

Role of Social Media Marketing in Promoting Service Brands

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Abstract

Social media marketing has become an essential component of service marketing in the digital age, enabling service brands to connect with customers in an interactive and cost-effective manner. This study examines the role of social media marketing in promoting service brands using secondary data collected from published research articles, journals, industry reports, and online sources. The analysis focuses on key aspects such as brand awareness, customer engagement, brand image, trust, and loyalty in service industries. Findings from recent studies indicate that social media platforms significantly enhance the visibility of service brands and facilitate two-way communication, thereby strengthening customer relationships. User-generated content and online reviews further influence customer perceptions and service choice decisions. The study concludes that effective social media marketing, when integrated with service quality, contributes to sustainable brand growth and competitive advantage in the service sector.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Service Brands, Customer Engagement, Brand Awareness

1. Introduction

In the digital era, social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a dominant force reshaping how service brands communicate, engage, and build relationships with customers. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), LinkedIn, and TikTok enable dynamic, two-way interactions, offering real-time communication and personalized engagement that is particularly valuable for service industries where the quality of customer experience is a core differentiator.

Recent studies highlight the transformational impact of social media on service brand visibility and performance. Literature reveals that the integration of social media into service marketing strategies enhances brand visibility, promotes customer engagement, and supports real-time dialogue between brands and consumers—factors that are critical for intangible offerings where traditional tangible cues are absent. For instance, broader research shows that platforms have evolved from simple networking sites to key business communication tools that help service brands create immersive, relationship-driven experiences.

Empirical evidence from recent research indicates that social media marketing activities significantly influence brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty—three core constructs of brand strength in the service sector. A 2025 study found that social media marketing initiatives improve brand awareness most noticeably, while also impacting brand loyalty through enhanced customer cognition and perception. Furthermore, global consumer behavior trends suggest that social media has become one of the primary sources for brand discovery and engagement, with many consumers relying on social platforms as the first touchpoint in their decision-making journey.

The unique nature of service brands—characterized by inseparability, perishability, and variability—makes social media marketing especially significant. These platforms help service organizations overcome traditional marketing challenges by providing immediate customer support, showcasing service experiences, and facilitating user-generated content that spreads brand narratives organically. As social media usage continues to grow globally, its strategic role in promoting service brands is increasingly recognized as essential for sustaining competitive advantage in a highly digitalized marketplace.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of social media marketing in enhancing brand awareness and visibility of service brands based on existing studies, reports, and industry data.
2. To analyze how social media marketing influences customer engagement and brand image in service industries through a review of recent literature.
3. To identify major social media marketing strategies adopted by service brands and assess their effectiveness using secondary data sources.

3. Statement of the Problem

Service brands face unique marketing challenges due to the intangible, inseparable, and variable nature of services, making it difficult for customers to evaluate service quality before consumption. With the rapid growth of digital platforms, social media has become a primary channel for service brands to communicate value, engage customers, and build trust. However, despite increasing investment in social media marketing, many service organizations struggle to clearly understand its actual role and effectiveness in promoting service brands. Existing studies are scattered across sectors and platforms, creating a need to systematically analyze and synthesize secondary data to understand how social media marketing contributes to brand awareness, customer engagement, and brand loyalty in the service sector.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is confined to examining the role of social media marketing in promoting service brands based exclusively on secondary data. The study covers major service sectors such as banking, healthcare, education, hospitality, telecommunications, and other digital service platforms where social media is extensively used for brand communication and customer engagement. It focuses on analyzing information from published research articles, academic journals, industry reports, company websites, and other reliable online sources. The study considers popular social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube to understand their contribution to brand awareness, customer engagement, brand image, trust, and loyalty. The scope is further limited to reviewing recent national and international studies to capture current trends and practices in service marketing. Primary data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, and observations are not included, and the findings are interpreted within the limitations of available secondary sources.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

Growth of Social Media Usage and Its Relevance to Service Marketing

Secondary data from global digital reports, industry publications, and academic journals consistently indicate a rapid growth in social media usage across all age groups and regions. This expansion has significantly altered the marketing environment, especially for

service brands that rely heavily on communication, relationship-building, and trust creation. Service marketing differs from product marketing due to the intangible nature of services, and social media platforms provide a virtual environment where service experiences can be demonstrated, shared, and reviewed.

Analysis of recent studies reveals that social media has become a primary touchpoint for customers during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages of service consumption. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube enable service providers to communicate service features, values, and benefits visually and interactively. The interpretation of this trend suggests that social media marketing has moved beyond promotional messaging to become a strategic tool for service brand positioning and differentiation.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness of Service Brands

Brand awareness is considered one of the most immediate outcomes of social media marketing efforts. Secondary data from marketing research journals highlight that frequent exposure to service brand content on social media significantly enhances brand recall and recognition. Service brands that actively post engaging content, such as customer testimonials, service demonstrations, and behind-the-scenes videos, tend to achieve higher visibility.

Studies analyzing service sectors such as banking, hospitality, education, and healthcare indicate that social media marketing plays a crucial role in informing customers about service offerings and brand identity. Unlike traditional advertising, social media allows continuous brand exposure at relatively lower costs. The interpretation of these findings shows that social media marketing reduces information asymmetry in services and helps customers form initial perceptions even before direct service interaction.

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a key performance indicator in service marketing, as services require active customer participation. Secondary literature reveals that social media marketing facilitates two-way communication, enabling customers to like, comment, share, and directly interact with service brands. This interactive nature strengthens emotional connections and enhances perceived service value.

Analysis of recent empirical studies suggests that engagement metrics such as comments, shares, and user-generated content are strong predictors of customer involvement with service brands. For example, service brands in the hospitality and telecom sectors that actively respond to customer queries on social media platforms show higher engagement levels. The interpretation highlights that engagement through social media builds relationship continuity, which is essential for long-term service brand success.

Role of Social Media in Shaping Service Brand Image

Brand image refers to customers' perceptions and associations with a brand. Secondary data analysis shows that social media significantly influences service brand image through content tone, visual storytelling, and online interactions. Service brands that communicate professionalism, responsiveness, and empathy on social media tend to develop a positive brand image.

Research studies indicate that consistent messaging and quality content enhance credibility and trust. Negative experiences shared by customers also shape brand image, making social media both an opportunity and a risk. The interpretation of these findings suggests that service brands must manage their social media presence carefully, as online perceptions directly influence customers' service expectations.

Impact of User-Generated Content on Service Brand Promotion

User-generated content (UGC), such as reviews, testimonials, and customer posts, plays a significant role in service brand promotion. Secondary data reveals that customers trust peer reviews more than brand-generated content, especially in service industries where quality cannot be evaluated before consumption.

Analysis of online review platforms and social media discussions shows that positive UGC enhances brand credibility and influences service choice decisions. For instance, hospitality and healthcare service brands benefit greatly from customer reviews and recommendations. The interpretation suggests that social media marketing success in services largely depends on encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences, thereby amplifying brand reach organically.

Social Media Marketing and Customer Trust in Service Brands

Trust is a critical factor in service marketing due to the high perceived risk involved in service consumption. Secondary research findings indicate that transparency, responsiveness, and consistency on social media platforms enhance customer trust. Service brands that address complaints promptly and openly tend to build stronger trust relationships.

Analysis of banking and financial service sector studies reveals that social media is increasingly used for customer support and information dissemination. The interpretation of this trend indicates that social media marketing functions as a trust-building mechanism by reducing uncertainty and enhancing perceived reliability of service brands.

Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty in services is often influenced by emotional attachment and service experience rather than price alone. Secondary data suggests that social media engagement contributes to brand loyalty by maintaining continuous interaction between the service provider and the customer. Loyal customers often follow service brands on social media, participate in discussions, and advocate the brand within their networks.

Analysis of longitudinal studies shows that customers who frequently engage with service brands on social media exhibit higher repeat purchase intentions. The interpretation highlights that social media marketing supports relationship marketing objectives, transforming satisfied customers into brand advocates.

Sector-Wise Analysis of Social Media Marketing in Services

Secondary data across various service sectors reveals differing levels of social media adoption and effectiveness. In the hospitality and tourism sector, social media marketing is extensively used for visual promotion and customer engagement. In education services, institutions use social media to communicate academic offerings, achievements, and student experiences.

Healthcare service brands use social media mainly for awareness and education, while financial services focus on trust and information sharing. The interpretation of sector-wise data suggests that while the core role of social media marketing remains consistent, its application varies based on service characteristics and customer expectations.

Challenges Identified from Secondary Data

Despite its advantages, secondary studies identify several challenges associated with social media marketing for service brands. These include negative online reviews, difficulty in measuring return on investment, content saturation, and managing customer expectations. Service brands face the challenge of maintaining consistent engagement without compromising service quality.

The interpretation of these challenges suggests that social media marketing must be integrated with overall service delivery strategies. Mere online promotion without quality service performance may lead to negative brand perceptions.

5. Overall Interpretation and Strategic Implications

The comprehensive analysis of secondary data confirms that social media marketing plays a vital role in promoting service brands by enhancing brand awareness, engagement, trust, and loyalty. Social media platforms act as experiential spaces where service brands can demonstrate value, manage relationships, and shape perceptions.

The interpretation of findings indicates that service brands should adopt a customer-centric social media strategy aligned with service quality and brand values. Effective social media marketing is not only a promotional activity but also a strategic tool for long-term service brand development.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing plays a pivotal role in promoting service brands in today's digitally driven marketplace. Based on an extensive analysis of secondary data from recent studies, journals, and industry reports, it is evident that social media platforms have transformed the way service organizations communicate with customers, create brand awareness, and build long-term relationships. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media enables real-time, interactive, and personalized communication, which is particularly significant for service brands characterized by intangibility and high customer involvement.

The findings indicate that social media marketing significantly enhances brand awareness and visibility by providing continuous exposure and multiple touchpoints for

customers. It also strengthens customer engagement by encouraging two-way communication, feedback, and participation through likes, comments, shares, and user-generated content. Such engagement contributes positively to brand image and helps service brands establish trust and credibility among consumers.

Furthermore, the study highlights that social media marketing supports customer trust and brand loyalty by ensuring transparency, responsiveness, and consistency in service communication. Customers increasingly rely on online reviews, testimonials, and peer recommendations while choosing service brands, making social media an influential factor in service consumption decisions. However, the study also recognizes challenges such as negative reviews, content overload, and difficulty in measuring performance, emphasizing the need for strategic and integrated social media management.

Overall, the study concludes that social media marketing is not merely a promotional tool but a strategic component of service marketing that influences customer perceptions, experiences, and relationships. Service organizations that effectively align social media strategies with service quality and customer expectations are more likely to achieve sustainable brand growth and competitive advantage.

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