To study the use of Digital Media platforms in education brand and its impact on students

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Abstract

Marketing has a key role to play in building any education brand. Digital marketing is a relatively new promotional tool which is getting popular in all the institutes to have a better communication with their students. The novel digital platforms are helping to connect with the student’s fragment which is dispersed.

Digital marketing has made its way very clear and loud in the current market. The use of platforms such as websites, blogs, and social media platforms has opened a two way and an instant way of communication. This is leading to a better understanding in between an institute and the students. These platforms are helping to send messages, receive messages, reach new prospects and maintain the current customer base. This is a biggest in terms of users and effective tool out of all these is social media. The use of social media by the institutes is making sure that interesting content is getting generated which helps in creating a brand for an institute.

Updated and informative college website is seen as an effective sales tool; hence important information is always displayed on the college portals for the convenience of students. Various technical and non-technical related blogs are assisting students to become a reader and learn more.

The undertaken study aims to investigate the use of digital media platforms and the kind of impact seen on the students and understand their views on use of these platforms.

Key Words- Digital Media, AISSMS, Brand, Social media.

Introduction:

A report on Trends in Higher Education Marketing, Recruitment, and Technology( March 2014) by Hanover research emphasized that, one of the notable trends in higher education branding and marketing is that institutions are dedicating lot more attention to the branding marketing and
focusing on connecting with the students. A step ahead, today universities have hired marketing professionals from the corporate world, who are focusing on creating a brand by using various digital platform’s for a technology driven generation.

Today communication with students by various means in extremely important. Traditionally it was much easier to do so, as the numbers of students was relatively low. There was a time when only face to face communication was happening amongst the students and the faculty. Time has certainly changed. Entry of internet increased the distance in between a students and a faculty, but is also made them more connected. All the traditional ways of marketing and communication tools have taken a back sit.

It is widely seen that almost every college is connecting with their students by using some method of digital platform. It could be ‘Enterprise Recourse Planning software’ to enter the attendance, or could be a website to put important information or the circulars, or it can be social media platforms which are preferred because of the wider and a cheaper reach. The use of ERP helps in generating the reports. Students are benefited too as it allows them to track their attendance by using a single log in. ERP has given an easy access to the entire parent to track their wards progress, attendance.

Another platform which is widely used by the colleges is Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. These platforms are students friendly hence, it is easier for colleges to stay connected with the students and pass the necessary information.

Sarode and Wani (2017) studied that, today students are on the social media for 2 to 4 hours in a day. This time spent by them is really useful to build a brand for any institute. These platforms are used by the students as well as their parents. It is an easy way to reach the college authorities.

Apart from the college admin information, today’s generation is seeking to be connected all the time with their friends, faculty members, recruiters and other interesting related field professionals. They like to be in touch with their idol. All digital platforms help the institutes to
make sure that the younger generation remains with them by creating and posting interesting content, videos and by doing promotion campaigns.

**Review of literature**

Siddique and Singh (2016) studied positive and negative impact of social media on students, business and the society. The author stated that Social media gives a mode to the students to reach each other with regards to the college assignments, lecture information. Its great way to communicate with students who are not regular to college. The same platform can be used by teachers to post information about college events and other important happenings. From a business point of view, Social Media helps to study and understand the clients by their likes and dislikes. It helps in various promotional activities which help in increasing the brand awareness. The budget required for such promotion is much less than the traditional marketing activities.

Bansal. S (2014) studied that there are various measures taken by various colleges to promote and build the brand of an institute. Few major once are which are studied and mentioned

Overall north colleges and universities are aggressive in the promotion. Celebrity Endorsement is used by a few educational institutions to promote their brand name. Digital era evolving digital world is leaving black board and office interaction. Educational institutions are advised to take more efforts to cater to the needs of this online. Few educational institutions have started with few social wellbeing activities to create their brand image in the society. It’s important to be very careful on how brand campaign message language may be perceived internally. Students of the colleges should be a part of creating a brand. Colleges can raise visibility and build their brand with their target audience by offering programs tailored to that audience. The researcher also focused in having a website for students, alumni to be connected. Davis III et al (2014) stated in his research that researchers have begun to pay attention to the growth and significance of social media. The use of Social Media Technology is growing fast among all segments, especially in millennial users who are college-goers. Ezumah (2013) concluded in the research that social media is sued to keep in touch with the old friends, current friends and family members and they spend around 1.5 hours on the social media. 94% of the participants access the sites through various handy devices such as laptops, 78% use cellular phones and a smaller number which is
14% through iPad. The researcher said that Twitter is gaining the popularity and 67% of the respondent’s has a Twitter account. Though they are new to the twitter yet it is one of the preferred platforms. 29 % of the students are having LinkedIn account in spite of the platform being the oldest one.

Utpal (2017) found out that students spend 1 to 5 hours in a week on Facebook. The author studied carious activities students are a part of. The studied age groups which are the youngsters mostly are busy in engage are like, comments, share and Troll. Majority of the students i.e. 53.1% students like the post. Commenting on the post is mostly seen in female users than the male users. Maximum percentage of students likes to view photos, but the students are not interested when they see an ad on the page.

Sutherland et al (2018) found out that students in the last year of their undergraduate degree programs felt a strong connection to their university community from following their university on social media and used social media frequently as a tool to engage offline with their university community. This may be because students in the final years of the college they feel more connected with the college than the students who are in first years. It was also recommended that the faculty working can be strategic and proactive in making students aware about the various benefits of using social media. Having better offline events to attract students will interest the first year students in achieving wider participation. So long as first year students are regular, available, pleasant and interesting opportunities to make offline connections may assist in improving student engagement. Lovari and Giglietto (2012) found out that maximum Italian universities have an official page on Facebook, followed by YouTube and twitter. LinkedIn is not a very widely used platform. The researchers also found out that very less number of colleges have a person in charge who handles these pages. Private institutions are more inclined and effective while planning the social media strategies. Both medium and private institutions share a high interest and hence it helps attract new students and engage them by using a social media in a dialogic way embrace social media strategies.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**
The data for this research was collected from the students of various colleges which are under the umbrella of AISSMS Organization, Pune.

A simple convenient technique was used to select the sample from the population. Total studied sample was 495. The structured questionnaire was formed by keeping the research objective in mind. The well designed questionnaire was sent through Google Doc to the students of AISSMS who are active on social media platforms. Result of the same was further analyzed and interpretation was done to understand the answers.

Objectives of the study are as mentioned below,

1. To study the most effective and informative digital platform.
2. To know the impact of various promotional activities on the students.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The questionnaire was collected from 495 college students. The 99 % respondents are from the age group of 16 to 25, remaining 1% was answered by age group of 26 to 36.

Chart 1- Information source

78% respondents were introduced to the brand by their family members, relatives or friends. 21 % of the respondents got to know about the college through the college website. Interestingly only 15% students received the information by social media platforms.
Chart 2- Should a college be present on digital media platforms.

When asked if presence on digital platforms for an institute is important, 90% of the respondents were for it. Only 2% respondents do not agree with the same. 8% of them said they are not sure about the answer.

Chart 3- Awareness about various platforms.

72% of the students of AISSMS are aware that their respective college is present on various media platforms. 45% of them know about a college page on Instagram followed by 34 % are aware about Facebook. 22 % are aware about a YouTube platform. Only 8% are aware that college is active on LinkedIn.
Table 1- Effective digital platform
40% of respondents said, that search engines are the most effective media channels which helps in creating the awareness and feel connected, followed by 37% said that Social media platforms to seek required information. Individual college Website stands at third position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms</th>
<th>Most effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Least effective</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engines like Google, YouTube, etc.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emails</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2- Informative platforms
While talking about gathering information from various platforms, the most informative platform for 39% students is Instagram. For 35% of students an updated college website is a tool of getting information. 64% of respondents said LinkedIn and YouTube can be improved by uploading more content. 92% students think, Radio as an informative tool can be used in future.

**Chart 4- Frequency of visits**

Even number of respondents which is 34% of the total sample size, visit the college page once in a week and once in a month. 16% of the student’s visit these pages once in a day.

**Chart 5- Rating of post on the base of reliability**

32% of the respondents said that they can relate to the post in between 75% to 50%.

24% said they can relate to the post from 99% to 76%, only 14% respondents said that they can relate to the post completely. 19% students can not relate with the post.
Table 3 - Impression about various activities

Under media department, various activities were undertaken to promote the brand. The impact of those was asked to the respondents. Promotional videos created an impact and they were rated as very impressive by 24% of the respondents. Celebrity attending college events, and excellence award which was started in the year 2019 created a good impact in 27% of respondents. Highest rating for feel good factor was for articles and blogs which are published or uploaded.
YouTube channel promotion is surely on rise. It was surprising to know that 24% of the students did not know that the respective college has a YouTube channel. 30% of them never visited the college YouTube channel.

![Chart 7- Expectations from the platforms](image)

Students who visit the various platforms expect to receive some information. The mean of the given options was calculated. The highest mean out of all the option was received for Placement information and events and news about the college (3.75). Overall interesting information about college (3.70), followed by industry trends (3.62) to keep themselves updated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Image</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Centric</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promising Brand</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Education</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Centric</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Brand</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Devlp.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 – Perceived brand image
The AISSMS has created a brand for itself, as the organization is in the existence from many years. Respondents were asked about their perception about the brand. 52% respondents said that they strongly agree that the brands is employee centric followed by, 33% of the said they think that the brand has lot of heritage value. 38% of the respondents said that they agree that this brand is student centric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best day to post the videos</th>
<th>Mon- Thurs</th>
<th>Friday Morning</th>
<th>Friday evening to Sun evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0600hrs to 1159hrs</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200hrs to 1759hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800hrs to 2100hrs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100hrs onwards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best time to post</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 – Best day and time to post

According to 36% of respondents best time to post is from 1800hrs to 2100hrs. 82% of them said to get more attention it is advisable to post on weekends.

Chart 8- Duration of being online

The students were asked about the duration that they are online, 43% of them said that they are online for 1 to 2 hours daily.
Recommendations and suggestions

- It is strongly recommended that platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn needs a very heavy push. Twitter can help in reaching out to people who look for more serious content. LinkedIn as a professional platform can be made aware in final year students as they are on the way of becoming joining the respective industry.
- Aggressive promotion for the Blogs by student’s at various channels to create publicity is required. This can help reach the brand in unexplored and untouched segment with the help of young readers.
- LinkedIn and YouTube channels lack the youthful content. More useful and technical or non-technical content can be uploaded and promoted to attract the student’s.
- LinkedIn can defiantly help in getting more companies for placement, which will help in exploring new job opportunities for the student’s.
- It’s suggested to have more stimulating and striking and engaging content on the social media platforms to have student’s visiting the pages more often than once in a week or once in a month.

CONCLUSION

An AISSMS brand has created a place for itself in the city and the state. The brand is on the right track in terms of the use of digital media platforms with the current and future students.

It’s very positive sign to learn that, students got maximum recommendations through word of mouth which proves that it the brand has created a mark for itself without heavy promotions in past. It’s concluded that students recognized this as employee centric brands as compare to any other brand image, the credit for this brand image certainly goes to the employees and the internal marketing.

The students are seeking more information about happenings in the college and placement information through various media platforms. It’s good to know that they are aware about the initiatives taken by the college on various digital media platforms and they pay attention to them.
to an extent. The research determined that Friday evening is the best time to post the content on the social media platforms. The research can confidently help bridge the gap in between what students expect from the digital media platforms.

**References**


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