

Buzz Marketing in times of COVID-19

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Abstract---Goals are the unsurpassed way to outstretch success for any organization. These goals accompany a variety of marketing strategies to attain objectives. One of the very prompt and successful marketing tools would be Viral Marketing. Buzz Marketing is one of the techniques of viral marketing which involves consumer interaction to amplify its idea behind the product. The meaning of the word buzz originated from the word itself, 'Buzz' to create hype for a product in the market to earn maximum revenues from it. The chief aim of this technique is to maximize the word of mouth potential and create a sense of trust in the customers by generating a puff for a product/service for their audience. Buzz marketing primarily relies on runaway excitement around a product or service. Since buzz marketing, by and large, is focused on word of mouth potential, is ironic to the digital age. A considerable shift towards online marketing has driven the marketing industry to revamp its strategies and find different ways to create efficacious upshots similar to the word of mouth potential. There is a consistent rise in the use of the internet for almost everything we do. This upswing has been a mixed bag for the brands to remodel their marketing strategies in the online world.

Key Words--- pandemic, COVID-19, buzz marketing, social media marketing, social media trends, lockdown trends

I. INTRODUCTION

The current pandemic that hit the world in early 2020 has been one of the most important game-changer for brands to keep up with the trust of their customers. COVID-19 has been the significant buzz of the year for brands to rebuild their marketing strategies by keeping in mind the new normal phenomenon to engage with its customers over social media platforms.

It has been difficult for the brands to create a buzz for their product in the most buzzing period. The pandemic is all about moving digital from shopping to education and from entertainment to fitness. Social media activities have a pronounced effect on its users. The brands have tried to attract customers via social media throughout the lockdown period that was quite a challenge for the marketers due to the skeptical nature of that period. The companies have regularly tried to have a transparent interaction with their customers. Good communication helps both the brand and the customers to have a better understanding of the product/service. An interactive communication helps the brand to comprehend the requirements of its customers.

Similarly, transparent communication helps the customer to trust the brand a little more. The Online System Manager controls the communication between the customers and the marketers where the users of online media's responsive nature regularly express their opinions and helps to analyze the efforts made by the marketers. This is followed by a healthy flow of communication among the users that further enhances the reach of buzz communication among the OSM (Online System Manager) user community.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This lockdown, COVID-19 wasn't the only thing we tested positive for. This pandemic has continuously been a new challenge for marketers to attain maximum attention of their consumers. Being confined to digital platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc., marketers have tried to convert their buzz marketing strategies into the term hashtag trendy. This lockdown we have experienced copious trending stuff online that we couldn't resist trying. According to the survey, most of the users from the age of fourteen to thirty-five have tried out trendy challenges over Instagram. The trending term has been quite an advantage for the brands to engage with the audience during a pandemic where it was difficult for the brands to drive engagement due to the pandemic and the mental health associated with it.

Instagram and Facebook have lately been the hub for driving engagement of the users. You can sell almost anything to everything over online social media platforms, especially Instagram. During this Lockdown period, the users of Instagram followed an explosion of trends and partly contributing to the success of the marketing strategies behind them that might not be initially strategized but the trending feature of Instagram helped them to make it one. From making the very famous Dalgona coffee to following trends that involved fitness that successfully aided the businesses to be ahead of the game. The Dalgona Coffee flooded the social media platforms and forced the isolated humans to attempt the sensation that further boomed the sales of instant coffee even higher than before the pandemic.

Brands like Nescafe took advantage of the trend. Similarly, Zoom has burst into popularity as students turn towards video calling software for attending online classes amid the prevailing situation of coronavirus. There has been a negative buzz around Zoom regarding facing a huge privacy backlash. This negative buzz forced many users to uninstall the app and switch to another without even verifying the facts. This is how social media comes into the game as an amalgamation of positives and negatives. The shutdown of cinema theatres due to the lockdown period has led to a remarkable rise of the OTT platforms in the Indian culture. There is a continual buzz for streaming movies/series online and the content has been impactful on the audience, largely youth to dive into binge-watching series/shows at nights. A clothing brand, H&M, took advantage of the buzz around a movie called 'To all the boys; forever and always' a sequel of 'To all the boys I loved before' and started a campaign in the lockdown to enable the audience to get closer with the film. The marketers of the H&M brand flourished this digital campaign on social media and grabbed the attention of the viewers of the film who were deeply in love with the character 'Lara Jean' the female lead in the movie. The digital campaign was launched by the name 'To all the boys X H&M Fan club.', where users were virtually invited to be in Lara Jean's room with a cutting edge filter and have close-up details of the movie as well as the new H&M collection. It was a smart move by the marketers since the movie had already been profitable in its industry. Taking advantage of the fans' emotions helped the brand earn greater profits while laying its brand name among people over social media.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research will be guided by the following objectives:
to understand the Indian perspective on the nature of Buzz Marketing in the times of COVID-19.
to determine the relationship between attitude towards Buzz Marketing and consumer Behaviour.
to determine the negative impacts of the Buzz Marketing on the organizations.
to understand the Buzz Marketing as tool for Indian Political Propaganda in a world Pandemic.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the perspective of the Indian consumers on the nature of Buzz Marketing in the Pandemic period?
- 2 Does attitude mediate the relationship between Buzz Marketing and consumers' behavior during the lockdown period?
- 3 How do organizations deal with the negative impacts of Buzz Marketing particularly during the pandemic?

- 4 How do political parties use Buzz Marketing as a tool for political propaganda in a pandemic?

V. METHODOLOGY

Since Internet and social media is used to influence masses there was no chance that the political parties could not take advantage of this time to attract voters in their favour for future voting. Political parties are always a step ahead when it comes to reach audience via social media platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter etc. They circulate sentimental messages over WhatsApp and tweet about how they are with the Public in this time which has largely affected the audience to trust the party.

The home arrest persuaded people to fall in love with home-made stuff from cooking to home workouts. This research has used qualitative methodology in the form of various case studies on buzz marketing from notable organizations. We came across many marketing strategies which were pulled during this world pandemic period so that the period didn't affect its customers' trust.

Here are a few case studies on successful use of Buzz Marketing;

1) Brew Dog

Aberdeen's favourite purveyor of craft beer, Brew Dog, took steps to tackle the shortage of hand sanitizer in the country. They use this buzz in their favour as there was a shortage of hand sanitizer in the country.

James Wyatt said: 'We are determined to do everything we can attempt to try and help as many people as possible to stay safe.' They used different social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to stay active and exhibit their steps towards the problem and try connecting the brand to the audience by

creating a buzz. They saw the problem and solved it their way and used it in their favour. This is one way you can use the buzz to market your brand.

2) Nike

Nike has always been the master in marketing. They usually leverage people's emotions to market their brand. They engage their customer using their motivational tagline, "Just do it". But this time around the global pandemic, it was agonizing for the fitness maniacs who were not allowed to step out of their houses. This disturbed their daily fitness routine. At this point, Nike put forward the idea of home workout in the audience's head through campaigns such as The 'Play for the World', created by *Wieden plus Kennedy*, which reinforced the message 'We must all do our bit for the world' and 'play inside'. This campaign included videos of people sharing their moments from home workouts on

social media which initiated the buzz of a home workout. This not only motivated the people to work on their fitness routine but also promoted the brand image. They even introduced a home challenge with the help of their brand ambassador, Cristiano Ronaldo, named "The living room cup". They even including celebrities to create a buzz in the global pandemic and at the same time, delivering the message to stay home safe and sound was a quick-witted plan to continue to keep up with the trust of the customers. They invited users of social media to take part in their online challenge where people were encouraged to upload their videos using hashtags such as #thelivingroomcup and #playinside. This challenge was a 'core crusher' abs workout in which people had to beat Cristiano's best record.

3) Durex

Durex is well known for its clever marketing and didn't sit back at the time of COVID-19. They also pitched in this situation by broadcasting numerous fun ads at this distressing time to make things a bit more fun. They ran a campaign named "Staying in is Effing Good" in which they used various puns such as "COME INSIDE just don't step out", "IT'S GETTING HARDER BUT DEFINITELY WORTH IT", "There will be a happy ending" to spread the message and to create awareness regarding home arrest. Durex also put out a video on their Instagram which showed a guy texting his partner "Ready to roll with me?" to which the girl replies "I am all game!". The next slide revealed them playing 'Ludo' online which brings forward their message to stay indoors. They also covered the trend of house cleaning in which the marketers turned up with an idea to use a broom which was brought in by the instance of home quarantine. They wrote: "Sweep her off the floor". They brilliantly used this difficult time to gain some digital following and promote their brand. They brought their brand into people's mind and demonstrated how to make lemonade out of lemons with the right set of strategies.

4) Zomato

Zomato is one of India's biggest food delivery company. At the time of lockdown, people were a bit skeptical to order food online, so to break this notion, the company launched a campaign named "Safety Level". The advertisement narrates a story of a child who is bored of eating dal every day, so he orders online food from the Zomato app and shows her that ordering food from Zomato is safe and how it goes through many safety levels. This campaign helped people to get over their fear of ordering food online and gained their trust towards the consumer, which is both hilarious and eye-catchy at the same time.

VI. CONCLUSION

This makes it clear that the marketing and advertising industry, in particular and media in general, has found many creative ways to stay afloat in the times of a pandemic. They used the means of buzz marketing to play and engage with certain levels and elements of human psychology and social nature to create profit for their products or organization. Buzz marketing proves that organizations must also adapt like human beings to create campaigns that are extremely relevant to the contemporary thoughts, actions, feelings and current mind-sets of the masses. To stay relevant, or to even stay one step ahead of others, in order to be on top of a trend, companies and their representatives start the trend, so they may be recognized as the pioneers of it. To start a movement, brands and organizations brainstorm and come up with challenges, trends, games and other tactics. In the case of a health crisis such as the COVID-19 Pandemic, most brands chose to partner with a figure prominent in health, wellness and fitness industry, so that their audience can associate the brand to a sense of hope and trust in these bleak times.

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