

FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

# Digital CMO

MARCH 2017

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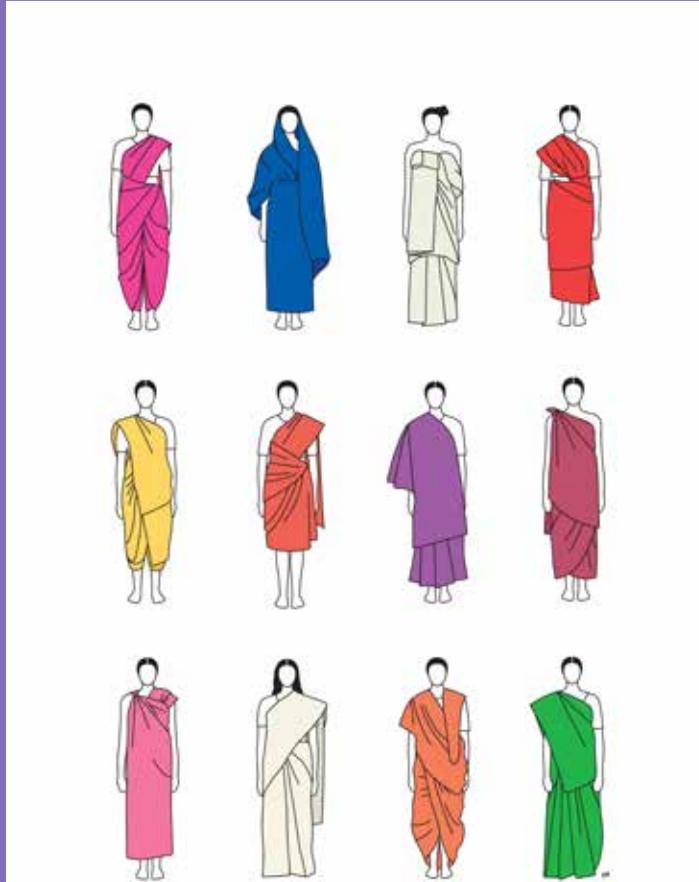
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## B2B SOCIAL MEDIA

# HELLO

I still remember, not many years ago, when B2B executives would look at you with amusement if you were to bring up the subject of social media to them. Social media was then seen as a platform for consumer engagement and not even remotely a B2B marketing tool.

Times have changed since then. Social media is now wooed equally by B2B marketers. And while social media has found a place in a B2B marketing plan, its impact on the overall business is still being debated.

Generating actionable insights from social interactions and tapping into the true potential of the medium through meaningful customer engagement are a few of the challenges that marketers are facing.

In this issue of the Digital CMO Digest, we spoke to a few progressive marketers to unscramble the confusion that hung around social media in the B2B space. They spoke to us about the need for relevant content, the importance of timing, and the as-yet untapped potential of the medium, which goes beyond consumer engagement.

We also dug deep into research to see what studies from around the world had to throw up.

In this issue, we present to you all that we found.

In our artistic space this time we cover a young graphic artist from Mumbai. Her name is Shweta Malhotra. She has a unique, minimalistic aesthetic style that we found refreshing in today's over-communicated world. We present six of her artworks here.

Happy reading!



Arunh Krishnan  
Editor

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### Avanish Tiwary

Avanish is an independent journalist who writes on business strategies. Previously, he was a reporter on start-ups at The Financial Express.

### Priyanka Bhattacharya

Priyanka Bhattacharya is an old school journalist who began covering the Indian information technology industry when it was still nascent. Since then she has expanded her horizons, and besides IT, she now also covers digital marketing, CRM, health & beauty, and the lifestyle industry.

## Designer

### Priyokumar Singh Naorem

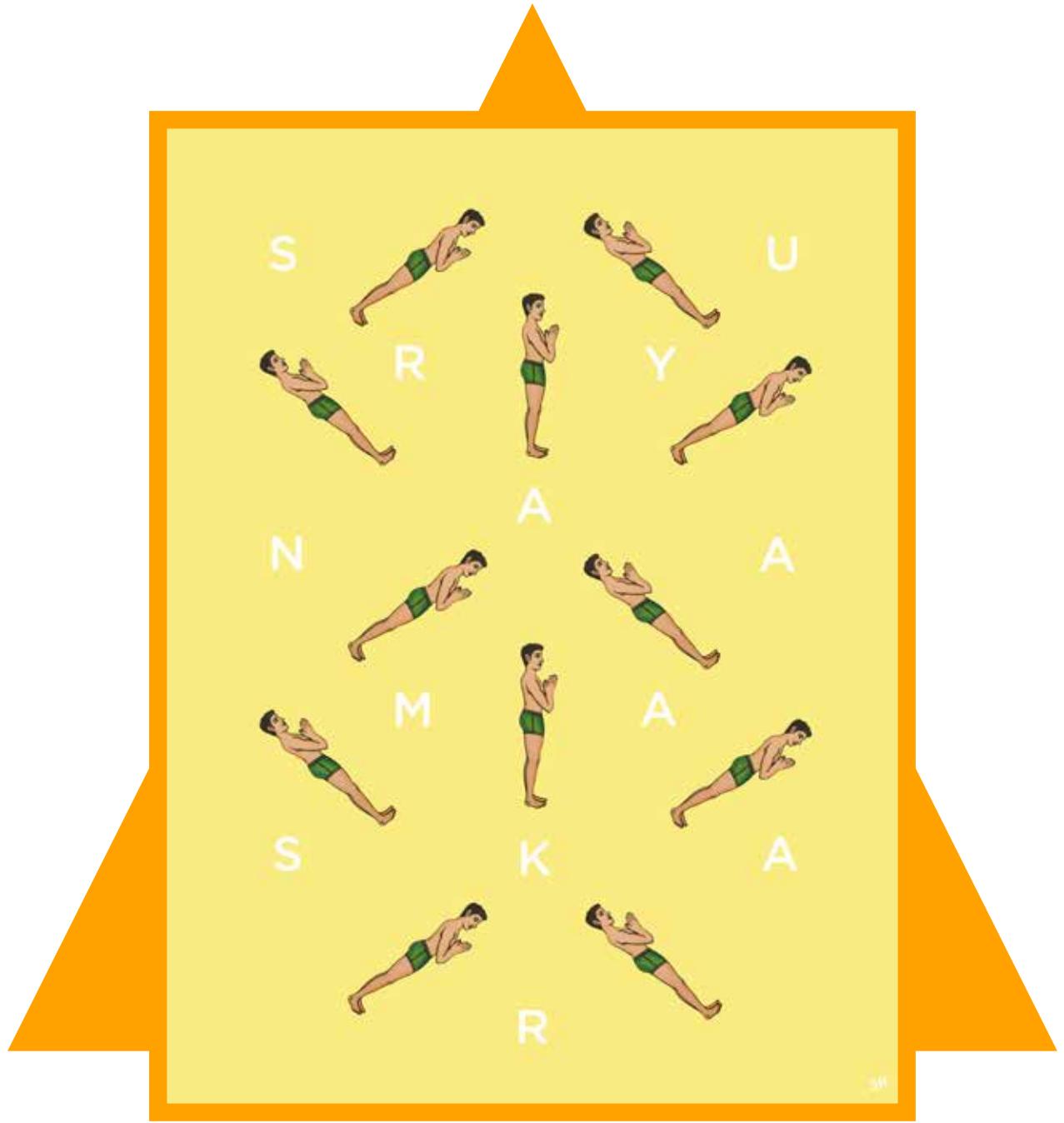
## Artist

### Shweta Malhotra

Shweta Malhotra is a graphic artist and designer from Mumbai, based in New Delhi.

After working with ad agencies and design studios for close to 8 years, she branched out on her own and currently works independently.

Her overall design aesthetic is minimal, bold and graphic, a response to the maximalist visual language prevalent in India.



Surya Namaskar

# Marketers are still struggling to find mature social media strategies: Results from the “State of B2B Social Media Marketing 2016” survey

The world may be more social than ever before, but B2B marketers are still struggling to find effective gains from social media, a new survey by Regalix Inc. has found. The “State of B2B Social Media Marketing 2016” found that nearly 15% of companies still do not invest in social media marketing.

More importantly, across all the companies surveyed, nearly 48% rated social media marketing as only *somewhat important*, while just over half rated it as *very important*. The big challenges companies faced were *assessing the effectiveness of social media marketing activities* (67%), and *generating actionable insights from social data* (50%).

Coupled with this, 56% of respondents who have not invested in social media so far said they were unable to find persuasive data on ROI, which kept them from investing in social media.

One of the basic reasons for this effectiveness gap is that marketers continue to think of social media like traditional advertising platforms. Thus an overwhelming majority (87%) still settle for *increasing brand awareness* as their highest priority, missing opportunities for *increased post-sale engagement* for cross-selling and building referrals (59%), *generating consumer insights* (just 26%) and *providing customer support* (just 17%).

Most companies are still struggling to get a clear grasp of the social space and understand how to tie their marketing efforts across different channels and content types. Thus, besides a lack of clear ROI, 33% of respondents cited *lack of expertise in running campaigns* and 22% cited *aligning social media strategy across the company* as other obstacles preventing social media investment.

But marketers are beginning to understand the nuances between social channels and the need to have different strategies for different channels. Thus, while LinkedIn continued to dominate among social media (89%), Facebook has gained ground as a leading support channel (46%), and newer platforms like Instagram (11%) and Pinterest (6%) are gradually showing signs of emerging as effective channels for meeting different marketing objectives.

Marketers are also beginning to see the need to align content type with each platform: thus video, gaming and interactive content were seen as working best on Facebook, while serious business messaging through whitepapers and case studies, how-to posts, articles and research papers fared better on LinkedIn.

The major gap for companies, though, is a clear strategy for what social media messaging should achieve in terms of marketing objectives. Among social media metrics, vanity metrics like *retweets, likes, shares and comments* still dominate at 41%, while *social trends* (23%), *demographic information* (19%), *social graph data* (12%) and *sentiment analysis* (13%) continue to lag.

In terms of key marketing metrics, *website traffic* (83%), *leads generated & conversions* (63%), *click rates* (63%) and *followers & likes* (60%) are all rated higher as key measures of success than *user engagement* (just 52%). This suggests that companies still see marketing as one-directional, and are failing to grasp the potential for dialogue of social media platforms.

While social media investments are predicted to grow, to tap into the full potential of the medium, marketers need to script more sharply focused social strategies with a deeper insight into the social behavior of consumers.

# Social media marketing is a great cost-effective option for a brand

*Kiran Veigas, Associate Director and Head – Corporate Strategy & Marketing at Happiest Minds, shares his views on how social media marketing can benefit B2B organisations. Happiest Minds, the digital transformation, infrastructure, security and product engineering services company, uses social media effectively to reach out to not just potential clients but also employees, to keep them connected with the company's strategy.*

*Veigas tells us how B2B companies can look at professional networking channels like LinkedIn to promote the brand and develop business campaigns.*

*Interviewed by Priyanka Bhattacharya*

## // How relevant is social media for B2B organizations?

B2B brands derive maximum mileage out of social media by powering up its brand quotient and creating an identifiable persona of the organization that connects with customers and prospective talent.

It helps in social selling and nurturing relationships by showcasing thought leadership and company culture. Social media has become an essential cog in the integrated marketing wheel of content marketing, event marketing, media relations and influencer marketing.



## // Which social media channel would you say worked best for you in lead generation?

For lead generation, we have derived maximum results from LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google.

The main reason is that marketing spends in these channels can be more focused toward our target audience. We have found that paid campaigns can be tightly controlled using the various analytics and dashboards provided by these channels. We also have the option of tweaking the campaigns if desired results are not met.

## // What are the things you focus on when investing in social media advertising?

The first thing we ensure is that the messaging is crisp and focused. We are very conscious about picking the appropriate channel for the audience that we want to reach out to. We use more than one channel where applicable. When it is a paid social campaign, we are meticulous about selecting the target audience to maximise on the spend.

## // How often does Happiest Minds use social media channels to reach out to its customers?

At Happiest Minds, we use social media almost on a daily basis to share various updates like company news, press releases, recent thought leadership content (whitepapers, blogs, case studies and POV articles), upcoming event information and service offerings information.

For instance, when Ashok Soota, Founder and Executive Chairman at Happiest Minds, was conferred IT Lifetime Achievement Award by Financial Express in Dec 2016, we used social media in a big way. We shared the event photos on social media and we were able to extend that feeling of happiness and pride across all Happiest Minds people and office locations.

## // What would be the measure of success of a social campaign? What would you say is a good ROI?

We would measure the success of a social campaign by its social shares and comments. The ROI would be based on the quantum of web traffic and leads generated.

## // How critical is social media marketing in the overall marketing plan?

Social media marketing is a very cost-effective option for a brand. Irrespective of whether the brand is big or small, digital media provides a level playing field in most ways and a great campaign will achieve virality irrespective of the media spend.

## // Your suggestions to organizations looking at social media for a B2B connect?

To understand the market you must invest across multiple channels. Only then can you figure out which channels work for specific objectives. Then you create campaigns to fit the channel you have chosen. Run a mix of paid and non-paid campaigns to get the most out of your social media marketing efforts.

When developing the content for your campaigns, do use a mix of images, infographics, videos and text to capture maximum eyeballs. Finally, to understand the success or failure of your campaign, you will need to use various analytics and dashboards to evaluate sentiment analysis, web traffic and prospect engagement.

A close-up portrait of a man with a shaved head, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a purple button-down shirt. The background is a blurred office setting with computer monitors and greenery.

# We have quadrupled our budget in social media marketing

*Chennai headquartered software development services company Aspire Systems' Marketing Director, Raghunath Vijayaraghavan, talks candidly about the importance of social media marketing. He elaborates on which social platforms work for B2B companies, and which don't.*

*Interviewed by Avanish Tiwary*

## // How big a help does social media provide to B2B marketing?

The biggest challenge for a B2B company in marketing is that there is a lot of focus even today on cold calling, sending emails, etc., which is basically part of a push campaign, but what we need now is a pull campaign. Because of the intense competition, as there are now hundreds of IT services companies, the question is, how do you differentiate yourself from others? Automatically the focus shifts to making the content different and that is where social media becomes an important tool. It helps to distribute content to the most number of clients.

For B2B specifically, *LinkedIn is a huge help as that is one social network that is typically meant for B2B companies* where you won't see many B2C brands. You won't see companies like Flipkart or Amazon using it as actively since for them Facebook, and maybe Twitter, are better platforms. But that is not so for B2B brands. A lot of companies focus on content and regularly find themselves asking how they can use content to target the relevant customer. Content has to provide value to the reader and at the same time also help in building your company's brand. Let's say, Aspire Systems puts out some very good content for someone who is looking for a solution pertaining to a retail problem. The more content they digest from us the more credible we become, and at that point in time there is a huge possibility that they themselves might reach out to us. Most of the social media marketing is focused around content. So *social media marketing goes hand in hand with good content*.

## // What kind of content works best on social media?

There are different types of content to work with and we keep changing the flavour so as to avoid monotony. It can be videos, success stories, webinars or a white paper that talks about say, Aspire Systems' thoughts on mobile apps. The hope is that it would build my company's credibility and at the same time if someone wants to reach out to us they should have a way to do so.

If you look at social media marketing at Aspire Systems, typically we look at what kind of pain points our customers go through. Let's say a company has issues with its mobile app; maybe it crashes frequently, or they want their customers to be connected with the company through the app all the time. We develop content that the customer would find useful, then see how we can target them. Through LinkedIn, I can specifically target the VP of say, Flipkart, which is useful for us. Even ads on social media channels like LinkedIn work in an effective way as I can target my ad viewer there. I can set it up in a way that the ad will be shown to only those who have the designation of a director or above of say, a retail company. When somebody in that position sees my ad, they would be happy to give it a read and explore more.

There is also the aspect of consuming content at different touch points that a marketer should keep in mind. For example, if we get to know that a particular client likes to consume content on mobile apps, we give him more content on apps. To be able to do this, we need to create profiles of all our clients.

## // What kind of innovation is happening around social media campaigns?

Marketers are trying very hard to ensure that the customers reach them and for that they do a lot of AB testing of ads. We also use re-marketing effectively, so if you were to come to the Aspire website, the next time you log into any of your social media accounts, our ads would be shown to you.

## // Are new social media platforms like Snapchat or Instagram important for B2B marketing?

Snapchat or Instagram kind of platforms are more for a B2C company. For B2B, the most commonly used platforms are LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. *Facebook is more of a re-marketing platform which is sometimes also used for recruitment.* I would say LinkedIn is the most preferred B2B social media marketing tool. But almost all companies have their own YouTube channel, so videos that include tutorials and things like that mainly go on YouTube instead of any other platform.

## // Does social media help in lead generation?

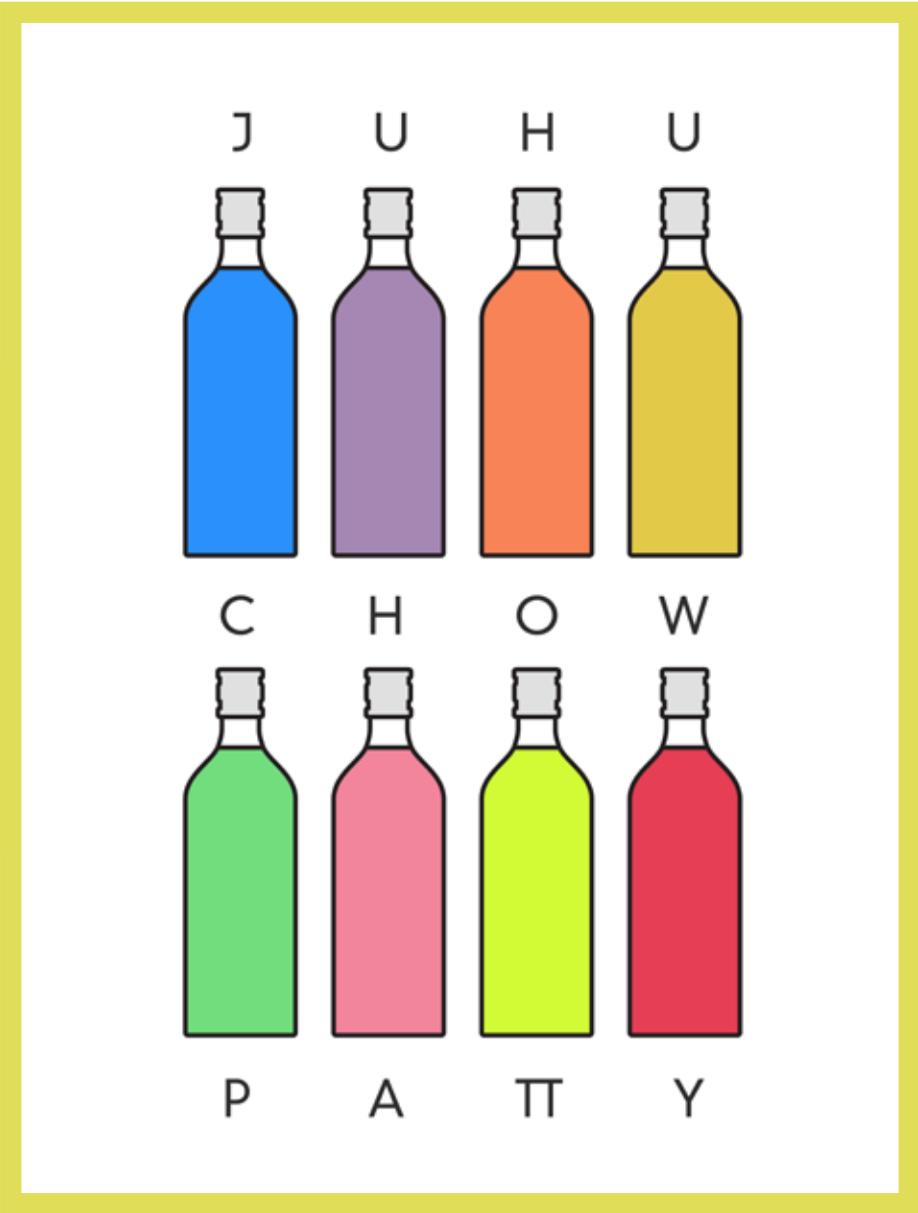
It's not that social media is only for branding. These tools are helping in lead generation as well. However, as of now, we still need a lot of traditional marketing methods for lead generation. But social media is quickly moving up the ladder to become one of the strongest lead generation marketing tools. The dependence on other marketing tools for lead generation, I would say, is dipping, and in the next two to three years, social media will dominate.

## // Has Aspire Systems increased its budget for social media marketing?

Without giving exact figures here, I can say that we have increased our budget in social media marketing from last year to this year by four times. The main thing for us to think about, and it's something other marketers should also focus on, is how to divide the funds among separate social platforms. One has to try and understand which platforms will work for your business and at what stage. *Twitter has not worked for lead generation but it's a good social media platform for branding. LinkedIn is considered as a strong lead generation platform. Facebook is more for brand building.*

## // What challenges do marketers face while doing a campaign on social media?

I would say the challenge is probably more of recruiting the right social media manager who knows the subject and is an expert. Though digital marketing has become equivalent to traditional marketing, there are many nuances to it that only an expert can handle. Talent is still a huge problem. Also, because of its popularity, social media marketing is becoming expensive and a CMO will have to be wary of how much he is spending and what his returns are.



Juhu Chowpatty

# We target specific groups and interests on social media

*Meera Iyer, marketing head of online grocery seller, Big Basket, talks about the importance of social media marketing and how it can be used for maximum benefit. She talks about the need for relevant content and the importance of timing a social media post.*

*Interviewed by Avanish Tiwary*

## // What is the objective of your social media marketing?

The first objective is customer acquisition. Social media as a channel has the maximum number of your online customers actively engaged on it. Facebook is the biggest in terms of the sheer number of users. It's like one channel where you, as a marketer, are able to reach the maximum number of people at one go. It is an attractive medium for e-commerce since you can reach out to people who are already online.

Another reason we use social media is for customer engagement. There is a huge appetite for rich content like videos, story experiences, infographics, and GIFs. We participate in all of these as it allows our users to share this content with their friends. It is great for brand building. Content could be anything related to our business, like a video about how we source our foods and vegetables.

## // If you have to rank all the marketing tools according to how effective they are, where would social media be?

We have gone the mass media route and mass media will always take the lion's share of spend. As you'll know, a TV campaign costs a lot of money.

I would say that *of my entire digital budget, social media would constitute 15-20%*. However, I do see it increasing with time. Digitization is only going to grow in India and accordingly, the proportion of spend will increase in social media. If you look at it, *even a brick and mortar kind of business overseas will have significant spending on digital marketing compared to traditional marketing*. This is only because the profile of audience has largely shifted online. But that is still not the case in India.

## // What would you say are the new platforms that companies are using besides Facebook and Twitter?

*Snapchat is a very strong and interesting platform that has come about*. Unfortunately it's not yet big enough and from the Big Basket point of view it doesn't have the kind of target group that we cater to. But we are hearing a lot about it and are waiting to see how the target group evolves.

We have started using Instagram since a year or so. It's a very nice platform especially for people interested in food which constitutes a huge chunk of our business. On Instagram, we are also seeing a lot of interactions starting to take place.

## // Do you also see social media companies creating tools for marketing?

In fact, I would say social media, led by *Facebook, has cutting edge technology as far as targeting is concerned*. No other platform gives you the targeting options that Facebook does and what's also great about Facebook is that they are able to track cross-device. People are many a time logged in from the website as well as from the mobile app, but the company is able to differentiate between them and is able to find out if it's the same person who's cross using. Facebook is possibly one of the very few companies that allow tracking of cross-device marketing.

## // What is the importance of content while posting it on social media?

I always tell my team that when it comes to social, you should ask two questions before you put up anything over there: why should people care and why they should share. If you are able to answer these two questions satisfactorily then go ahead. It is more dependent I would say on the content and the relevance of that content at that point in time than anything else. We had a post on Janmashtami that was a GIF with Krishna doing something and it did exceedingly well. But that wouldn't work today as it was topical. So not just great content but great content that is topical is what will work.

# YouTube is the Channel of Choice for Hyundai

*Priyanka Bhattacharya*

*A case study on how Hyundai used social media to engage with its target audience, develop a deep connect and build interesting interactions.*

During the Super Bowl season in the US in February 2016, Hyundai ads released on YouTube were rated among the top 10 ads by social media channels. The company actually got the first, fourth and sixth spot on the 10 best ads rating on YouTube. Hyundai actually saw a 92 percent increase in its YouTube followers during this time. According to the Hyundai US CMO Dean Evan, all this was possible because of the company's strategy to focus on few primary social media partnerships – YouTube obviously is one of them – so that the efforts are more concerted and effective. Facebook and Twitter are the social channels of choice for the brand.

This is the story in the US; but the Indian scenario for the brand is quite similar. Here too it has invested heavily in YouTube and Facebook. The company now has over 6 million fans in Facebook, over 50 million video views, and nearly 20,000 subscribers on YouTube.

## **The best social media presence in Indian auto sector**

The numbers stated above are impressive for an automobiles company. According to YK Koo, Managing Director and CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the numbers emphasize Hyundai's strategy to actively reach out to a larger cross section of customer base and engage on a real time basis through social media platforms.

Hyundai Motor India started its social media presence with Facebook in 2011. Over the last five years it has not only strengthened its base in the social networking channel, but also made its presence felt in YouTube. The company has actually managed to double its engagements over the past few years. Like in the US, the company in India also follows a much focused approach.

Moreover, the company is proud of the fact that it has very high levels of fan engagement - highest in the digital space amongst any automobile manufacturer. It has been able to do so by continually monitoring and measuring the key metrics of any campaign it publishes.

In fact, social analytics is a major tool for Hyundai to constantly gauge the impact of its social media campaigns. It engages in lots of social listening, tracking comments and shares to understand the levels of engagement a specific post has. This enables the company to be competitive and optimize each social media event or activity. One of the reasons why most of its campaigns have worked and garnered such success is the intelligence it gathers from its social media marketing efforts and using that to develop further communication strategy.

## Hyundai made the YouTube choice

Cars are best shown in action, and video campaigns enable that. Which is why Hyundai, a brand focused on a young and mobile audience, chose the video medium, and thereby, YouTube.

One example of how Hyundai used YouTube effectively is the road safety awareness campaign that it ran highlighting actions in our day-to-day lives which can prevent mishaps. The videos, '#BeTheBetterGuy' showed brand ambassador Shah Rukh Khan spread the road safety message.

These films made instant connect with the consumers that included car owners who were not necessarily Hyundai customers. Talking about '#BeTheBetterGuy' campaign, YK Koo says, "Hyundai Motor India is a caring brand, and we want all drivers to realize the importance of safe and responsible driving. With people's participation, we are confident the campaign will become a social movement."

This was an innovative move on the part of the company to garner customer goodwill, and improve overall brand recall. Unlike TVCs, these YouTube videos have a longer shelf life, so the impact of the overall communication activity is higher and more durable because it is on social media.

## The 'Better' Brand

Through its focused social media marketing initiatives, Hyundai India has been able to not just launch new products, but also develop better consumer engagement and connect. It has used various social media channels prudently, without stretching and diluting its marketing impact. The keyword here is optimization of the channels used and having a defined end result in mind. Koo explains, "The Indian car buyer is getting younger and is fast in adapting to global trends. Studies revealed that the communication behavior amongst youngsters is evolving. Hyundai has designed a new strategy by introducing pictograms, infographics and emoticons which is the common language adapted by the youth to communicate with each other. Being a youth-oriented brand, Hyundai has adopted an approach that

strikes a chord with current youthful trends which are engaging and active through all digital platforms. The brand has successfully created memorable campaigns and experiences for young Indian customers and has positioned itself as an ace auto brand on social media."

## The 10 Point Hyundai Social Media Strategy

1. Integrated communication approach
2. Specific channel focus for specific campaigns
3. Primary social media partnerships
4. Mapping target audience
5. Visually compelling communication
6. Social analytics
7. Social listening
8. Competitive tracking
9. Engagement metrics
10. Branding through social message

# Working social media into B2B settings

**Rajesh Nanarpuzha**

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*Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense...*

*-Gertrude Stein*

Today's business environment is characterized by a deluge of data. A major contributor to this deluge has been social media, particularly through its rapid rise. This has meant that firms, and specifically their customer facing functions, continue to amass large quantities of data regularly. But the effectiveness with which it is converted to information, and then to actionable insights, remains questionable. For long, firms have equated customer value to the firms' attempts at creating perceivable value to customers. However, Kumar and Reinartz (2016) argue that this view is limiting in today's business

environment. They propose that customer value should also include value that customers provide to organizations through multiple engagement avenues facilitated by social media. Additionally, popular discourse on the impact of social media has largely been restricted to B2C contexts. However, social media has the potential to disrupt B2B 'business as usual'. By focusing on forces preventing effective use of social media in B2B environments, and by looking at suggestions for its optimum application within extant research, I offer potential pointers to embracing social media within the overall strategic umbrella of B2B firms.

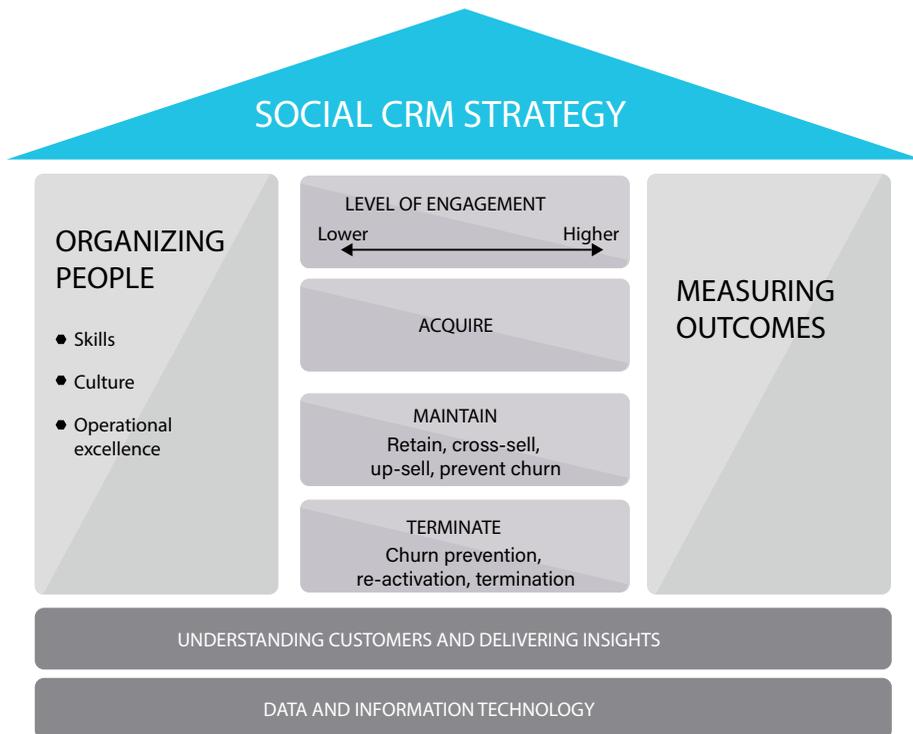
## // Barriers to social media adoption in B2B

There is a growing realization that Social Networking Sites (SNS) can be effectively leveraged in B2B settings. However, existing research shows that firms in the B2B space have largely used social media for communication with customers, for identification of potential partners, and for building relationships (Michaelidou et al., 2011). The limited use to which social media has been put to, is indicative of potential barriers to its adoption in B2B settings. Delving into this, Siamagka et al. (2015) find that questions on usefulness of social media to their firm, lack of a culture fostering innovation, and uncertainty about costs and benefits with regard to its implementation are principal barriers to its adoption in B2B business

settings. In addition, Lacka and Chong (2016) point to questions on usability and utility of social media sites as barriers to adoption. The prevailing environment within B2B companies with regard to social media adoption continues to be laced with scepticism. Its use is limited and marked by caution. However, the possibility of furthering business objectives by actively encouraging the use of social media exists. I discuss this next.

## // Leveraging social media optimally

As an example of social media's disruptive potential and the adaptation required to succeed, Malthouse et al. (2013) introduce the concept of the 'social CRM house' (Figure 1).



Malthouse et al's (2013) consider traditional CRM to be a composite of tools and strategies related to acquisition, maintenance and termination of customers. The authors' key insight is that firms can set the level of social media engagement with customers based on the firms' comfort levels. Levels of engagement (item 1) can be dialled up as the firms' comfort with the use of social media increases. The firm's social CRM strategy (item 2) can be set based on this comfort level. Social media data and IT applications (items 3 and 4) provide the raw material and the analysis tools for strategy implementation. Equipping the company's employees to implement the strategy (item 5) and building adequate monitoring mechanisms (item 6) complete the social CRM house.

Huotari et al. (2015) offer additional pointers on leveraging social media for B2B companies. They suggest that companies should actively differentiate between users involved in content creation on social media. The strategies for encouraging creation of desirable social media content needs to be different for internal users (those on the payroll of the firm) and external users (all others). For example, employees could be directly trained and encouraged to create desirable social media content. On the other hand, external users could be indirectly influenced to create desirable social media content through marketing activities aimed at content creation.

## Conclusion

For far too long, the conversation on benefits of social media have been limited to B2C settings. In B2B settings, the role of social media has been looked at with scepticism. However, toddler steps have been taken and B2B firms are now waking up to the need to use social media optimally. Insights from research in B2B settings offer a potential pathway in this quest.

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Rasoi

# To be or not to be? B2B firms and social media

**Harsh Dadhich**

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Why should a B2B firm have a social media strategy or even a presence? This question often grapples most B2B companies. As Regalix's data shows, B2B firms' investment in social media is going up. This upward trend is a reflection of legitimate rewards of such practices.

## What's social media to my business?

Many B2B firms do not engage with social platforms believing that it is not of relevance for their business. Michaelidou and colleagues<sup>1</sup> found that lack of identified relevance is one of the major barriers for adoption of social strategy at a B2B firm. To complicate it further, most B2B firms

struggle to identify or adopt metrics to measure success of social media presence. In spite of these reservations, the data also shows that more number of B2B firms are engaging with social networking sites than before and this is likely to increase in future.

A study<sup>2</sup> on B2B firms in the UK shows that perceived ease of use and image of social media also play a role in its adoption. Firms that view social media as an easily available option to use and promote themselves are more likely to adopt it. This perception may stem from their exposure to technology, industry and innovativeness as a work-culture.

## So what if my business is on social media?

Social media is a powerful channel for customer engagement. Research shows that benefits may not always be as direct as sales, but could be even more intrinsic such as responsiveness of sales personnel. Agnihotri and his collaborators<sup>3</sup> found that social media usage by sales people resulted in enhanced information flow between the organization and their customers. This resulted in a higher responsiveness from the sales team leading to tangible benefits such as customer satisfaction. Similarly, researchers<sup>4</sup> have also found that B2B social media usage influences brand performance amongst its customers as well as customer-retailer loyalty.

As a real-time information exchange tool, social media allows organizations to create customer level value beyond instances of purchase. Andzulis and others<sup>5</sup> have found that social media consumption at a B2B firm evolves over time and it graduates from being a mere presence (Facebook page, etc.) to active efforts to drive customers to such company pages; followed by social media being perceived as an extension of the sales channel and finally resulting in becoming a tool for value co-creation with customers, real-time engagement and facilitation of learning processes. At the final stage, social media becomes an enabler of a competitive marketing approach for a B2B company.

However, social-focused CRM practices cannot yield results in isolation of a customer centric approach – belief that customer engagement is the key to success – at the top management level. A paper published in *Journal of Business Research*<sup>6</sup> shows that social CRM is influenced by the degree to which an organization is customer-oriented in its decision making and marketing approach. A company that has an overall customer engagement and support mind-set is more likely to view social media as a necessary apparatus for contacting and cultivating customers for future instances of purchase. They would also focus on other

on-ground and offline channels for communication. Hence, an effective social approach would begin by focusing on capturing customers across touchpoints and engaging them in a conversation.

<sup>1</sup> Michaelidou, N., Siamagka, N. T., & Christodoulides, G. (2011). Usage, barriers and measurement of social media marketing: An exploratory investigation of small and medium B2B brands. *Industrial marketing management*, 40(7), 1153-1159.

<sup>2</sup> Siamagka, N. T., Christodoulides, G., Michaelidou, N., & Valvi, A. (2015). Determinants of social media adoption by B2B organizations. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 51, 89-99.

<sup>3</sup> Agnihotri, R., Dingus, R., Hu, M.Y., & Krush, M.T. (2016). Social media: Influencing customer satisfaction in B2B sales. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 53, 172-180.

<sup>4</sup> Rapp, A., Beitelspacher, L. S., Grewal, D., & Hughes, D. E. (2013). Understanding social media effects across seller, retailer, and consumer interactions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(5), 547-566.

<sup>5</sup> Andzulis, J. M., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Rapp, A. (2012). A review of social media and implications for the sales process. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 32(3), 305-316.

<sup>6</sup> Trainor, K. J., Andzulis, J. M., Rapp, A., & Agnihotri, R. (2014). Social media technology usage and customer relationship performance: A capabilities-based examination of social CRM. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6), 1201-1208.

# Traditional methods of advertising don't really work

*Interviewed by Avanish Tiwary*

The 20 year old California based SaaS provider Zoho Corporation has been working with B2B companies, enabling them with technology to help in their marketing and sales department.

We talked to Meera Sapra who is the product manager at Zoho Social, a social media management tool for businesses that takes care of all social media requirements of a company, right from publishing content to monitoring what's being said about them online. Prior to this, she led the social media efforts for the Zoho suite of over 35 products for six years. In this interview she talks passionately about what social media campaigns can do for a B2B company.



## // How important would you say is social media for B2B companies?

Social media channels are about people and as social media channels help businesses build relationships with people, I don't think there is a lot of difference between B2B and B2C in terms of their social media impact.

A lot has changed in the last couple of years. A few years ago, creating a website was optional for a company, but now can you imagine a business without one? The same is with social channels - a company without a social media channel will simply be unacceptable to customers today.

## // What should the objective be behind a social media campaign?

There are several aspects to it.

One is to attract new customers; the other is to create curiosity among people who have never heard about the company or the product it offers. Companies want to get noticed and social media does the best job of it.

Right now, traditional methods of advertising don't really work to their fullest. With almost everyone using ad blockers, its impact has worsened. For the amount of money and effort that you put into creating an ad, the return is below par if you compare it with the results of social media for the same work.

For companies to get noticed they have to be where their audience is. By creating content that people would want to share, companies are realizing the potential of social media in spreading awareness. Trust and credibility are the two things companies want to build on social media.

Today a business that is launching a new product or making a new offer would go out on social media first. There are a lot of social media-first campaigns.

The other use of social media is to reach existing customers for post-sale efforts.

## // What would you say is one of the key success factors for a company's social media efforts to be effective?

One of the important things to make social media work effectively for you is to ensure that your CRM initiatives are integrated with your social media efforts. Because of the integration, you are able to see all the transactions that the customer has had with you in a single window. So it's a customer centric driven model where you don't have to ask them for the same details over and over again.

Say, you booked a ticket and there is a problem with it. You tweet that brand about your concern and the company representative comes online and asks you for your name, ticket number, and other such details. That is a big social media disaster. The company should have all those details with them already including your last complaint, how it was resolved and if this problem is similar to the last one. They should know all this from your social media account. Our CRM handles all that and the companies that work with us benefit from this integration. This is a major thing that brands are beginning to realize.

## // What kind of content works best for B2B companies while devising a social media campaign?

It all depends on the nature of the business, the kind of audience the company has to deal with for a specific campaign. People will engage differently with videos than say an article or a white paper.

If you want to do a campaign for brand awareness it might be better for you to create content that people could view and share, something that people call 'snackable content'. But if you want to drive traffic to your website then you might want to share a snippet about your product along with a link for them to come to your web page.

If my audience is teenagers, then I would choose a channel like Snapchat or Instagram. But if I want to target a more serious buyer, then I would probably go with Twitter or LinkedIn.

With the flood of information and people's attention span going down, videos is something that captures people's attention. The biggest testimony to this is that almost all the social media channels have recently included or increased the limit of video uploads. Many of them have also added features like 'live video' where people can comment live and share. Facebook and Instagram launched live video and added video features similar to what Snapchat has. Twitter recently increased the limit of video upload to 130 seconds. So all these changes go to show that video is going to be the one to drive most of social media marketing.

## // Which social media tool in your view stands out for a B2B marketing campaign?

I am biased so I am going to say Zoho Social. But there are other very good products like 'Buffer' which is mainly for publishing content, and 'HootSuite' and 'Cloud Social'.

Your social media management tool should also be integrated with your CRM.

Zoho Social not only manages your social media content but also adds leads directly from your software into your CRM. If you are having a conversation on any social channel with someone who you believe is a potential customer, you could add them to your CRM with just one click.



*Umbrellas*

# Likeable Social Media

**Dave Kerpen**

*Dave is a devoted father, husband and the founder and CEO of Likeable Local, a social media software company. He was one of Entrepreneur magazine's top 10 up and coming leaders. His first book, 'Likeable Social Media', was a NYTimes bestseller.*

## Book extract

I was standing in line to check in at Las Vegas's then-trendiest hotel in town, the Aria, for nearly an hour. It was June 2010, and I had just arrived after a twice-delayed six-hour flight from New York. I was tired and annoyed, and last thing I wanted to do was waste an hour of my life waiting in line. Frustrated, I pulled out my smartphone and tweeted, "No Vegas hotel could be worth this long wait. Over an hour to check in at the Aria. #Fail."

Interestingly enough, the Aria didn't tweet back to me, but a competitor did. I saw a tweet from the Rio Hotel just two minutes later. If you're anything like most people with whom I've shared this story, you're probably thinking, "What did the Rio tweet, 'Come on over, we have no line'?" Indeed, many a small business owner and corporate senior executive who have heard this story have thought that this was the Rio's ROI moment, and that was surely what the Rio tweeted back.

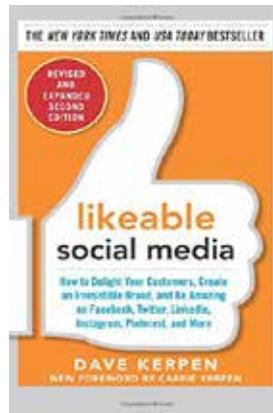
Had the Rio tweeted such a message, I would have likely felt annoyed by two things: "First, why are they stalking me like a creepy character looking to manipulate me and benefit from my bad experience? Second, why is it jam-packed and happening at the Aria while it's wide open at the Rio?" On the contrary, however, the Rio Las Vegas tweeted the following to me: "Sorry about the bad experience, Dave. Hope the rest of your stay in Vegas goes well."

Guess where I ended up staying the next time I went to Las Vegas? And the time after that, and the time after that?

The hotel used social media to listen and to be responsive, showing a little empathy to the right person at the right time. An ad or a push-marketing message simply wouldn't have worked. But its ability to listen, to respond, and to be empathic did.

The Rio essentially earned a \$600 sale from one tweet, one message that got my attention and ended up being integral in my decision as to where to stay next time I was in the city. Not a single person reading this could argue that the tweet was a marketing or sales message from the Rio either - because it wasn't. That would be considered an excellent return on investment (ROI) by anyone's standards. But the story doesn't end there.

Before even arriving at the Rio, I *liked* it on Facebook by clicking the Like button at Facebook.com/RioVegas, thereby letting my 3,500 friends, and the world at large, know of my endorsement

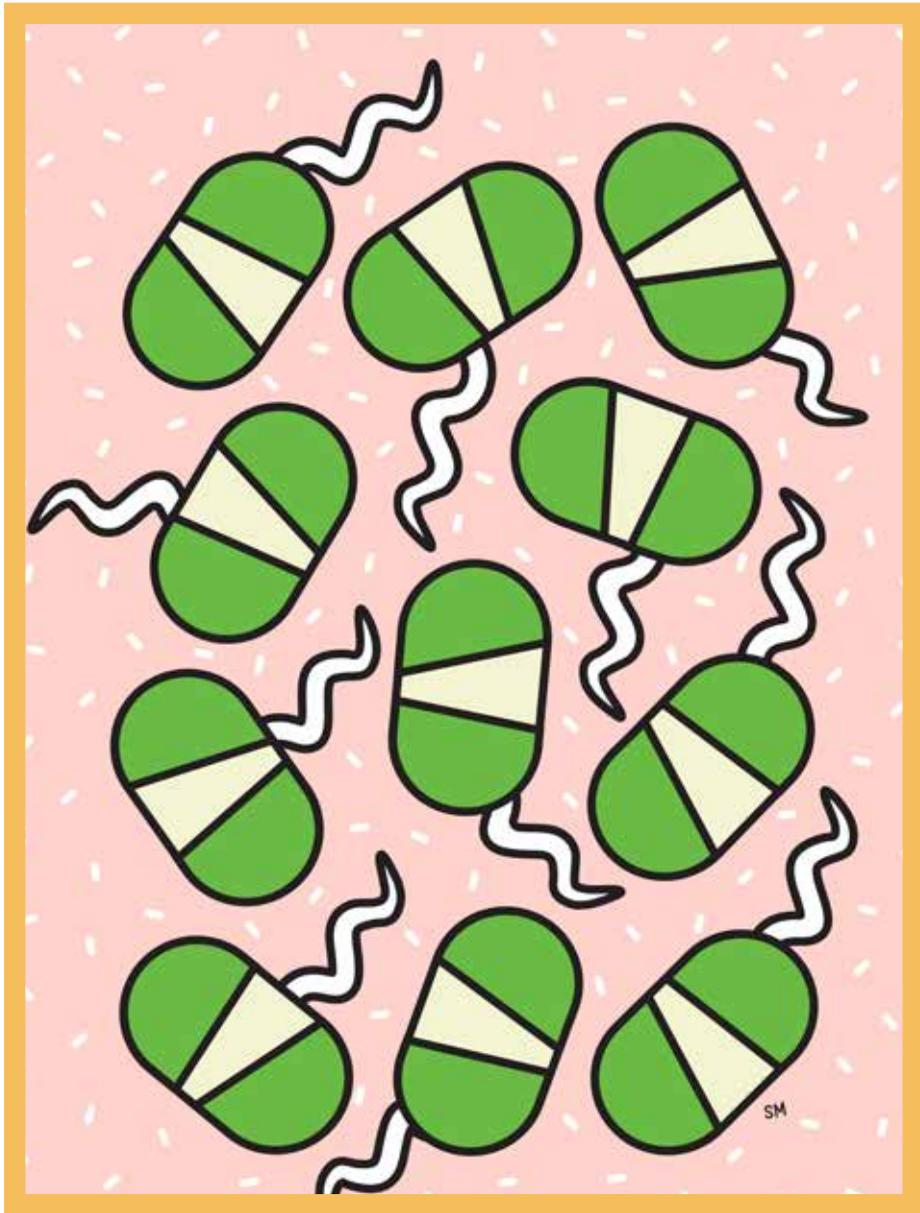


of its customer-friendly practices. A few months later, my friend Erin was looking for a hotel to stay at in Las Vegas over the New Year's holiday, and I received the following message from her on Facebook: "Hey Dave, I noticed you liked the Rio's page. Thinking about staying there for New Year's. What do you think?"

A friend's recommendation is more powerful than any advertisement, and Erin ended up staying at the Rio as well, along with 10 family members. Dozens of other friends have surely noticed my tweets and Facebook *likes* about the Rio and have been influenced since. So, one tweet led to one *like* on Facebook and, in fact, many thousands of dollars worth of business.

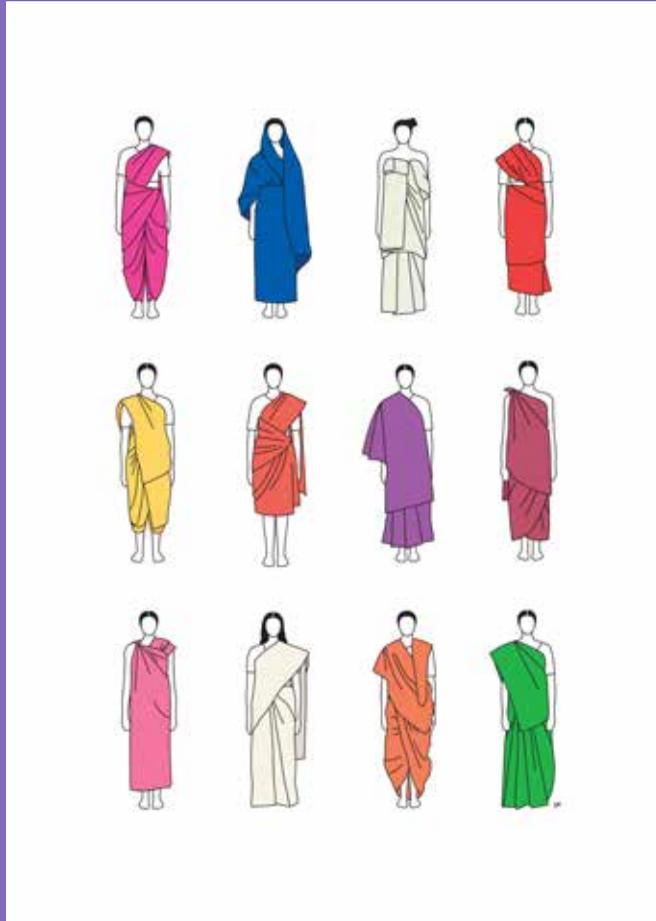
It used to be said that happy customers tell three people about their good experiences and unhappy customers tell ten about their bad ones. But as my experiences with the Aria and Rio hotels demonstrate, today, thanks to social media, happy customers *and* unhappy customers can tell thousands of people their feelings about a company's service or product with just a few clicks relying on the Like button as a virtual endorsement. The Rio leveraged this fact to its advantage, while the Aria did not.

*Extracted with permission from the author*



Sprout Love

# REGALIX



*Drapes of India*



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