

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND VISIBILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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Abstract: *Through the article, there was research about the impact of social media on brand visibility for small businesses. In today's digital fast-changing world, the importance of social media is becoming more crucial. Social media can help now finding something faster when you have demand for this. Through this all factors, in this article, made recommendation for small businesses when they first time enter the market.*

Key words: social media, market, small business, brand visibility, digital world.

Hypothesis: Social media usage helping to increase the brand visibility for small businesses.

Introduction: Social media's growing popularity has altered how companies interact with their clientele and establish their brands. Social media offers SMEs, which frequently have tight budgets and few resources, a useful way to raise awareness and connect with more people. The impact of social media on Uzbekistani SMEs' brand image is examined in this essay, with particular attention paid to popular platforms like Instagram and Telegram. Through primary research conducted by interviewing SME owners and social media marketing (SMM) managers, the study investigates the difficulties, tactics, and results related to SMM. The results are intended to give SMEs aiming to boost their brand awareness and online presence in a cutthroat digital landscape some useful suggestions.

Literature review: social media has fundamentally altered how companies interact with their customers and sell their products in the modern business world. It has evolved into an essential component of business strategy, beyond its initial use as a communication tool to become a powerful catalyst for growth and innovation. This study looks at how interactions on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn may significantly affect a number of company performance metrics. It also looks into how social media use affects the expansion of businesses. Over the past decade, businesses have used social media in a way that has been nothing short of revolutionary. On these platforms, where billions of people are actively participating, businesses have unmatched access to a global audience. Social media offers a unique opportunity to communicate with clients in real time by establishing a two-way channel that was previously unattainable with traditional media. [1] Dr. M. Thaiyalnayaki Social media is the holy grail of online advertising. Over 4.70 billion people use social

media regularly worldwide, and that number is expected to rise to 6 billion by 2027, meaning that over half of the world's population interacts on one of these platforms. [2] Zishan Khan

According to Thevenot (2007), small businesses view their social media presence as important because it can help them stay in touch with their customers around the world and raise brand awareness. Their position in the market can be significantly altered by using quick and effective social media marketing platforms. Additionally, Thevenot (2007) notes that the widespread use of social media marketing offers to attract clients has heightened competition for consumers' attention and led to trends in paid advertising, which are forcing small businesses to think strategically about their marketing efforts.

As the market is more competitive than ever, Kozinets (2002) asserts that in order for businesses to succeed in the modern world, they must increase consumer awareness of their brand. But it's getting harder every day to draw in new customers, keep them interested, and raise brand knowledge among the public. Since social media platforms are predicted to grow in popularity over time, businesses are increasingly utilizing them for free or paid online advertising (Kozinets, 2002). [3]

Brand awareness is the degree to which a brand is recognized, accepted, and remembered by consumers (Percy and Rossiter, 1992; Perreault et al., 2013: 199). The ability of a potential customer to identify or remember that a brand belongs to a particular product category is known as brand awareness, according to Aaker (1991:61). Brand awareness, according to Keller (2009), is about the track or crowd power in consumers' memory that represent their capacity to recall or identify a brand under various circumstances. The time and risk that consumers will spend looking for the goods they intend to purchase is decreased when they are aware of the brand (Verbeke et al., 2005: 7).

It is anticipated that buyers will select the brand about which they are knowledgeable. Four stages of brand awareness are identified by Aaker (1996: 10–16): dominating brand, top of mind brand, brand recognition, and brand recall. According to Farjam and Hongyi (2015), brand recall is the initial thought when a variety of products is introduced, but brand recognition is linked to the consumer's familiarity with the brand. Being a brand that immediately springs to mind means that you are the most well-known brand in your product area. A brand's level of dominance is the degree to which it supplants a product category (Aaker, 1996: 15). [4].

Methodology

Primary research

The purpose of primary research is to know the importance of social media for brand visibility. That's why in this article made primary research interview from a small business owner and a SMM manager of small business. Through this survey we

gain, why the small business owners and the SMM managers perceive and the social media for their business or projects. Through this interview we know what challenges did they have, what strategies did they use and we know the outcomes from their perspectives.

Results

Asilbek Marasulov

He has been a SMM manager at NOOR marketing agency for 3 years and he experienced more than 30+ projects and there was small business too.

<p>1. Which social networking platform do you believe helps small companies build their brands the most, and why</p>	<p>1. In Uzbekistan, top social media platforms for small businesses were telegram but after the Covid-19 there was change to Instagram. Instagram is the best place to sell something online in Uzbekistan now. But Telegram also did not lose their effect, some small business regularly use telegram also.</p>
<p>2. Which content categories and essential tactics do you suggest small businesses use to increase their visibility?</p>	<p>2. Usually, people prefer natural contents in Uzbekistan, which people adapt to see that. Let's take a example of Mobile phone store Believe store in Malika, before they use social media they had 3 times worse results in sale and no one know the brand, now they use the social media, they have more 5k followers and people know them well, because of social media.</p>
<p>3. How are the visibility of small company content affected by social media algorithms, and how are these problems resolved?</p>	<p>3. Small businesses usually have limited budget in the beginning, that's why for cheap price small businesses can advertise through the social media platforms, at the same time social media platforms can boost their contents organic, if they can attract enough people they can advertise for free just with contents.</p>
<p>4. What are the most important KPIs for evaluating the effectiveness</p>	<p>4. We calculate social media effect by its numbers, number of</p>

of social media initiatives for small businesses?	followers, comments, likes, shares, savings and etc., or we can see its effect by percentage of sales, like many percentages of the sales through social media.
5. What creative approaches or resources do you employ to assist small businesses in overcoming obstacles pertaining to their social media presence?	5. Small businesses can collaborate with top influencers it's faster way to spread the brand to the public. Because the public have more trust for influencers than brands now.

Interview questions for small business owner

Dilshod Vakhobov – Founder of Dandy clothes store in Tashkent and Kokand.

He has been using social media for his business for 2 years.

1. Which social media networks are used by your company? What is the primary objective of adopting them, too?	1. We mostly use Instagram, however for sales we use Telegram too, as we are the clothes store, we should advertise clothes to our customers, our main customers are teenagers, and that's they spent a lot of time on Instagram, that's why we use this platform.
2. What kinds of content— posts, videos, advertisements, etc.— have worked best to raise awareness of your company?	2. Usually, we post 2 types of contents for our Instagram first one is trend videos with music, this kind of post can gain views more and faster, it has more potential to be in the top. Second type of content we do for social media is explanation video, which we give information about the clothes fully.

<p>3. Do you handle your social media presence internally, through a third-party agency, as a freelance social media marketer, etc.?</p>	<p>3. I use the service of social media marketing agency, they do for me contents with their brand face and videographers, they do strategies for my business and they usually give me list offers of right influencers to collaborate with them.</p>
<p>4. What obstacles have you encountered when promoting your business on social media?</p>	<p>4. Usually, the problem is with working customers, why? Because in Uzbekistan people don't have social trust for business, because it began few years ago to adapt to this, they need some time</p>
<p>5. Since you began using social media for marketing, have you noticed a notable increase in consumer involvement or brand awareness? If yes, could you give an example?</p>	<p>5. Yes of course, I think in the age of 16-25 girls in Tashkent and Kokand they know us very well. We have 215k followers on Instagram, a lot of customers comes from social media to our store.</p>

Discussion

The primary research by Social Media Marketing manager and small business owner gave very useful insights about social media impact on brand visibility for small businesses.

Both interviewers think that Instagram is the most effective social media platform for small businesses in Uzbekistan, especially after Covid-19. In addition Telegram also have its power in Uzbekistan, but it uses by older age of people, Instagram users are usually teenagers. Small businesses should use Instagram to build brand awareness among the public. It can help to create a trust for brand and also increasing the sales of the business. Small business owners can use Telegram for direct communication with customers or for sales.

As the SMM manager mentioned, small businesses should create natural contents for their customers, because customers usually prefer this kind of contents. Next type of content type recommended by SMM specialist is informational videos for their products, services, because people trust people words, that's why if they can give detailed information and if they can advertise their products or service with their words they can gain the trust of customers.

Small business owner prefer video for trend videos, because it can get more view faster than other kind of videos, but he also mentioned about informational video for

his products, both interviewers admit this kind of video helpful for small businesses to build trust, trust refers to brand image.

Both of them mentioned different obstacles during the using social media marketing. Small business owner mentioned about the social trust of the customers, which online service should pay attention to attract customers online, because it's little bit difficult in Uzbekistan, due to the social media platforms entered recently to the market, that's why it has difficulties. SMM managers mentioned about limited budget of businesses for Social Media Marketing and he offered to create organic contents to faster achieving brand visibility.

SMM managers calculate the KPI metrics with numbers of followers, shares, savings and other factors, these number refers the number of people who know the brand in the market.

To get faster results for brand visibility small businesses can work with the top influencers, it has good impact on to share the brand and gaining the trust of the customers. While small business owner also agrees with the idea to use the influencers to boost the brand visibility.

Conclusion

Social networking is now a crucial tool for small businesses trying to draw clients and increase brand recognition. This article's core study emphasizes Telegram's value in sales and direct communication, as well as Instagram's dominance in the Uzbek digital market. Engaging your audience and establishing trust are crucial components of a good content strategy, such as popular educational films. Although problems like financial limitations and shifting algorithms still exist, creative strategies like working with influencers and producing original content present encouraging answers. Small businesses may use social media to create a powerful brand presence and spur growth by adopting these insights.

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