

POSITIVE IMPACT OF VIRAL MARKETING VIA SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY IN COMPANY A

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ABSTRACT

This research is relating to the positive impact of viral marketing via social media for company A in Malaysia. Researcher had identified that the company are facing difficulties in getting attention from their customer in social media and a part of that, this research conducted in order to inform the company about the positive impact that they will get after implementing a viral marketing messages for customer in social media. The objectives of the research are to identify the medium of social media that frequently used by the customer and to investigate the positive impact of viral marketing via social media towards customer in market. According to this research, there are several statement that have been collected by the researcher in order to make the research more reliable. Moreover, researcher decided to use convenient sampling method which questionnaire are distributed to the respondents around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. Researcher choose to have face to face distribution and also upload the questionnaire thru online system. For overall, this research might help the company to make an improvement for their company practices or strategies to maintain their brand reputation and be more well-known among customers in market. Based on the findings, it shows that the large numbers of respondents are using Facebook as the social media channel and give positive comment towards viral marketing that practices in this company.

Keywords: viral marketing, social media and positive impact.

Introduction

Marketing is one of the most crucial aspects in business. Various companies from around the world are currently using social media to promote their products and services in the internet marketing. According to Carlsson (2010), he predicted that on the 21st century will be the era when social media are integrated in companies and will be a crucial tool in communication. Social media plays a very important role in marketing and the same time creating a sense of community with the customers. With limited obstruction, all businesses will be able to use social media as a tool of marketing.

Other than that, promotion also plays an important role to the company to boost their sales and create awareness of customer towards some specific products or services. Promotion is one of the key factors for marketing mix. According to Schultz, Robinson & Peterson (1998), they stated that "sales promotion can be refer as marketing and communication activities that enable company to change the value of product or service perceived by the specific target in markets.

Viral marketing is a direct marketing technique in which an organization persuade online customer to forward publicity material in emails. It will depend on the ability of the company to spread information of the product in social media to other consumer of social network. If the large number of friends or followers in social media company can obtain, it may help company to get advantages for promoting their product more effectively. Nowadays, viral marketing has becomes a mainstream marketing instrument used by multinational firm in various industries such Nike, Unilever, Domino's and Volkswagen.

This research are intent to focus in Company A Malaysia how the impact of the viral marketing to the sales promotion using the internet channel. It also to examine to what extent their viral marketing promotion in the social media functions to attract more customers to buy or select their products. This company is a fairly well known company in the fast-food market. Almost every day they entertain a tens of thousands of customers' throughout Malaysia. This company have a good promotion in the mass media channel but still in a beginner level for using the viral marketing strategy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To identify medium of social media that frequently used by customers
- 2) To investigate the positive impact of viral marketing via social media towards customer in market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Viral Marketing

In this modern era, technology has brought paradigm shift in the ways the products or services are being marketed across the globe. The term of 'Viral Marketing' usually will associate with the phenomenon by which consumers share and spread marketing relevant messages initially sent out deliberately by markets to stimulate and capitalize on word-of-mouth behaviour.

Viral marketing history have been launched by Hotmail's tag line "Get your private, free mail from Hotmail at <http://www.hotmail.com>" (Helm, 2000, Porter & Golan, 2006, Maria et. al, 2008). This tag line, added automatically to every email sent from a Hotmail account, was passes on form the existing Hotmail users to the recipients of their email messages in the way that viruses spread and named as viral marketing. So, the usage and the concept of viral marketing usage will depend on the technology rapid change in the world.

Kaikati and Kaikati (2004) categorise the viral marketing as a stealth marketing technique. Stealth marketing is a recent proposition within marketing (Phelps, et al., 2004, Porter & Golan, 2006, Maria et. al., 2008). Because the changing of technology, viral marketing is firmly positioned in the e-marketing domain. The other major domain that viral marketing suitable for is marketing communications (Maria et. al., 2008).

According to Dasari and Anandkrishnan (2010), "Viral marketing is a moderately new idea that allows the web word-of-mouth (WOM) technologies to spreading out the message of marketing and enable marketers of company to create a great relationship with customers."

Moreover, viral marketing also can be considered as an electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) or known as "word-of-mouth" (Litvin et al., 2008; Woerd, 2008). Eckler and Rodgers (2010) discuss that there are the advantages make viral marketing in company which can help company to reduced cost of promotion, increased credibility, increased visibility, decreased interruption, and improved format flexibility.

Furthermore, Wilson (2012) also stated that broader definition of viral marketing refers to strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others and creating potential growth in the message's exposure and influence.

Sales Promotion

Viral marketing usually will closely associate with sales promotion of company. According to Burnett (1993), he defines that promotion has significant impact with persuasively communication in order to attract customer attention towards products and services that offered in market. Sales promotion usually has two types which refer to monetary promotion and non-monetary promotions.

Basically monetary promotion refers to the transactional and recognized for providing immediate rewards to customer such as discounts, coupons and rebates whereas non-monetary promotion is refers to delayed rewards which enable to create relationship with the customer by providing sweepstakes, free gifts and loyalty programs. These two types of promotions provide both utilitarian and hedonic benefits to the consumers.

According to Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000), they stated that hedonic benefits can be refer to value expression, exploration, entertainment and self-esteem. It shows that the sales promotion plays essential role for the customer to be attracted and at the same time give a lot of benefits to the customers.

Social Media

In this modern era, the existing of online social media as a marketing channel has enormously changed the ways of company communicates with customers. With the large number of users worldwide, social media will be able use by marketers as their marketing communication tools with customers in markets.

Hennig-Thurau et al., (2010) stated that the emerge of social media channel such as Facebook, YouTube, Google, Twitter and Instagram has allow company to distribute their information about their products and services to customers at anywhere and anytime. Gordon et al., (2010), stated that social media is one of medium that allows company to create, share, communicate and slowly build a good relationship with customers in markets.

Moreover, social media also may give power to the customers to share good news or share tips and tricks to better use the brand. Therefore, social media appear to be an ideal environment for practices that can enhance customers' relationship with the brand and ultimately their loyalty, (Habibi et. al, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

The respondents that involve in this research is based on simple random sampling method which researcher choose respondents who are willing to answer all the questions that provided by the researcher. 50 samples was picked from the specific locations in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Researcher used mixed method which internet and face to face distribution the set of questionnaire to the respondent. The sample size is considered to be most feasible, time and cost efficient for this study.

Questionnaire distributions were based on the standard format such as Likert scale model, dichotomous scale and multiple choice questions were used to obtain the qualitative response from the respondents. Frequency distribution and reliability test have been

used in this research. Questionnaire are divided into four sections: Section A is for the Demographic questions, Section B is about the Social Media and Section C is about the positive impact on sales promotion in the Company A.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Informations

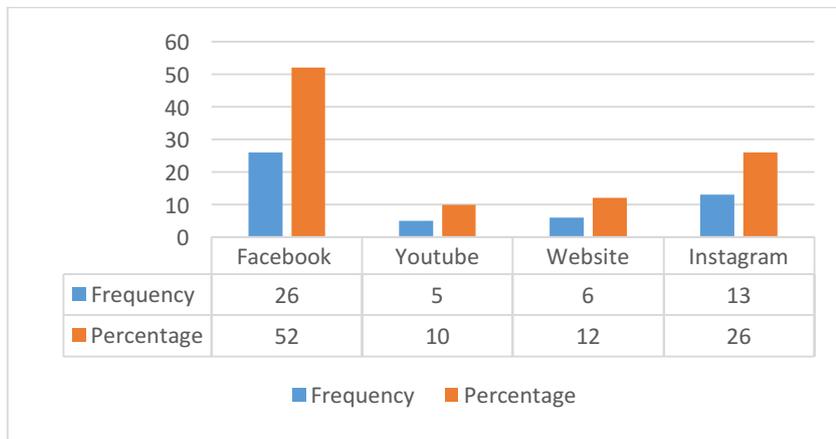
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	32	64
	Male	18	36
Age	19-23	15	30
	24-28	16	32
	29-39	16	32
	40-50	3	6
Occupation	Government	7	14
	Self-employed	5	10
	Private Sector	32	64
	Student	6	12
Income	Below 1000	20	40
	1001-3000	20	40
	3001-4000	10	20
Married Status	Single	31	62
	Married	19	38

Based on the table 1, it shows that the large proportion for this research is female 64% and male is 36%. Meaning that the most contribution in this study is female. Furthermore, the highest respondents who answer the questionnaire are between age 24 to 28 years old and 29 to 39 years old, which both of the age group are 32%. In addition, most of the respondents are from the private sector that is 32% and follow by the government sector 7%. The respondents income level the highest group come from below RM1000 that is 40% and RM1001 to RM3000 is 40%. Lastly, the respondents are majority still single that contribute 62%.

Objective I

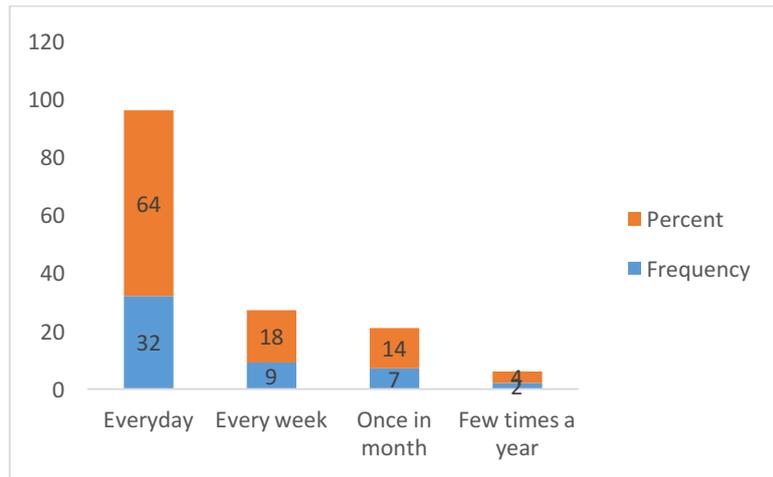
Identifying the right medium of social media that frequently used by the customer

Table 2: Types of social media that customer frequently use



The table 2 shows types of social media that customer frequently use nowadays. Based on this table, researcher identify that the most frequent social media used by the customer is Facebook which 26 respondent (52%), follow by the Instagram which 13 respondent (26%). They prefer to use this two types of social media because both are friendly user and have the application in the respondents hand phone. Rather than the YouTube and website, they need to have a large number of data plan to browse them.

Table 3: Frequency of using social media



From the above result in table 3, shows that 64% which is 32 respondents are using the social media every day and 9 respondents that is 18% are using social media every week. Other than that, 7 respondents 14% are not frequently used which they only using social media once in a month and 2 respondents (4%) are using only few times a year in their daily life. The usage of the social media is impact the sales of the products or services. This shows that most of the respondents are using the social media all the time either during working days or weekends. Nowadays, in reality most of people are addicted on using smartphone as their needs and opening their social media everywhere at any times.

Objective II

The positive impact of viral marketing via social media towards customer in the market.

Table 4: The positive impact of viral marketing via social media towards customer in the market

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree & Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 Promotion in social media is important in marketing communication	22	24	2	2	0
2 Understanding about viral marketing	7	17	23	2	1
3 Viral marketing of sales promotion give impact to customer in social media	12	25	11	2	0
4 Viral marketing of promotions in social media can helps company to build a good relationship with targeted customers	14	22	8	6	0
5 Viral marketing of sales promotions is able to attract customer to purchase the products in markets	5	28	15	2	0
6 Customer will talk positive about an interesting viral marketing of sales promotion company	5	27	10	6	2
7 Customer leaves comment about product after seeing viral marketing message in social media	8	21	13	8	0
8 An interesting advertisement or sales promotion in social media lead customer share to their friends	14	17	11	8	0
9 Viral marketing of promotion in social media help to created awareness and more popularity about brands	20	21	9	0	0
10 Viral marketing message in social media will help company to reduce cost of other promotion	15	22	11	2	0
11 Viral advertisement of sales promotion product or service is a signal of new offers or incentives from company	15	24	8	1	2
12 Viral marketing and quality gift offer or price discount always motivate the customer to shift from one brand to other.	12	26	9	3	0
13 Viral marketing message is a signal of product quality to customer	12	23	11	2	2
14 Customer usually knows the product's promotion information depend on viral	19	14	16	1	0

marketing in social media						
15	Viral marketing of special gift and offer in social media make customers feel entertained and excited	17	22	9	2	0
16	Viral marketing of sales promotion give convenient time to customer for searching about product information	23	20	4	3	0

From the above result, it shows that 24 respondents are agree and 22 are strongly agree that promotion in social media is important in a marketing communication. Most of the respondents are not understand the viral marketing term refer to the table 4, 23 respondents choose neither agree and disagree. Viral marketing of sales promotion give an impact to the customer in social media supported by the 25 respondents agree for this statement. Viral marketing of promotion in social media can helps company build a good relationship with targeted customers agree by 22 respondents. 28 respondents is agree with the statement viral marketing of sales promotion is able to attract the customer to purchase the products in markets.

Customer will talk about the positive side about an interesting viral marketing of sales promotion used by the company agree by the 27 respondents. Customer will leave their comment about the product after seeing the viral marketing message in social media also agree by 21 respondents. An interesting advertisement or sales promotion in social media lead the customer share to their friends agree by 17 respondents. 20 respondents strongly agree and 21 respondents agree with viral marketing of promotion in social media help to created awareness and more popularity about brands. Viral marketing message in social media will help company to reduce cost of other promotion agreed by 22 respondents.

Majority 24 respondents agree with viral advertisement of sales promotion product or service is a signal of new offers or incentives from company. Most of the respondents agree (26 person) with the statement of viral marketing and quality gift offer or price discount always motivate the customer to shift from one brand to other. Majority respondents (23 person) are agree with viral marketing message is a signal of product quality to customer. Other than that, 19 respondent strongly agree with statement customer usually knows the product's promotion information depend on viral marketing in social media while 16 respondents is neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Viral marketing of special gift and offer in social media make customers feel entertained and excited agreed by 22 respondents and 17 are strongly agree. The last statement, viral marketing of sales promotion give convenient time to customer for searching about product information is strongly agree by 23 respondents and 20 respondents choose agree on this statement.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the research that researcher has been made, we can see that Company A is already have their own social media but they do not use it aggressively while promoting their products in market. Based on finding that researcher collected shows that nowadays promotion in social media are really important for company to be implemented. To make it very clear, we can say that the viral marketing of advertisement in social media plays a crucial role for promoting products of company in market.

From the findings also we can say that the huge numbers of respondents are interested toward advertisement that company made in social media. Besides that, researcher also identify that nowadays many of respondents are frequently use social media in their daily life and the medium of social media frequently used by the customer are Facebook page, Instagram and website. In this paper, Facebook is one of the main choice within the respondents.

On the other hand, the positive impact of viral marketing via social media towards customer in the market also shows the positive results in which the customers mostly are being agree about the advantages that viral marketing will provide for them in the market. One of the finding also identify that customers are mostly agree with the sales promotion in viral marketing via social media to friends. The effects of social networking site on message sharing intention is discrepant (George et al., 2016)

Refer to objective I, Facebook is the most popular social media choose by the respondents. Refer to Gupta S. (2016) Face book alone has over 1.2 billion active users and refer to the Pew Research Center, it is the social network most popular in the world. Company A need to compete with other competitors in order to attract customer attention towards their products in market.

Refer to objective II, based on the results that researcher has gathered, it shows that customers are comment positively about existing of viral marketing sales promotion in social media. This results lead researcher to recommend Company A for implementing viral marketing of sales promotion for their product in social media. Another gap that this company has is no specialized person that responsible for the viral marketing of sales promotion. Specialized person can be hired to create an interesting viral marketing advertisement where can attract customer attention to watch and slowly increased the sales for the company.

Given that this research focuses in Company A Malaysia, is one of the most popular fast-food company. Thus, maybe the findings may not reflect what is happening across the board in Malaysia. For further discussion, maybe researcher can discover different fields to see the effectiveness or the impact of viral marketing in Malaysia. Viral marketing has a huge part to discover and this company need to benchmark other successful company to overcome or improve their strategies in using viral marketing. They also need to use variety of social media for viral marketing to make their products boost out of their aspected.

Overall of the study, we can conclude that viral marketing is one of the essential tools of promotion that company should be considered properly in order to increase their sales in the market. By implementing viral marketing in social media, it may also help the company to reduce cost of other promotions method in the company.

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