



Information Booklet

Sales and Marketing

10

SOCIAL MEDIA

for SMEs



National Business Development
Program for SMEs

Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) works under the Ministry of Industries and Production, Government of Pakistan and was established in 1998 with the objective to propel economic growth through development of SMEs. SMEDA serves as an SME strategy-advisory body for the Government of Pakistan and facilitates partners in meeting their SME development agendas.

SMEDA envisions growth of a globally competitive SME sector (in Pakistan), through creating an enabling environment and support services for increase in the national economy. SMEDA strives to achieve this vision by providing assistance in employment generation and value addition to the national income, through development of the SME Sector, by helping increase the number, scale and competitiveness of SMEs.

National Business Development Program for SMEs (NBDP) is a project of SMEDA which intends to provide hands-on support services to SMEs. The aim of this business development support provided by NBDP is to advance new businesses and improve efficiencies in existing SME value chains to empower them to contend in global market. NBDP expects to facilitate around 314,000 SME beneficiaries over the period of five years.

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Objectives

- To highlight the effective use of social media marketing, promotion and selling of products and services.
- To describe different social media platforms available for business activities.

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a Concept and Importance of Social Media in Business Activities

Around the world, people are connected with each other through social media. Social media is not just the means of communication but it is almost a pervasive culture of the day. The concept of social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to provide seamless communication with anybody and everybody that needs or wishes to communicate.

While social media started to develop in late 70s, the first recognizable social media site, SixDegrees.com, was launched in late 90s. It enabled users to upload profile pictures and connect with others. Six Degrees also let users make friends with each other and expand their social groups but people did not understand its role in business.

With the passage of time, social media has moved electronic messaging into another phase of interactive dialogue. It has created new types of community bonding called social networking, a social structure with people who are joined by common threads of communication channels.

With more than three billion people around the world using social media platforms including Google+, GoogleMybusiness, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest etc. every day of the month.

It has also started playing an increasingly important role in business. Social media platforms help to connect with customers, increase awareness about the brand, and boost leads and sales.

There are many reasons for investing in social media as a wise business move. However, it eventually depends upon objectives for using social media.

Before really utilizing social media, the reason for doing it must be clarified. What are the hopes to accomplish? Is this related to increase sales or improve customer service? Or alternatively, just to create more visibility for the business?

Here are some of the things that can be achieved for the business with social media;



Create Awareness

With the appropriate use of social media, awareness about the business, its products and services can be created within and outside the social circle.

Once people know about the business, they can become customers. Social media boosts a business's presence and visibility among potential customers, helping to reach a wide audience without having to invest a lot of time and effort. Additionally, creating a business profile is free on all networks, so there is no cost that a business has to bear. Use of GoogleMybusiness for providing directions to the business address and presence on Facebook and Instagram messaging could really change persona of any business.

Communicate Authority

Customers are increasingly savvy and more discerning about which businesses they frequent and patronize. Before making a decision, they may do a quick search to browse any website and check any business on social media.

After being active on social media, it is important to know, what kind of response on social media will attract customers to the business? Will they find an empty storefront or a rich source of information? Setting up robust profiles that is updated frequently with relevant content will build a business's authority and ensure to make a positive first impression through social media, showing that this business is trustworthy, knowledgeable and approachable.

Encourage Engagement

With an active social media profile, customers are encouraged to engage. However, there are ways to do that proactively, as well. One of the most common methods is to upload an introductory video for business and follow it up with more releases as new features are being added to the business.

An engaging video can be created for social media with a simple setup—good lighting, a smartphone, and a tripod. Also, a test run is must before going live to make sure the internet connection or hotspot has enough speed to avoid delays and interruptions.

Provide Support

Customer support services can be provided through social media experience. Social platforms have successfully broken-down barriers between companies and their customers. Now, instead of calling a customer service line, many people turn to Facebook or Twitter to inquire about new products, complaints about service or to find further information. Likewise, social media can be used to engage the customers about giving feedback on products and services. This is a very convenient and less formidable option for customers and businesses alike.

Grow Affordably

Marketing costs add up and not every business can afford huge marketing campaigns. But a lot of value for the money can be gained with social media advertising. Any business, regardless of size or budget, has an opportunity to grow its audience and achieve its targets through ads on social platforms like Facebook and Instagram.



Effective Use of Social Media for Business – Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a powerful tool for businesses of all sizes to reach prospective customers and existing clients. The customers are already interacting with businesses through social media, and if speaking directly to the audience through social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest is not being done, the business is missing out on market access and feedback. Focused marketing on social media can bring remarkable success to the business by creating devoted brand advocates and even driving leads and sales.

- 1 Add a Cell to Action Control
- 2 Analyze, Vary and Prioritize Content
- 3 Know your Customers with Hangouts
- 4 Use Strategic Hashtags
- 5 Deliver Constantly, No Gaps
- 6 Manage your Time
- 7 Find out your Focused Social Media Chan
- 8 Publish on LinkIn for More Growth
- 9 Target with Social Ads
- 10 Eyes are Attracted to Colors:Visualize with Images

Social Media Marketing, or SMM, is a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social media networks in order to achieve marketing and branding goals. Social media marketing includes activities like posting text and image updates, videos, and other content that drives audience engagement, as well as paid social media advertising.

Social media marketing can help with a number of goals, such as:



The bigger and more engaged an audience is on social media networks, the easier it will be for the business to achieve its marketing goals.



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Pros and Cons of Using Social Media for Business

There is no denying the fact that social media is a great place to engage the audience, build a friendly, yet, strong relationship with them and get potential customers through campaigning, but these benefits of social media come with a few drawbacks too.

Businesses are putting their reputation on the line in front of billions of people and there are a few examples of disasters in recent years. Some people tend to take social media lightly, primarily because it is conveniently operated and promises products and services which are not completely true or yet to be arranged. This reflects negatively on the business reputation and customers do not like such experiences.

On the other hand, there are some businesses who have grown massively through social media and built an entire network through one or more of these platforms.



The Pros

- Being authentic means being noticeable
- It is an open marketplace
- It has international audience
- Social media costs less but gives more
- Helps to stay ahead of the competitors
- Build a reputation with the customers

The Cons

- The line between professional and personal may get blurry
- It can be risky
- Not every 'like' means something

Pros and Cons of Social Media for Enterprise



PROS

to use social media
the right way

- ✓ Increase the visibility of a brand
- ✓ Help to improve the reputation of business online
- ✓ Attract more traffic to web page or blog
- ✓ Open new possibilities to the market
- ✓ Make communication between enterprise and clients easier



CONS

to use social media
not the right way

- ✗ Create corporate-centrism and just talk about the business
- ✗ Reputation problems for the business
- ✗ Problems with security or privacy
- ✗ Claims too much time and dedication

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Social Media Tools/Platforms for Business

Social media tools for business are same as in general social networking. It is just so that incursion of social media tools in business and trade has become pervasive. According to international trade data there is an explosive growth in the use of social media in business.

70% of business-to-customer marketers have acquired customers through Facebook. 93% of Pinterest users use the platform to plan or make purchases, and over 41% of Instagram users have used Instagram to purchase a product online. This is also indicative of business trends for global e-commerce.

The best part is, not only are people purchasing from businesses on social media but they are spending 20-40% more money on companies that are using social media.

Moreover, 71% of customers who have had a positive experience with a brand on social media are likely to recommend the brand to their friends and family- growing the customer base even further.



Facebook

With 2.41 Billion daily active users, Facebook is the most widely used social platform. Facebook Messenger is an app that allows Facebook users to send direct messages to one another and fortunately, this functionality also extends to business pages. Because Facebook Messenger is a part of Facebook, it has the same access to Facebook's large user base and advertising platform.

Whether the business goal is brand awareness, website traffic, lead generation or online conversions, Facebook should make a notable difference in reaching the goals when used properly.



Instagram



Instagram is owned by Facebook, it has access to the same extensive user base and advertising platform just like the Facebook Messenger app. So, Instagram has all of the same paid benefits of Facebook but Instagram also has its own set of organic benefits. When the term “organic” is being used, it means that functions can be performed or results can be achieved without directly paying for them and without any extra effort.

YouTube

YouTube is a video platform that allows users to watch videos and/or upload them. YouTube has 2 Billion monthly active users, giving any business the chance to share company content with over 30+ Million daily active users who are likely to watch it. YouTube has the benefit of visual content, but unlike the other social media sites for business it has the unique stance of being owned by Google! Without having to spend extra money on advertising YouTube videos can have higher search rankings by including the searched keywords in the title, video description and actual list of keywords in the keywords tool.



Twitter



Twitter is a very popular social media platform, and it has 336 Million monthly active Twitter users. Photos and videos along with character-limited text can be posted on Twitter but it is mostly known for its feed of real-time updates. Twitter is also great for engaging new potential customers through its use of hashtags. Similar to Instagram, a hashtag can be searched to find other posts from customers and businesses alike that have used the same hashtag. This means that one can find customers searching for something that his/her business offers and vice versa.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp has been building its business platform to allow businesses to have a proper business profile, to provide customer support, and to share updates with customers about their purchases. For small businesses, it has built the WhatsApp Business app while for medium and large businesses, there is the WhatsApp Business. WhatsApp Business is a totally independent tool designed for the WhatsApp client in business. It is used to manage various aspects of any business account so customers can get in contact with the business via WhatsApp chat. The only requirement is to get registered to gain official WhatsApp Business status.



An effective and practical social media strategy is a combination of following six elements:

6 Elements of Social Media Strategy



Steps Involved in Development of Social Media Strategy

i. Determine Objectives

The objectives of social media strategy should be clear, well defined and concrete. Without first defining the objectives; the strategy will be purposeless and hence, ineffective. The objectives of strategy must align with the objectives of the business.

ii. Define Audience

A well-planned social media strategy targets a specific audience and caters to their needs. To do so, a business must be aware of the following specifications of its target group:

Gender	Age Group	Special Needs	Academic Level
Professional Level	Geographical Spread	Preferred Social Media Channels	Preferred Language

Social media analytics can also provide valuable information about who the followers are, where they live, which languages they speak, and how they interact with the brand on social media. These insights allow a business to refine the strategy and better target the social ads.

iii. Social Media Audit

Perform a social media audit by collecting information regarding all the social channels of business, any impostor accounts, and key information about each account, all in one place. It helps a business to:

1 Assess its online presence

2 Assess consistency of social profiles

3 Record metrics to understand performance

4 Assess the alignment of goals with actions

5 Assess the competitors and social media trends

6 Assess opportunities

iv. Choose the Channels

Depending on the characteristics of an audience and nature of the business, choose the social media channels to tap the audience. To have greater and far reaching impact, target multiple social media simultaneously.

Commonly used social media platforms in Pakistan include:



Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



WhatsApp



YouTube



Instagram

v. Generate the Content

The goal of social media strategy should not be solely to promote business products but to share value so that followers view the brand as a credible, valuable source that they can turn to for assistance. The content must be:

- Engaging
- Meaningful
- Appealing

There are various types of content. The type of content shall be chosen in accordance with the social media platform, characteristics of audience and nature of business. Common types of social media content are:

- Images
- Videos
- Information Material
- Blog Posts
- Company News
- Infographics
- Interviews

vi. Analyze Performance

Social media strategy is a hugely important document for any business. It is also an evolving document. As soon as the plan is implemented and results are tracked, it may be discovered that some strategies do not work as well as initially anticipated, while some might work better than expected. It is important to track the results of strategy being implemented and make changes in strategy and implementation plan accordingly.



Conclusion

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to provide seamless communication within community called social networking. With more than three billion people around the world using social media like Google+, GoogleMybusiness, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest etc. there are significant benefits for businesses to utilize social media.

To utilize social media, the objectives must be clear. Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content. There are pros and cons associated with the use of social media for business, however, one must be careful in over promising.



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