

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON ADMISSION PROCESS OF MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES IN MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract

The use of internet has become an important commercial platform which is globally accepted and recognized by many universities as well as management institutes carrying online marketing channels with the traditional aids as well. Social media, defined as a platform for participants to create, share or exchange information and connect with others on a global scale, is emerging as a key marketing component of the college admissions process. The emergence of social media allows institutes the ability to communicate in a voice that is familiar to the millennial generation. Currently the enrolments (admissions) in management institutes are very low and competition is fierce. The outcome of social media marketing helps to answer the question of how management institutions can best leverage this technology to influence college choice. There is an increase in the interest of management institutes for use of social media as an integral part of marketing channel but slightly unaware in the higher educational or management institutes. This article shows how such platforms can be used to increase the flow of students via social media platforms in Maharashtra.

Keywords: Social Media, Facebook, Digital Marketing, Instagram Marketing of Management institutes

Introduction

With the setting up of technology in education, we are witnessing a lot of innovative changes in teaching pedagogics of educational institutes. Educational institutes are improving their systems to enhance academic precision. Institutes are using social media in the teaching-learning process to improve assessment for creating proper learning tools for the students. Social media is new path for the development and enrichment of student's learning process. Students regularly share their thoughts and knowledge with each other on social media. On the other hand, research scholars are offering online lectures and imparting valuable information through social media.

While social networking met with huge enthusiasm among new generation initially, this new social culture seems to have been accepted by all generations in India. The rise of speedy internet access and smart phones helped social networking even more and days of considering social applications as waste of time is long gone. Initially the use of social networking was limited to corporates and businesses for connecting with peers, customers, clients with twitter handle, Facebook accounts or WhatsApp mentioned on business and visiting cards. Because of Social networking it is much easier to associate with friends, colleagues and family members

who are associated with education field. Social networking gives access to vast range of knowledge viz access to information, videos, extension of social group, ability to express, learning opportunities, seeking and maintaining friends and relatives.

The impact of social network in educational management is attracting a lot of attention of educational fraternities. It is developing as a powerful factor to gain much needed push for institutes. Due to the growing influence of digital technology, the world is coming closer and closer. It is altering the technique of conveying lessons. Educational sector is inseparable from the influence of Social Media. It is becoming the knowledge hub for a student. It is changing their overall educational experience. The educational program has improved due to incursion of digital media technologies

Social Media as a higher education marketing tool has become an attractive proposition in influencing aspirant management students. With the information on social media the students can easily gauge the pros and cons of all the management institutes. Improved communications, customer engagement and increasing brand loyalty have been identified as outcomes of this form of marketing. It is reasonable to assume that assignation of social media applications as part of institutions' marketing could contribute in improvement of enrolment numbers and assist prospective students make judicious decisions regarding their study choice and institute selection. Social media can be a source for aspirants to improve their decision making process regarding their choice for selecting a course as well as institute.

Social media as a tool helps in nurturing and fulfilling the well positioned marketing strategies as well as fully developed process of recruitment and student engagement activities.

The Study aims on the future of market and about their social media use. The knowledge of Social media is important for enhancement of marketing strategies can go hand in hand with traditional marketing techniques in order to address the existing communication issues and improve student recruitment effectiveness. Three objectives will guide the study:

- Identifying the student segment (particularly their socio-demographic interest) based on their social media use,
- Explore the influence of the social media on the choice of Management Course and Management institute in relation to traditional communication tools.
- Explore the dependence of factors influencing the selection of institute through social media use.

Positive Influences of Social Media Marketing

- Reaching to maximum mass audience.
- Knowledge is shared at maximum pace.
- It reaches to niche rather than newspaper advertisements.
- Cost effective solutions
- Dynamic in nature

Negative Influences of Social Media Marketing

- Students get distracted through various channels as many institutes adapt this strategy for survival

- It's very difficult to actually engage the aspirants and enrol them for particular management course/ management institute.

Goals and Objective

It is a effective strategy in setting targets and objectives which focuses on social media efforts establish parameters for what a strategy is attempting. Institutes should adhere to the specific criteria, measureable, attainable, relevant, and time-based. Examples of main goals in management education that will reflect reasonable expectations of success for Management institutes include strengthening recruitment efforts, engaging with current students, connecting with an institution's alumni body, strengthening an institution's brand and reputation, and establishing social media as an efficient and valuable communication tool.

Higher education and social media marketing

Marketing of educational / management institute have often gained limited support. In order to compete in the national market as well as global market the management institutes should distinguish the need to identify proper segment to market themselves in order to sustain.

Social Media's Place in the Process: It is important to distinguish between how aspirant students use social media in order to get appropriate information about the management institutes. While students may spend several hours a day on Instagram or Snapchat, that doesn't mean that those channels are used for college information-gathering and decision-making, During the college search, students are highly likely to use college websites to gather information, followed closely by review sites, As students begin to hone their list of potential management institute, they turn to social media to get the actual scenario about the campus and current students of the institute. Perhaps most importantly, the report found that two in five students use social media to decide which institute to attend. Social media is more useful in influencing institute's choice rather than creating awareness amongst students.

How to connect: social media focuses on two major objectives: Firstly to entice students to come to their campus and Secondly to give feel of campus to those students who can't visit the campus. Identifying primary and secondary audiences is important for guiding the generation of content that will be appropriate and engaging for one's followers. By researching and collecting data on one's key stakeholders, an institution becomes better able to resonate and connect with them. Things to consider include determining the needs, interests, demographics, motivation, and preferred social media channels of one's audience. Social media use in management institutions involves additional considerations compared to other sectors because it has a segmented audience Management schools are thus faced with the challenge of determining how to meet the unique needs of each target groups like college students, graduate students, and alumni. When considering alumni engagement, some institutes may have a very diverse body of alumni in terms of generational differences and communication preferences, depending on when their programs were first established. Having a more mixed audience may decrease the effectiveness of social media-driven marketing and engagement efforts.

One way to address a highly segmented audience is by using social media targeting, which allows for directing posts and messages to reach specific stakeholder groups and populations.

For a fee, paid targeting options across Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn enable users to aim content toward audiences of a certain demographic, location, education level, occupation, political affiliation, particular interest, and more, while simultaneously enhancing the reach of one's posts. For users with a limited budget, organic targeting or free targeting is also an option, though much less powerful and limited in its ability to connect with key stakeholders.

Competitive Analysis: Observing how competitors and other members of the community use their social media is important for channelizing one's own strategy by gaining insight into what works and what doesn't, particularly in the context of reaching and connecting with an institution's specific target audiences. Analysing other institutes' social media profiles for different engagement measures and types of content helps to cultivate an understanding of what might appeal to students.

Content Strategy: Content strategy has the ability to make or break the success of a social media strategy. Without interesting and engaging content, having a presence on social media is not useful to an institution. Decisions should be made regarding the type, tone, format, and style of content, as well as posting times and frequency.

In general, planning and creating social media content should take into account what will be most engaging, relevant, and useful to the management aspirants. For instance, in order to influence social media effectively as a admission tool, it is crucial to understand the needs of prospective students and what attracts them when viewing the social media of a potential institute. The main determinant of perceived authenticity was disclosure – whether or not personal narratives, experiences, opinions, and feelings were shared. As a result, many education institutions have adopted the use of blogging as one way of imbuing content with authenticity. Some institutes even employ student ambassadors who run institute's social media accounts that provide prospective students with intimate and first hand perspectives on the institute and student life. Factors found to contribute to alumni engagement were university prestige, attendance of university events, and student organization involvement. Another study found that integrating unifying imagery, institution pride, relevance, and nostalgia into content is most effective for promoting alumni identification and also boosts social media engagement.

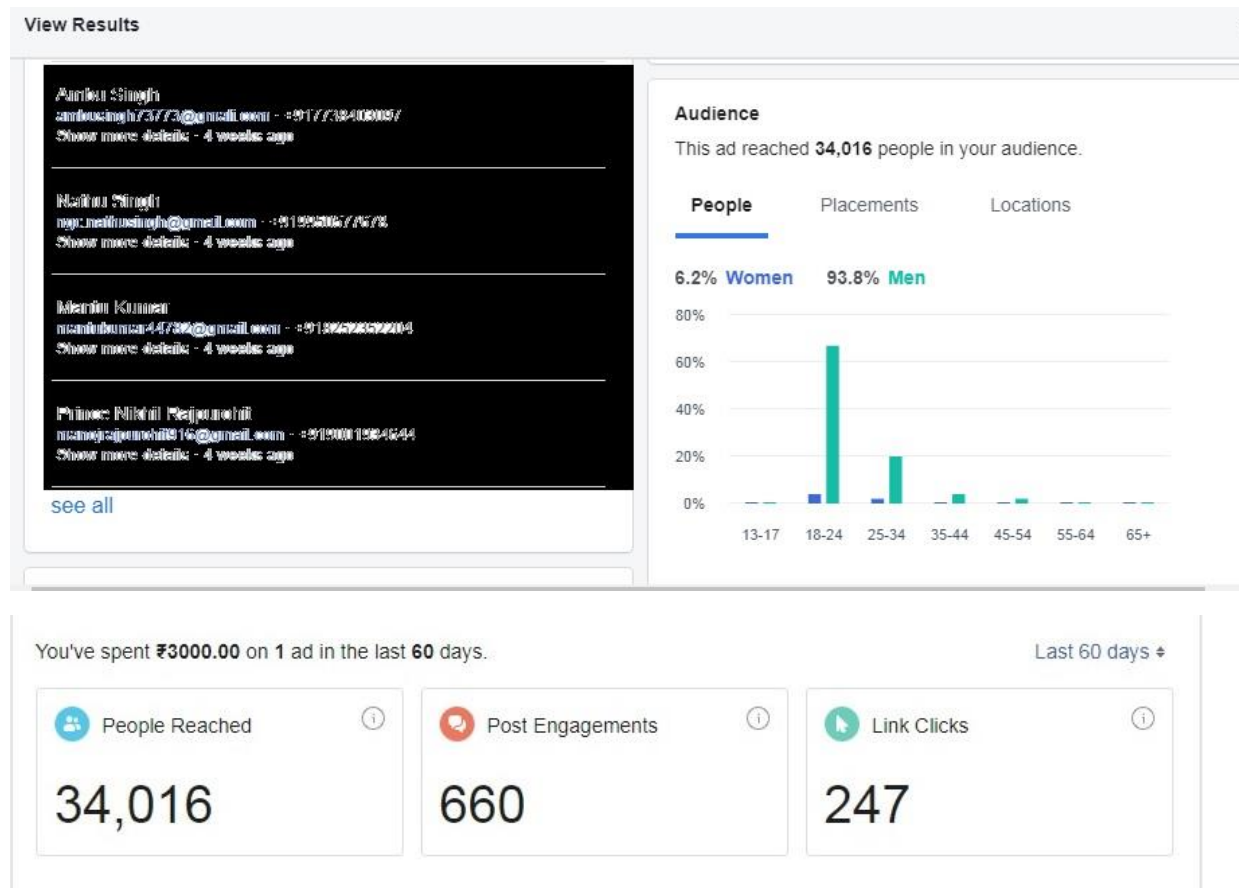
Another critical component of content strategy is determining posting times and frequency. While studies and reports have identified certain days and times of maximal user engagement across various social media platforms, it is more important to understand the posting times that will yield maximal engagement for an institution's specific audience. Though these pre-identified days and times may be useful as a guideline or starting point, the most effective way of determining periods when followers will be most likely to view and interact with shared content is through trial and error – posting content and then monitoring rates of engagement over time. In terms of posting frequency, the most important consideration is maintaining consistency so that followers remain engaged and are able to reliably expect posts on a regular basis.

Budget and Resources Planning: Determining the needs of a social media strategy ensures that an institution has the budget and resources necessary to cover all activities, which allows the strategy to be sustainable in the long term.

Actual Implementation of Social Media Marketing

The social media marketing was done in Maharashtra for 5day for all the MBA aspirants. The main focus was on the following points :

1. Identify the segment on Social Media
2. Identify the age-group (prominent customer base / students as well as their parents, alumni groups)
3. Identifying demographics (e.g City, State etc.)
4. Lead Generation



This is just a small example wherein the campaign was run for few days. The Link Clicks can be considered as potential students / aspirants who are seeking an opportunity in Management courses. The reach is much higher compared to traditional marketing ways in just small span of time and with lesser cost.

Conclusion

The Social Media marketing is now a very essential part in admission process of Management institutes. The purpose of this paper was to determine what extent college students and parents were exposed to social media and students gather information to finalize admission in particular management institute. For Management Institutes, developing a comprehensive social media strategy and applying best practices for social media use to specific channels can help engage

prospective students, current students, and alumni, and thus contribute to the success of marketing and student engagement efforts. This paper provides relevant information and guidance to inform management institutes that wish to enhance their social media presence. This creates opportunity to connect with students should be pursued in a strategic manner to achieve higher results.

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