

One way to do this scheduling better is to follow the biological responses of the target group's sleep wake cycles. In his book titled "When", Dr. Daniel Pink outlines how decision making can be made more accurate if we understand which part of the day we are most alert. And choose which decision to make when, based on that understanding. Social media scheduling decision can be done similarly.

This kind of scheduling will also have an impact on the brand and the campaign responses. Positive or negative emotions experienced during different day parts lead to brand sentiments being altered. Response rates to campaign may differ based on when they are posted.

Given that organisations are increasingly running analytics driven businesses, the efficiency of scheduling is an aspect that should get addressed more critically.

Metrics to measure social media

Facebook ads are simply not as effective as they used to be. Though it is getting more competitive, the cost of acquiring a lead through FB is rising. Boosting organic reach of a post through more advertising isn't helping either. These are leading to organisations cutting back on FB usage.

Linkedin groups is another example. Its new redesign has made targeted reach (an important reason why linkedin is used in the first place) more difficult. Google+ is one more medium that is going out of fashion (insufficient user base being the reason). With Google itself re-strategising its way forward (looking at AI and cloud as big areas of potential revenue generation), this channel is witnessing major pull back from the marketers' media plans.

Overall it seems that the metrics for evaluating social media are not coming good. While there are clear advantages in terms of real time feedback, high two way interactivity and low lead times for campaign development, social media still needs to go a long way in satisfying a traditional marketer's metrics of media evaluation.

New ways of working

Social media needs new ways of working. The internet has altered the ad viewing patterns and ad durations substantially. The youth prefers viewing ads on mobile devices and duration of a commercial starts with as low as 6 seconds (compared to an erstwhile duration of 30 sec and 45 sec). This 6 seconder is aimed at creating interest in a story and then following it up with the actual campaign that may be for a longer duration. So the requirements of agency personnel involved in creative production is varying. Also viral sharing of some videos means that agencies that were involved in media planning and buying are fast going out of business (or their revenues are getting hugely compromised).

Cold calls through emails are not effective due to flooding of social media messages - Response rates are abysmal. So organisations need to look for alternative ways of reaching potential customers and doing business with them.

Knowledge gap by senior management

Tough to believe but true! Suffering from a knowledge gap of how to exactly use it, many senior personnel are now undergoing reverse mentoring program by the youth to familiarise themselves with this medium. There are also cases where technology companies like Google send their employees to consumer marketing companies like P&G , to sensitise them on the possibilities of working together. Occasionally marketers also feel that their brands are not ‘exciting’ enough to be built on social media! This maybe a misplaced thought as brands can actually be made more fun using this medium!

Conclusion

Martech (Marketing technology) cannot ignore the presence of social media. Though the budget spends towards this medium is witnessing a positive shift, it is not adequate to justify the potential of the medium. There are clearly some trends that are encouraging media planners to consider social media in their portfolio. One is the consumer interest in online videos—this necessitates YouTube and other web streaming deliveries that are a part of social media. Secondly user generated content increases end user involvement and that interactivity is possible only through social media. Thirdly, short term communication through formats like snapchat (aka ephemeral marketing) make it easy for marketers to choose this media for announcing tactical promotional offers, which are becoming a bigger part of the brand expenditure.

Social media is here to stay and therefore addressing some of the above challenges may put social media on a fast track preference for marketers.

(This article has been written by Dr Rajeshwari K, Associate Professor, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai.)