The Usage of Instagram as a Marketing Tool

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The developments in information and communication technologies everyday and the effects of globalization have led to many changes in most of the fields including marketing communications. Today, businesses are struggling to survive intensely, to be able to be heard in a global competitive environment, and to keep their market share to the forefront. In this sense, the businesses that have taken into consideration that the current developments have caused great changes in the consumers, also added social media which they use very intensely in order to reach the consumers in the period that the traditional methods have lost importance, to their marketing mix as an important brand communication medium. Social media makes it necessary to go out of tradition in marketing activities. In the social media economy, consumers are at the forefront, and the structures that carry on their activities in interaction with the consumer are gaining importance. Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube are among the most frequently used social networks in our country, but in recent times Instagram is another platform that has recently attracted the attention of companies. The study examined the comparison of traditional marketing and social media marketing. The study also examined the importance of using images and the usage of Instagram as a marketing tool.

Keywords: social media, social network, marketing, Instagram

Introduction

Nowadays, in order to promote their products and services, the businesses have adopted the new marketing concept as well as the traditional marketing concept. In the age of internet and social media, they started to implement marketing strategies based on Internet and social media. With the rapid change in technology, the habits of social media users and, accordingly, the marketing methods of brands have changed at the same pace. Brands, in their social networks, concentrate on the posts that are visual based instead of writing based. Research and published reports show that digital marketers now attach value on social networks like Instagram, which are foreground with their visual content.

Social media, which has become one of the primary Internet usage goals of individuals, has become an important channel for various businesses adopting a customer-focused approach. Social media, the most important channel for real-time marketing, is very effective in reaching the target group with special opportunities offered. Through social media, real-time relationships can be established in platforms frequently used by the brand's target mass, products, services and campaigns are promoted, and the direct communication is ensured. Brands initially started using Facebook to promote themselves through social media, and then they continued with Twitter. Instagram is one of the new forms of influencing the contemporary modern world culture through social media. Instagram is a social media tool that helps people express themselves and

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communicate using creative imagery. This application, which is for sharing photos and videos, reveals the photographer inside people. Users have the freedom to put themselves up by sharing their personal stories and interests through photographs they take. With various filters and titles used in the application, users can personalize their content and create their own photo galleries. In other words, Instagram gives people the opportunity to describe their ideal appearance of how they want to be seen by others (Ginsberg, 2015, pp. 78-79). Brands, on the other hand, have started to prefer this new trend as a means of expressing themselves like individuals do, but also because of the low cost. The main purpose of this study is to demonstrate the ways in which Instagram, a social media tool, is used in marketing activities.

Social Media Marketing and Instagram

"Social networking is an umbrella term that refers to web-based software and services that allow users to come together online, communicate, discuss, exchange and engage in any form of social interaction" (Ryan & Jones, 2009, p. 152). Social media is linked to the content concepts of Web 2.0 and the user. The Web 2.0 term was first expressed in 2004 as the new use of the World Wide Web by software developers and users. Web 2.0 is the creation, publication and continual change of content and applications by participation and joint venture of all users, not individuals. Web 2.0 allows businesses to communicate with target customer groups, learn about customers' needs and ideas, and communicate directly and individually with customers. In particular, the concept of content created by a user that has achieved wide popularity in 2005 is used to define various media contents which are public and are created by the last user (Kaplan & Haenlien, 2010, p. 61).

When we look at the types of advertisements in Instagram, it is first seen that travel, food, fashion and entertainment brands use this tool by opening their own accounts. Brands use their own accounts to advertise their products and services, to give information and for advertising campaigns. Brands use Instagram accounts to encourage consumers to transfer their marketing messages to other consumers within e-sharing strategies, which will allow the display and effect of the message to grow exponentially. National publications, such as televisions and radios, have led to the rise of mass marketing. This is the first period of marketing. The second period of marketing includes the rise of direct marketing through direct mail, tele-marketing and catalogs. The second period of marketing is the present day of the social web age. Now, the consumer has more control. Consumers do not just talk to other people, they also want the marketers to listen to them. At this point, it is necessary to change the marketing concept and then the other components (Brand value, segmentation, targeting, communication, content, viralization, views, role of publisher and advertiser, hierarchy of information and inevitably payments) in order to be able to ensure the transition from old marketing to new marketing of social web (Akar, 2010, p. 10).

Until recently, channels such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and billboards have been at the forefront of the vechiles by which marketers are promoting their products and services on the market. However, new emerging Web 2.0 technology and the advantages offered by it have made marketers shift to this new medium. Nowadays, experienced marketers have realized that things that have worked in the past are not currently working (or not working well). There is a need for a new approach (Weber, 2009, pp. 9-10).

Emerging marketing requires marketers to focus on social networking and other new techniques. The new world presents new media, new channels and new markets. Social media marketing can be defined as using social media sites to increase visibility on the Internet and to promote goods and services. Social media sites provide social networking, exchanging of ideas and information (Akar, 2010, pp. 33, 52).

Table 1

Transition From Traditional to Social Web Marketing

Components	Traditional Marketing	New Way of Marketing
Marketing understanding	One-way, one-sided communication that explains the brand.	To nurture relationships and dialogues, to be more transparent, to gain confidence, to create credibility.
Brand value	It is important to remind the brand.	Brand value is determined by the customer: When does the customer recommend the goods or service?
Segmentation	Customer groups according to demographics.	Customer groups by interest, attitude, behavior: What is important for customers?
Targeting	Targeting by demographics, especially media purchases.	Targeting by customer behavior.
Communication	Radio-television broadcasting style: The message transmitted and created forcibly for the client's assimilation.	Dialogue, personal opinion, customer comments, or digital environment for interactive communication through search and examination.
Content	Professional content created and controlled by marketers.	Increasingly professional and user-created mixed content.
Viralization	The popularity driven by striking presentation rather than the content	Viralization is based on reliable content about remarkable products or features that enable people to talk and send emails.
Views	Experts contribute strongly to the debate.	Users can view and rate everything.
Role of publisher and advertiser	The publisher establishes channels and control the content that will collect viewers for advertisers who sponsor channels or programs.	Establishing relationships through sponsorship of the content and interacting with customers where, how, and when they want
Strategy	Top to bottom strategy, which is applied by the top management, determine the tactics.	Top to bottom strategy develops successful ideas gathered from continuous testing and customer input.
Hierarchy	The information is organized into channelsfor eligible advertisers, files and categories.	Information can be obtained with the desired keyword for the appropriate users.
Payment	Cost per thousand / mille with an advertising campaign (CPM): Cost is emphasized. Advertisers buy ideas (Share of Voice = Mind share = Market share)	Return on investment (ROI): It is investing in marketing for future growth. Profitability is based on measurable returns.

Note. Resource: Akar, 2010, pp. 31-32.

Weinberg (2009, p. 3) defines social media marketing as a process empowering individuals to promote their websites, products or services through online social channels and to communicate and connect with a wide range of communities that are not possible with traditional advertising channels. In another definition, social media marketing is expressed as an online advertising form in which social communities, including social networks, virtual worlds, social news sites, and social opinion sharing sites, are used in cultural context to fulfill branding and communication purposes (Tuten, 2008, p. 19).

The basics of social media marketing are based on three components: sociality, media, and marketing. In fact, social media marketing is concerned with listening to communities and responding in the exact same way, but for most social media marketers, it is about looking at content or finding particularly useful content and promoting that content in the broad social sphere of the Internet. Social media marketing, however, is a new component of search engine marketing, but the best of its kind. It is concerned with a wide variety of mouth-to-mouth marketing that is not only related to search but also influenced by the Internet (Akar, 2010, pp. 33-34).

Before establishing social media strategies, companies should plan how they will attach their customers to this process and how they will guide them in a reliable, controlled and cost-effective manner. Social media has created individuals who can announce their own ideas instead of customers who have previously had passive

relationships with brands. This has led marketers to the solution "co-create", in other words, to encourage the users of the brand to be actively involved individuals with the brand or product (Özdemir & Çetinkaya, 2014, p. 87).

Social media marketing offers some advantages to the firms. These are: Creating brand awareness, defining opinion leaders, the examination of consumer behaviors and external sources of crowded communities, developing ideas for new marketing strategies, directing traffic to company website, viral propagation of specific messages, increasing site stickiness, extending the display time of the brand message, developing social search classifications through organic links, increasing the brand's reputation and image and supporting the internalization, increasing product sales, achieving marketing objectives effectively (Tuten, 2008, pp. 25-26), and initiating and maintaining mutual talks (Weinberg, 2009, p. 6).

With the digital marketing concept, thanks to the developing and changing digital media tools, it has become possible for consumers to be directly involved in many processes from design to price, even promotion and "this has provided significant advantages to the firm in digital marketing by making the consumer a central element in marketing" (Burton, 2009, p. 14).

There are some reasons why social media marketing is different from traditional marketing strategies. These can be listed as follows:

• Social media marketing makes it easy to discover natural new content: Content is revealed spontaneously with the visit of hundreds of website users. Unlike pay-per-view ads on the web, social media allows the users to see the content without any commercial intention.

• Social media marketing increases website traffic: The traffic to your websites comes from other sources, including social media sites, that are the majority of the search engines. Once you are a participant of a community worth following, people will be interested in what you will share and will send relevant blog posts, videos or articles to their friends.

• Social media marketing has strong relationships: If the members of the community are really given importance as a part of the marketing message, strong relationships can be established if there is a spare time to respond to interest or feedback.

Importance of Visuality in Social Media Marketing

In the modern world we are in, visualizing the day through mobile digital technologies, photography of special moments of life has become easier and more important. People are trying to make a permanent life by ritualizing ordinary life with objects or scenes, such as a cup of coffee, an ice-cream in a cone, a cat in front of a window, and images that offer sections of everyday life (Katz & Aakhus, 2002). In addition to this, visuals can also comprise of important memorials such as birthdays, festivals, and celebrations. With the popularization of images taken at any moment in this life, the number of websites and applications such as Instagram, snapchat, snapfish, flickr and pinterest have begun to increase (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 43).

People learn to see before they learn to talk, so visual communication takes place before speaking by communication and is more impressive and persuasive than non-visual. Because people are learning 1 percent of what they learn by trying, 2 percent by touching, 4 percent by smelling, 10 percent by hearing, and 83 percent by observing the events around them (Işık, Biber, Öztekin, & Öztekin, 2006, p. 99). As a result, the usage of visuals is gaining more and more importance in social media marketing.

Simplicity of photo and video sharing sites becoming more popular with technological convergence is also connected to the reasons such as the high persistence of the visuals in the memory, the events we experience in

our daily lives, the possibility of linking and giving a chance of expressing oneself (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 43). In addition, as a result of the studies carried out, photographs and videos seem to motivate consumers to purchase products (Hautz, Füller, Hutter, & Thürridl, 2014).

The reason for the increase of these shares has been gathered in six categories. According to this, the first category is creating and maintaining a social relationship, since the relations are still continuing by sharing photos with distant people. Secondly, it is to create personal or group memorials during important events. Then comes the ability to express oneself and is followed by presenting oneself, especially through selfie. The final category includes other features, including the use of photographs for purposes such as writing, copying (Bradley, 2015, pp. 12-13).

The first step in perceiving the objective circumference is the sighting phenomenon (Uçar, 2004, p. 59). People learn to see before they learn to talk, so visual communication takes place before communication by talking, and it is more impressive and persuasive than non-visual. Because people are learning 1 percent of what they learn by trying, 2 percent by touching, 4 percent by smelling, 10 percent by hearing and 83 percent by observing the events around them (Işık et al., 2006, p. 99). Visual communication is a fast and easy form of communication in a world where over 100 languages and around 5,000 dialects are used (Uçar, 2004, p. 59). The same perception and understanding of traffic signs in many parts of the world by people speaking different languages can be given as an example in terms of the strength of visual communication.

The usage of visuals is gaining more and more importance in social media marketing. Visuals which are used for the message to be clearer and understandable in almost all social networks, attract more attention and shared by the target audience than the textual content. Photos, videos, ignographics, cartoons, slideshows and other visual contents are involved in this context. The main reason for the application of visuality to such a degree is to visually express different data and mixed ideas beter. For this reason, marketing campaigns need visuals that overlap with their strategies.

The Emergence and Development of Instagram

Instagram was developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in the last quarter of 2010 and is an application developed for smartphones that combines the Polaroid of old times with digital effects. In the early years, Instagram started to be used for free only on IOS, and in 2012 it started to be used in smartphones with Android operating system. It is possible to take photographs in Instagram, filter them, and also share the pictures taken on other social networks. Instagram, which provided users with the opportunity to take and share only pictures during the early years of its debut, then added video footage amongst their features and 5 million video in just 24 hours were uploaded to it.

Instagram was purchased by Facebook in April 2012 for $ 1 billion, and by 2013, approximately 130 million users of the application were found per month. Salomon states that Instagram speaks to a younger and diverse target group compared to other social networks. In addition, the fact that Instagram is heavily favored by the young masses has also been intermediary in the realization of different activities lately. For example; The UCLA Powell Library uses Instagram primarily rather than the other social networks to reach students (Salomon, 2013, p. 408).

When the results of the Internet & American Life Project conducted by the Pew Research Center at the end of 2012 are taken into account, 13 percent of the Instagram is used by Internet users in the United States. The research identified the profile of the users as women and people living in rural areas, mainly

Afro-American or Latino, ages 18-29 (Duggan & Brenner, 2013, p. 2).

Ö zutku et al. (2014) explained the tricks of Instagram in their "ABC of Social Media" as follows:

• Instagram is a sharing program; so it is important to take good pictures and edit them. When editing, Instagram can use its own photos, as well as other programs from outside.

• More than 5 photos per day should not be shared. Sharing a photo a day is enough.

• Instagram organizes events on a topic that is determined every weekend. These activities, which aim to reach more people and bring them together, make Instagram a virtual meeting platform.

• Another way to reach more people is to use "hashtag". Popular hashtags always catch people's attention. #love, #instagood, #tweegram, #photooftheday, #instamood, #iphonesia, #me, #cute, #summer, and #tbt are some of these hashtags.

• Photographs which are taken should not be shared only on Instagram, but also on other popular networks. By this way, shared photos will reach more people.

• In addition to sharing photos in order to use Instagram more effectively, it is also important to like and comment on the shares of followers.

• It is possible to see the most favorite photos of the day on Instagram. Inspiration that comes from these photographs is important for taking more effective photographs.

• One should not be so limited about the people to follow. Depending on the time and interest, a large number of people can be followed (500-1000) and a mutual interaction can be provided by writing a comment.

• Instagram is the most "international" social media tool. After all, the language of the photography is universal.

• It is important to maintain continuity on the Instagram account.

• It is not right to share a photo that has been stolen or taken from the Internet. If it is necessary to use one, the source must be indicated.

• Institutions should plan what they will share if they open an Instagram account. The original and different photos will increase the interest.

Marketing and Instagram

Along with Instagram becoming increasingly popular and the increasing use of infographic and visuals in marketing applications in social media, brands have started to be interested in Instagram. It has been proved by the investigations that people remember the objects, which they see, for a longer time and brands have begun to give an emphasis on the posts that are visual-based rather than the posts that are writing-based on their social networks. From this point of view, Instagram which has a great advantage in marketing goods and services by means of visuality has become a medium with many potentials for brands when it is used creatively, when a multi-channel communication work is carried out with other social media accounts of the brand and when it is supported by special campaigns. According to social media theories, since businesses attach importance to the opinions of consumers while creating brand values, communications are two-way. The Instagram user finds this value in inspiration and content shared by the brand and does not need to enter into too much dialogue through this channel. They first share the contents they find worth talking on through tags, and then make a word-of-mouth marketing by sharing with others (Wallsbeck & Johansson, 2014, p. 65). In addition, according to MacWorld's author and photographer Long, Instagram images are taking people to an abstract world that lies behind what they see and this can sometimes be an escape from emotion, memory, and experience (Bui, 2014, p.

5).

Instagram has the opportunity to directly touch the consumers' lives who are thought to be on display case, with their interests, passions, values, and personalities. Therefore, brands know the target groups more closely and communicate with them more effectively. Brands, at the same time, create their own lives through visual narratives and reveal their real life experiences by sharing photos and videos. As a result, brands will have shown the quality of the experiences that consumers will have when they buy their products. Accordingly, brands through Instagram demonstrate how consumers can value their daily lives (Ginsberg, 2015, p. 80). In order to provide this, photo sharing of the brand is something, going beyond its products, which entertains, embeds and connects with the consumer. Brands have a desire to be in the position of being "human" in the consumers' minds and they want to emphasize brand personality in their communication. This approach will give the brand a chance to establish a meaningful and close relationship with consumers and target groups that is more real, relevant to its purpose. As a result of the emotional closeness that exists, brands can build strong brand communities with their followers and increase brand awareness and brand loyalty by influencing their purchasing decisions. According to Muniz and O'Guinn, who are in the forefront of their work on brand communities, a brand community is a community that is attached to each other independently of geographical elements, have become subjective among the lovers of a brand and that is based on social relations (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 413).

Image sites are perfect tools for social media marketing because they can help create awareness for products. Spreading the message on these sites that make up the social communities can provide a real added-value for business and marketing purposes. Once images are uploaded to a social network, they can benefit from social media marketing as long as they are of acceptable quality (Weinberg, 2009, pp. 267-268).

Instagram can be used in the marketing, just like in Pinterest, by commenting on people's pictures, following people and putting pictures of the brand's products here. Putting hashtags under the photographs increases the interest and interaction with the photographs. For this reason, it is important to put hashtags under the uploaded photos (Sevinç, 2012, p. 130).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The social media economy is the fastest growing and changing phenomenon of our time. The reason for this is undoubtedly the rapid increase in the usage of the Internet and the related social networks by individuals. This kind of social networking of our lives necessitates the participation of businesses in these networks.

Today, social networks provide opportunities for small businesses as well as large businesses. Social media is easier for businesses to promote products and services, as it does not require large budgets like traditional media. But what is important here is that businesses can bring out original and creative ideas that they can draw attention to in social media.

Research has shown that visual messages are more noticeable than written messages on social networks. It has not taken long for businesses and brands to realize this. Visual elements used in social networks are carefully prepared and intended to convey the desired message directly.

Currently, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the most widely used social networks around the world. However, the rapid rise of Instagram in recent years is an undeniable fact. Marketers can not remain indifferent to Instagram and they use this visual-based social network along with Facebook and Twitter. Prepared campaigns are planned to cover all the social networks used.

In today's market conditions, the unchanging main purposes of the brands are to identify potential target

groups, attract their attention, create awareness, communicate in the right place and right time, create an environment to trigger sales, use purchasing process effectively, create and watch unique customer experience, provide loyalty and continuity. The ever-evolving technology of smart phones and digital cameras has made mobile photo sharing an important communication activity, making it a part of people's social life (Chang, 2014, p. 1). This has not only brought innovations for mass communication but also directed businesses to develop new methods for brand communication. Instagram has also attracted brands with extraordinary content in order to separate from message pollution in traditional media and to make a difference.

Instagram allows businesses to open their own pages. With this free application, many small businesses and even housewives are able to promote their products and services. Sharing hashtags under product and service visuals allows more people to reach and more followers to the page.

Instagram is used by many celebrities as is known. Businesses can advertise their pages through their own pages as well as the celebrities' pages. It is also among the marketing strategies that the results of agreements made with famous people or the sharing of the gifts sent to them are shared on the pages. It is also a strategy that is often applied by small businesses that a business can write its page's link under a celebrity's post.

Instagram is a platform that people especially prefer to keep a close eye on the products and services of the enterprises and to be informed about new products and services from the campaigns. At this point, the comments that the consumers have made under the shared posts and the questions they ask for information should be taken into consideration. Because now the consumer decides on buying behavior online.

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