Effectiveness of the SMM Communications Strategy of the Educational Center "Beauty Events"

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ABSTRACT

Social media are becoming one of the most important tools for promoting businesses. The scientific problem of the research lies in the fact that there are specific peculiarities in developing an SMM communications strategy in the field of business education in the beauty industry. The authors set the goal of testing the algorithm of developing an SMM communications strategy, assessing its effectiveness, drawing conclusions and making proposals for improving the marketing activities of the company. The three-staged algorithm of launching an SMM strategy for the educational center was proposed and implemented. The effectiveness of the "Beauty Events" SMM communications strategy has been measured.

Keywords: *Social media, smm promoting, developing an SMM communications strategy, business education, beauty industry, algorithm of developing an SMM communications strategy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of communication channels, social media are becoming one of the main and most important tools for business promotion. Digital communication channels allow reaching an audience comparable to traditional media resources, but with a higher degree of targeting and the possibility of feedback. This is confirmed by the upward trend in sales of goods and services through social networks.

Social media marketing (SMM) has taken a strong position among other components of internet marketing. These resources are specific, constantly changing, and therefore require extensive research. It should also be noted that SMM develops in different ways in various business sectors and has its own characteristics, which, in particular, are typical for the field of beauty business education.

The scientific problem of the research lies in the fact that there are peculiarities of developing a communication strategy in social networks in the field of business education in the beauty industry. This topic is poorly covered both in scientific literature and in various business information sources, as there is no unified system of typology, conditions of use and features of each promotion tool in social networks and, more importantly, in most companies there is no systematic approach to the practical application of a communication strategy in social networks.

In the conditions of intensive development of market relations, the key role in the prosperity of business, its long-term functioning and development is played by the effectiveness of marketing communications, as one of the elements of marketing, without which "... the activities of no company are unthinkable" and ignoring which companies "can lead to collapse" [1].

F. Kotler defines marketing communications as "the means by which firms try to inform, persuade and remind consumers, directly or indirectly, about their products and brands." [2].

Tretyakova T.S. notes that the modern marketing communications market is characterized by a significant increase in the popularity of the Internet as an interactive media environment, the development of non-traditional, alternative types of marketing communications and non-standard advertising media [3]. We can agree with this opinion, since social networks in the modern world are a unique communication channel that allow, due to interactivity and cumulative reach, conducting long-term communications in the format of a dialogue between users and a brand, which also extends to users' friends in social networks.

We can agree with A.A. Ziganshina in the fact that "the development of a communication strategy is carried out based on the actual needs of the market, taking into account the preferences of the target audience and other factors" [4].

It should be mentioned that there is a standard misconception that Social Media Marketing (SMM) focuses only on promoting a brand in social media. However, SMM should be, in fact, understood as a complex work within social media, aimed at promoting a site, product or service in any place of communication.

Christopher Trattner and Frank Kappe correctly understand SMM as a set of activities aimed at using social media as channels for promoting and solving other business problems [5]. Olshevsky D. explains this concept in simple words: "SMM is the process of attracting traffic or attention to a brand" [6].

In our opinion, the most complete and understandable definition is the definition of A. Pavlov: "SMM is an effective tool that allows you to convey information to the user, and provides communication between users" [7]. Its most important advantage is that the user himself represents an active advertising medium.

Thus, social media include a wide variety of network communication services and are based on various platforms, among which are:

− Internet forums;

− blogs (LiveJournal, Twitter, WordPress, Tumblr);

− electronic mail;

− podcasts (PodFM, LibSyn);

− social media (Facebook, VK, Instagram);

− Wiki (Wikipedia, PBWiki, Google Docs);

− Social aggregators (Plaxo, Friendfeed);

− Online-games (World of Warcraft, League of Legends).

Robert Scoble highlights the distinctive features of social media: the availability of information, the ability to edit it in published form, interactivity, the ability to track the popularity of publications, quick access to old materials, multimedia, minimization of personal space, the optional procedure for approving materials, the absence of spatial restrictions, unlimited volume, efficiency (instant response), links to other materials, incomplete control over the content of the page [8].

In our opinion, the main feature of SMM is that all actions are performed directly on social media.

We have composed a typology of tools for promoting the educational center and its services in social networks. Our typology consists of seven main features: content marketing, advertising, contests, marathons, partnerships, viral marketing and branding (Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of social media promotion tools for an educational center.

Feature	Types
I. Content Marketing	
1) Types of content	- educative; - customer; - engaging; - selling
2) Method of posting content	- posts; - stories; - live broadcasts
3) Format of the content	- text; - photo; - video;
II. Advertising	- targeted advertising; - advertising from bloggers; - native advertising.
III. Contests	- drawing with reposts; - rally; - games
IV. Marathons	- group; - individual.
V. Partnerships	- joint live broadcasts; - cross-promo; - group marathons; - joint drawings.
VI. Viral Marketing	- flashmobs; - challenges.
VII. Branding	- checking-in an account or community; - hashtags; - geolocation binding in maps; - site integration with social networks; - interaction with subscribers.

The main goal of SMM is to attract targeted visitors by unobtrusively posting or encouraging posting content on a specific topic in social networks.

2. METHODS OF ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SMM COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Based on the studied methods of developing a communication strategy in social media, we have proposed an algorithm that consists of three stages that can be applied to an educational center in the beauty industry.

At Stage 1, the analysis of the company's marketing environment is carried out. Before setting goals for a promotion strategy and developing it, we need to understand where the company is situated at the moment. Analysis of organizational and economic

characteristics of the company includes the description of the form of ownership, mission, goals and objectives of the company, organizational structure, personnel functionality and areas of activity.

The SWOT analysis method is based on the study of four groups of factors: the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, as well as the threats and market opportunities. It is at the junction of these factors that it is possible to determine the reasonable directions of the company's development, which will take into account all four groups of factors. We can agree with K. Sverchkova that the main advantage of SWOT analysis is the ease of its use and perception, as it does not require calculations and is not an expensive procedure [9]. The result of the SWOT analysis is the development of possible directions for further improvement of the firm's activities [10].

Stage 2, the formation of the content strategy of the educational center, includes setting goals for developing marketing communications, choosing social media sites, preparing a content plan, choosing SMM promotion tools, developing a calendar plan, and calculating the estimate of the communication strategy.

At stage 3, the effectiveness of the communication strategy in social networks is assessed. Based on KPIs, you can track how well the company conducts its promotion work or how competently a full-time specialist works. The development of a KPI system for assessing progress is a rather difficult task, requiring the developer to have a thorough knowledge of the features of product promotion and harmonization of indicators included in the KPI system.

It is also necessary to monitor performance indicators over time. For example, the growth rate of the audience for a certain period of time is estimated by the following formula (1):

$$\text{Audience growth rate} = \frac{\text{Number of subscribers} - \text{number of unsubscriptions}}{\text{Total number of subscribers}} \times 100\% \tag{1}$$

There are also metrics for assessing audience's feedback. These are metrics that show the reaction of subscribers to maintaining a group or account. For instance, the level of attractiveness (love rate, LR) shows the level of attractiveness of running a group or account and is calculated by the formula (2).

$$\text{Level of attractiveness} = \frac{\text{Likes}}{\text{Subscribers}} \times 100\% \tag{2}$$

The level of communication support (talk rate, TR) allows identifying the level of audience's engagement and is calculated using the formula (3).

$$\text{Talk rate} = \frac{\text{Comments}}{\text{Subscribers}} \times 100\% \tag{3}$$

The Amplification Rate (AR) is a percentage that reflects how often the audience reposts. The higher the indicator, the easier it will be to organize the development of the community and the free growth of its members [55]. It is calculated by the formula (4).

$$\text{Amplification rate} = \frac{\text{Reposts}}{\text{Posts}} \times 100\% \tag{4}$$

Engagement Rate (ER) is calculated as the sum of all subscriber engagements divided by the number of subscribers. All engagements are likes, comments and reposts.

$$\text{Engagement rate} = \frac{\text{All engagements}}{\text{Number of subscribers}} \times 100\% \tag{5}$$

Testing of the developed algorithm was carried out at the international educational center "Beauty Events".

3. RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SMM STRATEGY AND DISCUSSION

While implementing the SMM communication strategy at the "Beauty Events" educational center, we have used several methods of promotion in social media in order to attract clients to an exclusive online program for beauty masters named "The Way of a Master. Way of the Samurai". 258 people took part in the drawing, which influenced the growth of sales of this program and the growth of the number of subscribers in all social networks, since one of the main conditions of the drawing was a subscription to the account of the educational center. Targeted advertising was set up for both events in May 2020 in Instagram, VK, Odnoklassniki and Facebook.

The analysis showed that the newly created Facebook account had the highest level of attractiveness which proves that the subscribers of this group actively use this social network and are ready to support the company.

The most active audience in terms of the number of comments is observed in Odnoklassniki and Facebook. While the distribution coefficient scored the maximum score in Instagram. This was facilitated by the drawing of participation in the online program and the number of reposts increased. Facebook has the highest engagement rate. This means that the number of all engagements is equal to the number of subscribers. The return on

investment ratio (ROI) stayed at 2.34, which indicates a wise investment in promotion methods.

Table 2. The effectiveness of the "Beauty Events" SMM communications strategy

Indicator	Instagram	VK	Odnoklassniki	Facebook
Audience growth rate	0.8	1.56	-	-
Level of attractiveness	10.3	10.8	33.8	61.5
Talk rate	1.8	2.8	16.9	10.2
Amplification Rate	156.6	60	53.3	73.3
Engagement Rate	12.5	14.4	73.2	100
ROI	2.34			

4. CONCLUSIONS

1. We have proposed our own methodology for developing an SMM communication strategy for an educational center in the beauty industry. The algorithm consists of three stages: analysis of the company's marketing environment, the formation of a content strategy and the assessment of its effectiveness. Each of the stages contains a clearly structured set of tools.

2. The main goal of the company at this stage is to maintain a leading position in the market of educational centers in the field of the beauty industry, as well as to increase sales by 15% and net profit by 5%. This can be achieved by increasing the share of "large" beauty salons, clients from other regions of Russia and increasing customer loyalty. In turn, this requires an increase in the level of purchase of services through social networks by 30%, an increase in reaching 50% of the target audience and stimulation of trial purchases by new customers. The listed goals can be achieved if the plan for media goals is fulfilled: increase in reach, number of subscribers and brand mentions, as well as other KPI indicators with a possible marketing budget of 30,000 rubles per month.

3. As corrective measures to improve the communication activities of the educational center "Beauty Events" in social networks, we highlight the following: it is necessary to continue to maintain social networks in accordance with the content plan, set up targeted advertising once a month with a minimum budget and continue ordering advertising from different bloggers in compliance with the criteria choice of a blogger.

4. We noted that the assessment of the SMM communications strategy effectiveness of the educational center "Beauty Events" confirms the feasibility of its implementation and will allow the educational center "Beauty Events" to reach a new level, significantly expanding the client base, increasing brand awareness, thereby strengthening the competitive position in the Yekaterinburg market. Sales are expected to increase by more than 30% thanks to competent SMM promotion.

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