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Advent of information technology tools, their proliferation and acceptance amongst masses worldwide is one of the most significant developments of mankind. Collaboration, transparency, connectivity accorded by these tools accompanied by continual and continuous improvements mandates the study of impact of these on consumers and marketers alike. Availability of large amounts of publically available personal data at web opens the new vistas for marketers to engage the customers with their brands in ways that are more meaningful. However, in order to tap these vast amounts of data effectively, we need to employ an all encompassing, multidimensional, integrated and action oriented approach towards the customer footprints available at different techno-social mediums. Pervasiveness and influence of these media has led to emergence of the new fields such as social media, digital marketing, e-marketing and online consumer behavior as separate branches/disciplines in the overriding marketing field.

Whether an organization likes it or not, its brands are being talked about on social media platforms. The organizations have lost the control over the manner in which their brands are being talked about i.e. whether the brands are being discussed in a positive light or in a negative way. This uncontrolled, uninhibited and viral discussion of brands, positive or negative, has become and should be a cause of concern for the marketers, as a single negative remark going viral has the potential of decimating the carefully nurtured and hard-earned reputation of the brands and organizations over the years. Hence, this opens a new arena for marketers to work, in order to manage the public relations and brand image through social media, as social media marketing is different from traditional marketing as it enables an organization to analyze the effectiveness of its marketing campaigns in real time. Emergence of new social platforms, mobile devices and new apps require altered strategies to reach new and existing customers turning social media marketing into a continuously evolving and dynamic field.

This comprehensive text was conceptualized with the aims to provide relevant theoretical framework, latest empirical researches, problems and future research prospects in the dynamic and fast evolving area of reputation management and brand management through social media with specific focus on developing nations. The text was proposed with an aim to bridge the gap in research in the above-referred area so that it is a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in the field on social media marketing. Accordingly, contributors were invited to submit chapters related to managing public relations and brand image through social media in developing countries. Major topics covered in the text include Managing Negative publicity on Social Media, PR and reputation management through social media, Social CRM, Mobile marketing, Impact of Social Media on PR, Role of social media in Personal branding, Brand image management through social media, Online reputation management, e-WOM and Future of Social Media Marketing to name a few.
The publication has been targeted at policy makers, technology developers, academicians, researchers, practitioners and students of public relations, brand management and social media to help them in improving their understanding of the subject so that improved marketing strategies can be put in practice. This book provides relevant theoretical frameworks and the latest empirical research findings in the area so as to contribute substantially to the body of knowledge on managing public relations and brand image through social media.

The book is organized in the following five sections:

**Section 1:** PR, Publicity and Reputation Management through Social Media  
**Section 2:** Role of Social Media in Brand Management  
**Section 3:** Customer Relationship Management and Social Media  
**Section 4:** Assortment of Impacts of Social media Adoption and  
**Section 5:** Emerging Trends in Digital Marketing

Each section caters to a distinct role played by social media for effective business management. A total of 15 chapters are interspersed in the five sections, a brief description of each of the chapters follows:

First chapter focuses on the role of social media as a tool of PR Practitioners. Study, which was conducted in USA, uses Media Richness Theory to evaluate the richness of this emerging communication medium, as the prior studies were often descriptive in nature. Authors assessed the media richness dimensions of social media based on the perceptions of 162 public relations professionals and concluded that though social media is an emerging as well as powerful tool for PR efforts, it should not be compared to traditional media as both possess some unique medium characteristics.

Second chapter discusses how social media impacts the publicity component of the promotion mix, more specifically the emphasis of the author is on ramifications of the negative publicity, in social media, for the organizations. Author has listed out the reasons and remedies relating to negative publicity on social media by citing real life examples. Author proposes a series of guidelines to get back on track in the face of negative publicity in the social media.

In third chapter, focus is on how social media can be used for building, managing and sustaining Corporate Reputation. Authors begin with an overview of the existing literature related to corporate reputation and then using real life cases exhibit the plausibility of various social media platforms to strengthen stakeholders’ relationships and building social capital for the organisation. The methods to measure the success of social media initiatives in organisations, strategies to deal with online reputational crisis and process of creating organizational infrastructure for managing corporate reputation using social media is discussed.

Online Reputation management, an important dimension to be catered to by the organizations in this dynamic and competitive era, is the subject matter of fourth chapter. Emphasizing the importance of building managing and maintaining the reputation, more specifically online reputation, authors talk about the concept of Online Reputation Management (ORM) and various online platforms (such as Weblogs, Microblogs, Folksonomies, Wikis, Social Networks etc.) at the disposal of the organizations to manage the reputation online. Authors have also enumerated the features and advantages of these platforms. Impact of Digital Footprints, Digital Shadow or Passive Digital Footprints on online reputation as well as importance of managing SERP (Search Engine Results Page) has been discussed so that the negative SERPs are pushed down and the positive SERPs are pushed up in the research results. Authors while
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discussing techniques for sustaining online reputation stressed the need for a global body to monitor and regulate the online reputation management practices to ensure ethical implementation of the same.

Chapter 5 discusses how organizations can use various social media platforms for effective brand management in global marketing. Author gives a thorough literature consolidation of social media and brand management and advocates the brand management through social media as a mean to achieve strategic goals of the organizations. Chapter gives the theoretical and practical overview of social media, evolving dynamics of brand management, shifts in global marketing dynamics, and brand promotion through social media in global marketing.

Chapter 6 analyzes the Spanish Government’s use of social media to create, manage and consolidate the Spain Brand image to exhibit the image of Spain as an economic and political power among the first countries in the world. Chapter builds upon the brand basics viz. concept of brand, brand image, country brand equity, keys of country brand, management of brand image, effect of the origin on the behavior of the individual and then progresses to emphasize the importance of brand building with specific reference to country brand management. Country brand acting as a differentiator has become a strategic asset and a tool to promote their products, attract investments and promote activities like tourism for the nations has been elaborated upon. How rapid evolution of the internet and social media has brought in new dimensions in the construction of communication strategies for country brand management has been detailed.

Chapter 7 studies the role consumer engagement and swarm intelligence play in managing a brand at social media. Social media facilitates the human swarm and this ability to think collectively influences the online buyers at social media. Organizations need to explore this collective phenomenon as individuals behave in a very different way as a single identity from how they behave collectively in a group. Another crucial aspect, which organizations need to be wary of, is to get involved in dialogue with customers with respect to their brands in order to engage the customers as customer engagement creates the value for the company and adds to its bottom line. Social media and internet have changed the way customer engagement and swarm intelligence affect the consumer behavior and authors have studied the phenomenon empirically using netnography.

Chapter 8 is about Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM), the paradigm shift in customer relationship management, which is taking place due to the advent, proliferation and embracing of social media. Social media has altered the very character of the customers’ interactions with the organizations making this real time, interactive and influential. Authors highlight the need for integration of web 2.0 technologies with the existing business strategy of the so as to utilize the qualitative aspects of digital footprints for converting conversation into a transaction, for better value addition and win-win situations for the different stake holders. Authors have discussed the SCRM philosophy from two perspectives viz. strategic and operational by exhibiting two successful case studies for real life.

Chapter 9 asserts that social media, which has become a part and parcel of the internet users’ life, has the potential to influence the marketing policy of a firm. Author gives a theoretical review of how the possible customer-company interactions taking place via various platforms of social media can shape and affect the 4P’s of marketing mix. Chapter makes an interesting reading because of various examples quoted by the author to substantiate his views.

Chapter 10 caters to an under researched area i.e. consumer behavior associated to wedding in context of virtual environment, which in this case is a website catering to wedding viz. www.onossocasamento.pt. Chapter appears to be a unique contribution to the literature, both in terms of analytical tool used and the research gap identified, as it uses GME estimator, robust for small samples sizes (micronumerosity) to analyze virtual atmosphere, emotions, attitudes and real use in a virtual community having wedding,
an intangible concept, as its main theme instead of some product transaction. Study assimilated concepts borrowed from Theory of Reasoned Action, Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behavior and Internet Banking Acceptance Model. Three models were developed to understand the relationships between the virtual atmosphere and emotional states, how the individual characteristics (social identity, altruism and telepresence) and emotional states influence attitudes, and how attitudes, past experience and trust influence the actual usage of the site. Researchers concluded that out of the four components of the virtual atmosphere only graphics has a positive effect on emotions, whereas Emotions and social identity have a positive effect on attitudes. Individual characteristics of altruism and telepresence as well as trust do not exert any influence on attitudes and real use of the website respectively. In turn, attitudes only partially influence the actual use of site, where as past experiences are strong predictors of real use.

Chapter 11 examines the technological, environmental and organisational factors that may facilitate, motivate or constraint Web 2.0 knowledge sharing in SMEs and the effect of knowledge sharing on organisational innovation. Chapter also investigates whether web 2.0 knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between HR (Human Resource) practices and innovation. Results of the proposed model and hypotheses, tested using Structural Equation Modelling, hinted that technological and organizational factors are positively associated with web 2.0 knowledge sharing in SMEs, with organizational factors-commitment-based HR practices- being the main drivers of Web 2.0 knowledge sharing, and that it mediates the relationship between HR practices and innovation in SMEs. Findings are pertinent in view of the fact that SMEs are using Web 2.0 technologies such as social networking, wikis, and internal blogging to improve collaboration and Web 2.0 knowledge sharing.

Chapter 12 brings to the fore the changes and challenges effected in Japanese retail sector, specifically the convenience store industry, due to the technological innovations induced by social media. Specific focus of the chapter is on the micro bogging strategy adopted by Lawson, one of the top three convenience stores in Japan, to combat the saturation and ‘noise’ induced by bombarding of messages via social media and to stay relevant and differentiate itself, by taking refuge in Japanese cute culture concept, from the others. The pilot study conducted to explore the perceptions of the customers revealed that though the strategy adopted by store was successful in differentiating it from competitors, yet the positive customer perceptions about social media account did not result in customer actions. This chapter provides readers with insights as to how a Japanese convenience retailer has been able to create a comprehensive shopping experience by incorporating cultural marketing in Social Networking Sites.

Chapter 13 exposes the intricate interplay between the attributes of social media and dynamic self, which is immensely important to understand altered consumer psychology and behavior and in turn to form appropriate business strategies. Researcher has attempted to wade through the so far uncharted vistas in the arena of social media as it discovers the role of social media in instant gratification and the impact of the same on formation and evolution of self. A conceptual model for understanding the mental states and the concept of self in relation to want satisfaction through social media has been propounded, which depicts social media as a satisfier to a need as well as modifier and generator of a need. Model may be useful to unravel the present day state of instant gratification and its ramifications for the business and society more than what the conceptual and analytical studies about social media have exhibited so far.

Chapter 14 explores and assesses the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on customers’ purchasing decisions in hospitality sector in Indian context using secondary sources of data. Experiential and intangible aspects of hospitality business have rather made it binding on the customers to resort to word of mouth to assess the quality of the products and services offered. Era of internet and web 2.0, has led to emergence of (Internet) iWOM or (electronic) eWOM, which is virtual, written, permanent,
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more trust worthy and san any temporal and geo-political boundaries. Chapter also talks about various types of social media along with their contribution in marketing of hospitality sector. While discussing the impact of reviews on hotel performance, chapter suggests potential strategies for using online guest reviews when marketing.

Chapter 15 explores the interplay of attitude, satisfaction and purchase intentions in context of online shopping in Indian youth. Influence and role of attitudes and satisfaction from past purchases in offline shopping is a well-established fact. However, the changed retail landscape due to induction of internet technologies and more aware customers, researchers attempted to understand the same in context on online shopping, which is fast becoming a preferred mode of shopping amongst youth in India. Researchers found that attitude towards online shopping are a significant factor affecting purchase intentions in online shopping as well. Satisfaction was also found to be mediating the relationship between attitude towards online shopping and purchase intentions to online shopping among Indian youth.

In nutshell, book is an attempt to cover the various facets of social media as envisioned by researchers and practitioners to give valuable insights to the marketing practitioners, policy makers, academicians, researchers and students of Public relations, brand management and Social media by exposing them to various latest research endeavours being undertaken in these fields in a comprehensive manner.

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