sales ROI (return on investment) uplift of up to 20%. For example, AI tools can generate multiple versions of ad copy, design layouts, and even entire video scripts in a fraction of the time it would take a human team. This efficiency allows marketers to experiment with different creative approaches, test them in real-time, and quickly iterate based on

performance data. The ability to produce high-quality creative content at scale is enabling brands to be more agile and responsive to market trends.

One of applications of generative AI in creative ad campaigns is in the area of visual content creation. Furthermore, another report by Adobe stated that nearly 62% of creative professionals who use Gen AI say it is reducing the time they spend on tasks by about 20%. Tools like DALL-E and Midjourney can generate images based on text prompts which allows marketers to create unique visuals that align with their brand messaging. Reportedly, this capability is particularly valuable in industries where visual appeal is critical, such as fashion, automotive, and consumer goods.

Personalised targeting

Personalisation is seemingly becoming a key driver of success in modern advertising, and Gen AI is playing a crucial role in enhancing this capability. AI-powered tools can analyse vast amounts of consumer data to generate personalised ad content that resonates with individual preferences and behaviours. According to Salesforce, 73% of customers expect companies to understand their unique needs and expectations, and 65% of consumers say they will remain loyal to companies that offer a more personalised experience. Gen AI can also produce visuals and video content so that marketers can adapt to different audience segments. As a result, brands can create more meaningful connections with their audiences and improve the overall effectiveness of their ad campaigns. New Epsilon research states that 80% of consumers are more likely to purchase when brands offer personalised experiences.

A report by PwC estimates that AI will contribute up to $15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, with a significant portion coming from marketing and advertising. Brands that embrace Gen AI today will be better positioned to engage

with their audiences in new ways. However, it is crucial for marketers to remain mindful of the ethical and creative considerations as they integrate AI into their campaigns. By doing so, they can harness the power of AI while preserving the artistry and authenticity that are at the heart of successful advertising. (FE20082024)

Through the Looking-Glass: The Future of Marketing and Branding with Generative AI: What's a decade ahead of us!

"Generative AI will revolutionize marketing by personalizing messages and products to each consumer's unique preferences, akin to how a star chart is customized for an astronomer."

By Pragya Sugandha

Consider entering a high-tech observatory where each star is mapped and explained just for you. Generative AI will revolutionize marketing in a comparable way by analyzing vast amounts of data to uncover and understand each consumer's unique preferences, behaviors, and needs. This will enable brands to create marketing messages, advertisements, and products as precisely tailored to individuals as a star chart is to an astronomer. The future of marketing with generative AI promises a stargazing experience where every interaction is as personalized and insightful as a custom celestial map—ensuring a perfect alignment between consumer interests and brand offerings.

Interactive Experiences with The Magic Mirror

Standing in front of a magic mirror that doesn't just reflect your image but transforms it, allowing you to see yourself in different outfits, locations, or scenarios instantly. Generative AI will enable brands to create immersive and interactive experiences akin to this magic mirror. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) powered by AI will allow consumers to engage with brands in dynamic and personalized ways. Trying on clothes virtually, test-driving cars from your living room, or attending virtual events that feel almost tangible are examples of these AI-driven experiences. This technology will bridge the gap between the digital and physical worlds, making interactions with brands more engaging and memorable.

The Infinite Library and the Ever-Evolving Story

An infinite library where books are written in real-time based on your interests and current events illustrates how generative AI will revolutionize content creation. Automating content creation across various media will be a reality, with blogs, articles, social media posts, videos, and even interactive stories generated in real-time. This content will be tailored to trending topics and audience preferences, ensuring brands have a constant stream of fresh, relevant material that resonates deeply with their target audience. This capability will not only keep audiences engaged but also enhance a brand's ability to respond quickly to market changes and emerging trends.

The Genie in the Bottle for personalized customer support

Having a personal genie who understands your needs and provides solutions instantly represents the future of customer support with generative AI. AI-powered virtual assistants will offer instant, accurate, and empathetic responses,

continuously learning from interactions to become more intuitive and helpful over time. This advancement will significantly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, as support becomes more efficient and personalized.

Market Research: The Crystal Ball and future Insights

A crystal ball that predicts future trends and consumer behaviors with uncanny accuracy exemplifies how generative AI will enhance market research. By analyzing vast datasets to forecast trends, consumer sentiments, and market shifts, brands will be able to stay ahead of the curve. This predictive capability will enable proactive strategy adaptations and informed decision-making, aligning with future market demands. Brands will be able to anticipate consumer needs and preferences, positioning themselves strategically to capture emerging opportunities.

The Shapeshifter and the Dynamic Brand Identity:

A shape-shifter that can adapt its form to any environment seamlessly symbolizes how generative AI will impact brand identity. Brands will be equally adaptable, crafting dynamic identities that evolve with changing consumer landscapes. AI will help maintain a consistent core identity while adapting messaging and visuals to resonate with different demographics, cultures, and contexts. This adaptability will ensure that brands remain relevant and appealing to diverse audiences, fostering stronger connections and loyalty.

Addressing Challenges with The Shield and Sword Approach

While generative AI presents immense opportunities, it also introduces challenges, needing both a shield and a sword for protection and progress. Ethical concerns, data privacy issues, and potential biases will require robust ethical

guidelines, continuous monitoring, and transparent AI practices. These will serve as the shield, protecting consumers and brands. Simultaneously, innovation, adaptability, and a commitment to ethical AI development will be the sword, driving progress and ensuring responsible and effective AI use.

Ethical concerns, such as misleading or deceptive content, data privacy, AI bias, and authenticity, will need careful management. Establishing clear guidelines, ensuring transparency, and maintaining human oversight will be crucial. Additionally, staying compliant with evolving data privacy regulations and addressing potential biases in AI models will help build trust and credibility.

Embracing Generative AI

The future of marketing and branding with generative AI promises a landscape where personalization, interactivity, and predictive insights are the norm. By embracing these technologies with ethical foresight, brands can build deeper connections with consumers, offering experiences that are as personalized as a tailor-made suit, as interactive as a magic mirror, and as insightful as a crystal ball. The next decade promises a thrilling evolution in how brands communicate, engage, and grow. Brands that navigate these opportunities and challenges effectively will be well-positioned to thrive in this dynamic and rapidly evolving landscape. (FE08082024)

Thank you...