Tactics for Influencing the Consumer Purchase Decision Process Using Instagram Stories:
Examples From Around the World

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to put forth tactics to influence the consumer purchase decision process by using Instagram Stories tools. The tactics are handled with successful examples from around the world. Analysis of the examples reveal that many powerful tools of Instagram Stories such as different camera modes, face filters, stickers, live video, "see more" links, shopping stickers, hashtags, etc. can be used to accomplish business goals like driving online and in-store sales, promoting apps, raising brand awareness, generating leads, gathering follower feedback, and retaining customers by influencing consumers at every stage of the purchase decision process.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Behavior, Consumer Purchase Decision Process, Digital Content, Digital Content Channels, Digital Content Marketing, Ephemeral Content, Instagram Marketing, Instagram Stories

INTRODUCTION

Traditional commerce has become electronic with the rise of the Internet, and it has transformed almost everything about consumers' lives such as the ways of communicating and gathering information about product offerings or how to make purchases (Darley, Blankson & Luethge, 2010). Because of the particular impact of the digital revolution on consumer purchase decision-making, today's consumers are not limited to offline shopping; instead they now have access to product information anywhere (at home, at the workplace, or at any other place with the use of mobile devices) (Charlesworth, 2009: 16) and anytime.

According to the "Digital in 2018" report, the number of internet users is 4.021 billion, the number of social media users is 3.196 billion and the number of mobile phone users is 5.135 billion. Moreover, almost 1.8 billion people around the world are making online purchases (Kemp, 2018) and this number is expected to be over 2.14 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2019a). According to the "Social Commerce Revisited 2018" report, all social media platforms influence consumers' shopping journeys and as the report reveals, 58% of respondents say that social media influence a purchasing decision (SUMO Heavy Industries, 2018).

Looking at the literature on this subject, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) investigated how different types of celebrities on Instagram affect consumer buying intention. Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) explored Instagram influencers' impact on brand attitude. Casalo, Flavian and Ibanez-Sanchez (2020) examined influencers on Instagram, and identified some key antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. This study theoretically contributes to the literature on both digital content marketing and online consumer behavior, by explaining the use of Instagram Stories tools in influencing the consumer purchase process. Therefore, it is one of the first studies in this field.

CONSUMER PURCHASE PROCESS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

The traditional consumer purchase process consists of five stages including problem/need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase evaluation (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1990; Butler & Peppard, 1998; Teo & Yeong, 2003; Park & Cho, 2012; Wolny & Charoensuksai, 2014). The effects of the digital revolution on these stages may be summarized as shown in Table 1.

CONTENT MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Content marketing is not a new phenomenon, but the emergence of the Internet and digital channels including social media has facilitated companies to take advantage of content to attract current and potential customers (Lieb, 2012: 2).

Content marketing can be defined as attracting, engaging and inspiring customers to buy and share via content that relates to the interests and behaviors of the customers' buying cycle (Odden, 2012: 99). The growth of the social and mobile Web has changed communication methods (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011) and digitalized content marketing. Rowley (2008) defines digital content marketing as:

The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably in the context of digital content, or bit-based objects distributed through electronic channels.

A research study by the Content Marketing Institute (2017) reveals that digital channels are highly used to distribute content as shown in Figure 1.

According to the same research, content marketing tactic usage is listed in Figure 2.

According to the research by the Content Marketing Institute (2018) the top three most effective types of content that are used for content marketing purposes are shown in Figure 3.

MAJOR DIGITAL CONTENT CHANNELS

Digital channels can be considered as tools for delivering content. Major types of digital channels (Lieb, 2012), their role in the online consumer purchase process and the types of content that are shared on these channels are listed in Table 2.

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

There is limited literature on the classification of social media content. In one of these studies, Keefe (2017) classifies social media content in terms of privacy controls as public, private or ephemeral content. Public social media content has no privacy and is accessible to any person who wishes to view the user's account on a social media platform. Private social media content refers to content where users give limited access to a specific group of people to view the posted content. Ephemeral

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