Social Media Advertising for Achieving Long-term Marketing Objectives

Irakli Abashidze, PhD
Grigol Robakidze University, Georgia

Abstract
Increasing competition in consumer markets forces businesses to elaborate marketing plans focused on long-term perspectives. This is important in today's fluctuating and unpredictable business environments, where a high level of competitiveness and a positive reputation is the premise of survival for a business. Otherwise, it will be unable to retain its share of consumer markets and make plans focused on long-term periods. In this regard, social media advertising is one of the most powerful strategies to reach various marketing goals: brand awareness and high brand value, positive reputation and word of mouth, growing customer base, high ROAS (return on ad spend) in short-term and CLV (customer lifetime value) in the long run. Therefore, it is necessary to research social media advertising to achieve long-term marketing goals. The paper deals with various issues, including social media advertising opportunities, ways of attracting and retaining customers, raising brand awareness, and elaborating strategies focused on long-term results. The discussion provided in the paper is a result of the literature review and the author's observations. Each part of the paper contains recommendatory remarks for achieving long-term marketing goals by using social media advertising strategies. A brief conclusion summarizes the paper.

Introduction

Advertising has always been an integral part of marketing communications at every stage of its development. The emergence of social media made advertising an even more powerful tool for maintaining profitable relationships with audiences. Marketers can set a wide variety of advertising goals, make detailed segmentation, target specific categories of customers, and influence their behavior efficiently. At the same time, social media is shifting the power from marketers to consumers, because regarding the democracy allowed in social media all users as consumers can now be in contact with each other exchanging information about products and services, which pushes marketers to change their old methods to match the new needs of consumers (Ertemel et al. 2016). Marketers face the challenges of attracting and retaining customers as online word of mouth significantly affects consumer decisions. Hence, businesses need to elaborate advertising strategies that will be designated for long-term marketing objectives. Social media platforms provide such an opportunity. However, it requires profound planning and execution. Therefore, the issue is important and worth discussing.

Advertising for achieving long-term marketing goals in social media is necessary to maintain competitiveness. Gaining brand recognition and improving brand impression is a vital, yet challenging task for companies, especially in highly competitive markets (Golmohammadi et al. 2022). Consistent advertising should be a prerequisite for generating a loyal customer base and growing brand equity. Since a high number of commercial offers overloads social, advertising messages should offer value that will persuade customers not only to stay loyal to a company but also give the motivation to become a recommender for potential new customers.

Another important aspect is that social media is an unpredictable and fluctuating online environment. Businesses face reputational risks created by the nature of web 2.0, where consumer-generated content can spread fast, reach high numbers of people, and negatively influence a brand's reputation. Thus, the popularity of the online social community increases the need for companies to take ever-increasing cautionary measures to protect their reputations (Becker et al. 2019). Social media advertising may serve not only as a way to increase sales and attract new customers but also as a long-term marketing strategy that can reinforce brand awareness and a positive reputation. In this process, selecting a specific positioning niche is essential as well.

When it comes to setting and executing long-term advertising goals, consistency is one of the fundamental principles. Frequent exposure of customers to advertising messages increases chances of single purchase intentions and becoming loyal customers for long-term perspective. Additionally, social media advertising purposes can and must be differentiated

according to the stage of the life cycle of a product. Advertising in social media can be informative, persuasive or reminding, depending on the life cycle stage: introduction, growth, maturity or decline. For long-term objectives, informativeness is a rational factor that can increase the number of loyal customers as it significantly impacts the value of social media ads (Alalwan, 2018). The right approach on the right stage and consistency can make social media advertising one of the main factors for increasing competitiveness in various business industries.

The opportunity to reach the right audience at the right time and place is another condition for establishing lasting and profitable relationships with customers. The principle of "every time and everywhere" can efficiently provide businesses with the opportunity to achieve long-term marketing goals. However, precision in targeting and segmentation is essential for a successful advertising campaign. Segmentation can leverage a better understanding of consumer behavior, and therefore a better targeting, in order to obtain the desired effect of any marketing activity (Vinerean et al. 2013).

Setting long-term advertising goals in social media is significantly necessary for both large-scale and small businesses. Due to the high level of competition in markets and the peculiarities of social media marketing, it is vitally important to attract new customers consistently and gain their loyalty. Otherwise, the perspective of obtaining high competitiveness will be vague. Therefore, focusing on long-term perspectives is one of the main premises of success while planning advertising campaigns in social media.

The research methodology is based on the author's observation and analysis of various sources. In addition, a review of the literature is used for making respective conclusions regarding the research issue. However, since advertising in social media requires ever-changing approaches and the application of practical experience, it is expedient to make relevant conclusions predominantly based on the method of current observation results.

Results of the research: social media advertising aspects are discussed and appropriate conclusions are made. Namely, the paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the following issues: social media as an advertising channel; attracting new customers and retaining the existing audience; branding and raising awareness; setting goals, executing plans, and analyzing results. The conclusion is a summary of the paper with appropriate recommendations. Each of the issues discussed combines unified research that can help practitioners and researchers make insightful inferences.

Social media is a powerful tool for advertising

An array of advantages make social media a favorable platform for advertising. Features like detailed segmentation, ad format diversity, device diversity, rich analytical data, and goal diversity make it often a primary

channel for advertising communication for companies. Setting the right goals and KPIs is of great importance. They are primarily derived from firms' strategic marketing goals and help to coordinate organizational actions and mobilize resources (Tafesseet al. 2018).

Long-term marketing communication generates high volumes of analytical data that require thorough processing and detailed reporting. This is necessary for improving the efficiency of decisions that affect a company's marketing policy both in short and long-term periods. In this process, social media analytics tools are used to gather data from social platforms to help guide marketing strategies (Kumar, 2019). Furthermore, proper management of social media analytics can be considered a strong competitive advantage. This is even more important when a business aims at achieving objectives designated for long-term perspective.

Depending on specific goals and target audiences, various types of platforms and formats are at marketers' disposal: general-purpose social networks like Facebook and Twitter, Youtube as a leading video portal worldwide, Instagram as a platform for visual content, etc. Marketing communication through these platforms can enable firms to reach new customers through users' connections and drive the demand for their products. Therefore, understanding the factors that affect sharing on social media platforms is important for both marketing practice and theory (Peng, 2018). This information can be used for choosing an advertisement's creative, format, target audience, purpose, platform, and device types. Each of the above-mentioned platforms may have its own type of audience with characteristic traits of behavior and decision-making habits. Based on prior research and analysis, it is possible to conduct an advertising campaign targeting a specific customer category. However, marketers should take into consideration that a significant number of social media users are active on more than one social media platform. Nevertheless, the traits of the behavior of a particular user may differ depending on the platform type. It creates the necessity for marketers to differentiate advertising style, intensiveness, and goals according to social media platform types.

Social media platforms are also equipped with the opportunity to track customers' locations. This allows marketers to target audiences based on geographic data. Location can play an important role in the formation of a loyal customer base. In this process, advertisers should use geo-marketing tools as part of their business strategy if they want to regularly and automatically analyze the data of the target customer group (Madleňák, 2021). Therefore, consistent emphasis on location in advertising messages is able to prompt a customer to make repetitive purchases which will have lasting effects. However, location should be used in line with other values that a customer will be offered in advertising campaigns.

Consistent advertising communication may also be encompassed by various reputational risks and even threats of PR crises. Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate online reputation management (ORM) policy for detecting possible complications while conducting advertising campaigns through social media platforms. Immense amounts of information are generated by users daily through social media platforms, including posts about brands and their products. With the growing amount of information available over the Internet, an urgent need is felt towards finding tools that assist in resource search and management. A large share of the generated information content is processed daily over social sites (Manaman, 2016). Therefore, companies need to use online reputation management tools to detect and promptly prevent possible problems while advertising campaigns on social media platforms. The necessity of an online reputation management strategy increases, even more, when a business aims to set long-term marketing goals. Among other strategies, social media advertising is one of the main components of this process.

Marketers also need to consider social media advertising as an activity for forming and implementing a positioning strategy. Every advertising message can be used to convey brand values, foster a positive reputation, and raise brand awareness alongside product sales. Such an approach can have a long-lasting effect and bring various marketing benefits to a business. Focusing on intangible assets like brand value, positive reputation, and positioning in a unique niche can be gradually and increasingly converted into tangible assets - sales and growing profitability. Eventually, competitiveness increases. Nevertheless, high competition in markets forces businesses to take measures to retain loyal customers.

Audience retention and attracting new customers

Social media marketing creates an unprecedented scale to reach a large number of people, interact with them and leverage their voices for a more significant marketing impact. A purposive application of social media enables marketers to manage customer relationships, promote their brands and influence their purchase decisions (Tafesse et al. 2017). Among other strategies, advertising is one of the main tools for building these relationships. Every positive interaction within social media can be regarded as a step towards proximity between a brand and customers. Consistent positive interactions motivate customers not only to make repetitive purchases but also to establish a connection with a brand on an emotional level. This is a robust foundation for retaining profitable relationships with customers for a long time. Eventually, such customers may become brand advocates who have the potential to influence existing and potential customers. According to Philip Kotler's concept, in the digital economy, the customer path should be

redefined as the five A's – awareness, appeal, ask, act, and advocacy. Marketing 4.0 ultimately aims to drive customers from awareness to advocacy (Kotler, 2017). Social media advertising allows marketers to turn ordinary customers into brand advocates. In its turn, such customers can provide a business with stable growth of customer base in the long run.

To attract a high number of loyal customers or so-called "advocates", brands need to modify their advertising messages in social media considering the types of target audiences: "cold," "warm" and "hot" audiences. In this process, personalization can play an important role. However, the level of personalization should correspond to the level of engagement between a customer and a brand. Excessive levels of personalization in advertising may harm the efficiency of an advertising campaign. Therefore, the sellers need to research who's who that is related to their product and target audience (Latiff et al. 2015).

The role of "advocates" in attracting new customers can be revealed through electronic word of mouth (eWOM). eWOM received on digital channels is valued by consumers, in some cases, more highly than their own primary experience. It effectively builds brand communities and subsequently influences product judgment (Gvili et al. 2017). As a result, potential customers intensively engage with a brand on social media platforms which is a strong prerequisite for establishing lasting connections. Alongside other marketing benefits, establishing positive and long-lasting relationships with a large number of customers can increase a business's lifetime value (CLV). Social media advertising can be used as one of the key factors in these processes. To manage eWOM throughout social media platforms, monitoring customer feedback is one of the most important principles. It allows marketers to rectify possible drawbacks in advertising campaigns and avoid reputational complications.

Audience retention and attracting new customers require comprehensive research of consumer behavior. This is a key pillar of understanding consumers' needs, wants, and demands. Social media provides marketers with opportunities to observe and influence consumers' actions. Customer relationship management (CRM) is a strategy allowing marketers to collect various types of information about customers. CRM applications can use technology to collect and process information that predicts consumer behavior (Elena et al. 2016). Hence, businesses need to create a well-functioning CRM system in parallel to advertising campaigns on social media platforms.

Information collected within CRM channels is a part of the data analytics policy. Social media marketing combines metrics and/or analytics tools, methodologies, and techniques. Social media metrics represent the tangible outcome of monitoring, measuring, reporting, and calculating content

from social media (Misirlis et al. 2018). As social media is a rich consumer data source, marketers can analyze consumer behavior and make important decisions for future advertising campaigns. Besides, companies use social media to harness their brand awareness, product/customer service improvement, advertising strategies, and network structure analysis (Batrinca et al. 2014). Proper management of data analytics policy allows companies to collect, process, and analyze information necessary for attracting and retaining loyal customers.

While conducting advertising campaigns on social media, psychological factors play a vital role in forming consumer behavior and attitudes. Most decisions are based on emotional, irrational, and subconscious factors. The impression received during the online communication process influences customers' perceptions which further determines their actions. An advertising message must carry the right promise – a message that creates expectations in a consumer's mind. At the same time, customers define the rules of brand engagement. Psychological engagement is essential because consumers are not passive recipients of information; they are participants (Ashley et al. 2015). This is a part of the branding process, where social media advertising is an essential component, together with other marketing strategies.

Branding and raising awareness

The quantity of conversions is the most obvious result for evaluating the efficiency of an advertisement in social media. However, positive reputation, high awareness, and high brand value are also strong factors that influence customer decisions. At the same time, these results are more challenging to measure. Businesses on social media can transfer the uniqueness of the product and brand to the customers and can be influential by making touches that will make them feel important (Bilgin, 2018). Brand equity helps a business maintain a high level of competitiveness, sales, growing revenue, and other tangible assets. Advertising campaigns in social media boost a brand's positive reputation, and awareness and influence consumer behavior. Therefore, the overall branding philosophy should comprise advertising as one of the key tools at every life cycle stage.

Although advertising is an essential component, branding is a much larger process. It requires thorough planning and execution on multiple touchpoints between a brand and a consumer, both online and offline. This process may take years and a considerable amount of resources. However, the return on investment in branding is high from a long-term perspective. Social media advertising can be used as one of the primary strategies in this process, in conjunction and in full compliance with other marketing strategies. Using social media platforms contributes to the ability of firms to attach customers

to their own brands more (Alalwan et al. 2017). If done properly, a business can manage integrated marketing communications efficiently, where every channel and marketing effort contributes to building a brand image.

Since branding is an ongoing and lasting process, social media advertising should be used on a regular basis. Repetitive exposure to a brand in social media advertisements can create a positive image of a company in a customer's mind. Nevertheless, this process may be accompanied by complications. Consumers may perceive companies and brands as unwanted guests in the interactive space. In contrast, many users expect firms to participate in social media and may even purposely pull firms into the social media conversation by either mentioning the brand or "hashtagging" the firm (Felix et al. 2017). Such peculiarities of social media users and the diversity of customer behavior types create the necessity to segment and target audiences in a detailed manner. Besides, to avoid a negative perception of a brand, marketers need to implement the principles of permission marketing in branding strategy and in advertising campaigns on social media platforms. This is a complex but efficient approach that can bring several marketing benefits to a business.

It is expedient also to discuss the issue of public relations and coping with possible PR crises. As social media is unpredictable, unexpected developments may occur during customer communication. The reason for such complications may become an advertising message. Improper management of communication may turn into a full-scale PR crisis. Thus, marketers need to be prepared to manage communications during a crisis. On the one hand, social media and advertising, in particular, may become a source of PR crisis but, on the other hand, social media platforms can be used to alleviate or even resolve a PR crisis. Developing a direct dialogue with online users can help a company be proactive in the case of a PR crisis. At the same time, a firm can leverage its online social presence to smooth out the echo effect deriving from a crisis and use e-WOM to its advantage (Zamani et al. 2015).

Word of mouth may become one of the main threats to a brand in social media. To protect a brand from such threats, an anti-crisis strategy is necessary. One of the main principles for avoiding a PR crisis is constant monitoring of advertising campaigns. Marketers can use ORM tools to observe comments and feedback posts about a brand or a product. In this case, they can detect a threat and take preventive measures to avoid complications at an early stage. In case of a crisis, one of the most important principles is an immediate response. A delay in the reaction may aggravate a crisis and bring it to the point where it will be impossible to cope with the negative consequences. In the long run, this may significantly undermine the brand reputation and decrease competitiveness to the lowest level. Managing

advertising campaigns in social media requires general advertising skills, brand management qualifications, and experience. Therefore, while setting advertising goals and sales, branding must be envisaged as one of the objectives. Modern tools and social media platforms allow marketers to set multipurpose goals while planning advertising campaigns.

Setting goals, executing plans, and analyzing results

Before discussing details of long-term advertising plans in social media, it is necessary to identify what type of goals can be classified as "long-term". Social media advertising is not the only important factor in achieving the following long-term objectives: 1. Raising brand awareness and value; 2. Fulfillment of positioning strategy; 3. The constant growth of the customer base; 4. Positive word of mouth and online reviews; 5. Growing CLV; 6. Growing reach and engagement in social media. It may take years to attain these goals.

Setting KPIs designated specifically for long-term perspective is one of the primary stages in elaborating marketing plans. This is important not only for conducting an advertising campaign but also for summarising the results and analytics. Each indicator should have a pattern and a reference point for the tested period; (these can be the results for the previous period or the average for the sector) (Kościelniak, 2018). In this case, marketers will be able to analyze an advertising campaign while running, make corrections in ongoing campaigns if necessary and summarize the results after completion. However, marketers may encounter difficulties attributing an achieved goal to a particular advertising campaign.

The intensiveness of advertising campaigns in social media is another critical issue for marketers. The level of intensity is one of the elements that can determine the quality of an achieved goal, as the social media environment is overloaded by an immense amount of information, both commercial and non-commercial. It is extremely difficult to attract a customer's attention in such conditions. Therefore, having competitive advantages and offering important customer values are prerequisites of a successful advertising campaign in social media, including in the long-term prospect.

The efficiency of setting goals, executing plans, and analyzing results also depends on the level of compliance of an advertising campaign with general marketing policy and branding philosophy. Each advertising message in social media can be regarded as an element that forms a customer's attitudes, decisions, and behavior towards a brand. Since social media is a platform with intensive, multilateral communication, brand values spread rapidly on various channels. Consequently, active utilization of social media allows a brand to disseminate its messages and build a unique image of itself in customers' minds.

Algorithms largely determine customers' engagement habits to advertisements in social media. This is another issue that marketers must consider while planning and executing advertising campaigns. By using large-scale machine learning and deep learning algorithms, platforms learn about each user's interests and preferences through interactions with the content, including taps, swipes, time spent on each article, time of day content is consumed, pauses, comments, dislikes, favorites, and so forth (Li, 2019). This information can be analyzed within the scope of data analytics policy.

Decisions based on analytical data are much more efficient than unsubstantiated actions. However, due to the unpredictability of the social media environment, flexible decisions are necessary, according to current developments. Forecasting consumer behavior precisely is a difficult task. Nevertheless, based on processed data obtained from previous advertising campaigns and current analytical information, it is possible to create an advertising campaign that will have the potential to influence consumer behavior in favor of a brand. Post-purchase behavior is the satisfaction or dissatisfaction that consumers get after purchasing the product. In the purchase stage, the consumers compare the performance of a product with perceived expectations (Sama, 2019) and often customers manifest their impressions in the social media environment. This is an opportunity for brands to leverage this data for analyzing and influencing consumer behavior.

Online touchpoints in social media between customers and a brand is an important source of analytical data. These touchpoints are influential only if they comply with one another, including outside social media platforms and CRM channels. Moreover, they also must correspond to offline interaction peculiarities and the general marketing policy of a brand. In this case, social media advertising campaigns will have long-lasting marketing results. It is also necessary to analyze results in raising brand awareness which is one of the most apparent long-term marketing assets. In turn, a company can obtain a positive reputation that can spread from social media to the physical world and vice versa.

Measuring CLV is one of the apparent indicators of long-term marketing success for a brand. It implies measuring the customer's value over his or her lifetime, for most applications it is a three-year window (Kumar, 2018). Calculating CLV precisely requires a number of financial and marketing data. Measuring a brand's long-term marketing efficacy would be difficult or even impossible without processing various data from multiple sources. It also demonstrates how important it is to manage data analytics properly. However, no matter how precise analytical data and CLV calculation is, without respective conclusions, it is impossible to set future goals, execute marketing plans and assess results.

Conclusion

In today's markets, B2C businesses need marketing strategies designated for short and long-term objectives. This approach allows companies to concentrate resources more efficiently and increase return on investments. Social media is a marketing communication channel that allows marketers to plan advertising campaigns with diverse goals. Besides, focusing specifically on long-term goals is necessary for increasing competitiveness. As a result, a company gains high brand awareness, growing brand value, a growing base of loyal customers, positive word of mouth online and offline, and growth in profit and CLV. However, as mentioned above, these results can not be achieved solely by social media advertising efforts. Holistic marketing and branding efforts are necessary to attain these goals.

Choosing a social media platform is extremely important as it can be considered as a type of segmentation on a global scale, depending on a business industry, type of product, and target audience. Each social media platform has its own niche and audience. Nevertheless, much more detailed segmentation and targeting are necessary to increase an advertising campaign's efficiency. Social networks provide marketers with powerful opportunities to choose the right audience, including location-based communication.

Another significant issue is managing complications in communication and readiness for PR crises. A long-term advertising strategy would be incomplete without a detailed anti-crisis plan. Hence, if necessary, marketers need to elaborate a unified policy where anti-crisis measures back advertising campaigns. The need for a positive reputation is especially important in social media's fluctuating and unpredictable environment. To achieve this goal, brands need to have strong online reputation management (ORM) policy. This will allow them to prevent complications in communication and even large-scale PR crises.

Last but not least, marketing teams and company management must have up-to-date skills for current trends and technological novelties in social media advertising. Constantly evolving advertising policies of social media platforms, ever-changing algorithms, and developing advertising opportunities prompt businesses to be flexible in their plans, decisions, and actions for setting and achieving long-term marketing goals.

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