

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) – Most Powerful Advertisement for Quality Products

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Abstract— Science the inception of trade and commerce on the Earth, Seller has tried to convince his buyers by promoting and advertising his products. From those early days to Modern Holistic Marketing era, Advertising is considered as most effective way to promote a Brand. Marketers use several types of contents and delivery channels for effective Brand Positioning and achieving desired outcome. Things were absolutely fine until Web 2.0 Technology has empowered the customers to call a spade a spade and communicate built in perception with thousands of prospects within a minute. This natural conversation in Web is neutralizing the role and affectivity of Advertising. This paper discusses how the Buying Decision Making Process have been changed in this Digital era and locus of control is been shifted from Brands to customers.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM), Advertising, Branding in Digital Era



Fig. 1: Classic Purchase Funnel (Lewis 1900; Strong,1925)
 But this Basic AIDA Model somehow fails to explain the post purchase behaviour. Some researchers have also extended this AIDA Model and tried to explain post purchase behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

A customer goes through several stages of buying decision making process to purchase a product or service. From the stage of problem recognition to post purchase evaluation, Marketers try to influence the customers to achieve a favorable decision towards the brand or the product. Marketers practice several Sales Promotional Techniques and Advertising to convince target customers. Several formats and contents are used for customers in different stages. Major intention behind this contents are to influence the decision making process. For year's traditional media like Television, News Papers and other delivery channels were considered as the effective medium of Advertisement. Marketing Organizations also have utilized several Digital Platforms to reach and convenience their customers. But the scenario has been changed completely after the emergence of Web 2.0 technology. Web 2 Technology is the internet application that allows the users to express and share their own content. Customers are discussing about Good and bad aspects of the product. This Web conversation is now treated as the primary input in buyer's journey.

II. AIDA MODEL

AIDA Model is one of the basic model that explains Consumer Decision Making Process, which was widely used for Designing Advertising contents. E.St.Elmo Lewis has proposed AIDA Model (Classic Purchasing Model) which elucidates customer journey from the moment a brand or product attracted consumer attention to the point of action or purchase. Here he proposes that the customer goes through the phase of Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. This Model is well implemented by the Brands for their Advertising purpose since a long time.

III. AISDALSL MODEL

Wijaya and B. Sukma extended AIDA Model considering the engagement of customers in Social Networking Sites. Here they integrates Basic AIDA Model with Social Media and proposes that after purchase, the customer shares his likings and disliking in Social Media and that content is then accepted or rejected by other participants in Social Platform. They propose a customer goes through following stages of buying decision making process.

Awareness → Interest → Search → Desire → Action → Like/dislike → Share → Love/Hate

In this model researchers have given priority to the engagement of a customer to Social Networking Sites and explained how they like, dislike or share a content after consuming a product or service, but the limitation of the model is it doesn't not explain the effect of sharing on buying decision of other customers.

IV. SOCIAL FEEDBACK CYCLE

Burby, Atchison and Sterne (2007) introduces the concept of Social Feedback Cycle, where they have integrated Classic Purchase Funnel with Social Web and advocates that the natural conversation is the main input for purchase decision of other prospects. Customer is sharing his real experience in web. This shared opinion or free Talk is the key input at 'Consideration' phase of Buying Decision Making Process. Here they propose that Customer emphasizes on User Generated Contents than Marketers Generated Contents.

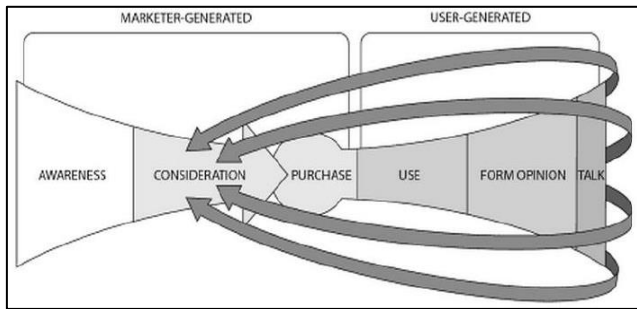


Fig. 2: The Social Feedback Cycle (Burby, Atchison & Sterne, 2007)

V. MORE ADVOCACY TOWARDS CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT

Social Networking Sites have endowed the customers to talk freely, which they have framed after consumption of the product, service or Brand (NickHajli, 2014). Social Media has changed the rule of the game. Customers are not considering brand sponsored advertisements and several promotional activities as the only source of awareness in buyer's journey. They are giving more priority to Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (e-Wom) in this era. (Voramontrietel, 2018). Today most important component of Social Media Business is that it allows customers to evaluate product, share to friends and also link current purchase to future purchase through status updates or feeds in micro blogs. (L. Forbes and E. Vespoli, 2013). This Social Networking Sites (SNS) are providing their users a collaborative platform. Due to availability of interactive and easy to share social platform, Consumers are now taking the user experience into the Web. After using a product customer is sharing User Generated Content (UGC) in web spontaneously because they believe his/her own experience will help others to take a right decision (A. Bahtar, M. Muda 2015). Buyers are leveraging this 'Real' experience to make any purchase decision and Social Feedback loop is minimizing the marketing effort of Brand. (Dave Evans and McKee, 2010). Customers prefer Social Media conversation because it is generating huge amount of up to date information regarding a product or brand, so that they can evaluate and take the decision. (H. Fong and R. Yazdanifard 2014). At the time of making any purchase decision, customers perceive the social media acquired information more trustworthy because they are extracting the image of product or Brand from an interactive atmosphere. (Smem Ozer, 2012). Customers prefer social feedback like description, rating, picture reviews, additional and cumulative reviews at the time of their purchase decision (Zan Mo et al, 2015). This level of acceptance of Social review and rating by the customers as the key input in their buying decision making process, has shifted the control from the Brands to the customers directly. (N. Holleschovsky, 2015).

VI. CONCLUSION

Several Literature review has established the fact that there is a dramatic change in set of input parameters in Buying Decision Making Process. Whenever a customer is using a product or availing service from a Brand, he is sharing his opinion spontaneously. If the product is of good qualities, if the price is justified enough, if the service is above

expectations, Customers are engaging themselves as the advocate for the brands. This spontaneously shared experience is propagated through various channels of Social Platform and getting a huge customer outreach. Other customers are keeping their confidence on user generated contents and considering readily shared real experiences as the most trusted and key input in their buying decision making process. So now it is high time for the marketers to create real value for the customers. Market is not ready to accept mediocre products within the wrapper of excellent advertising.

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