

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND PROMOTION OF INDIAN CRAFT SERVICES

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Abstract: Story telling has been around us since ages. It has been used as a tool for engaging the listeners at their subconscious cognitive level so that it remains as their permanent memory set. This art of storytelling has been found to be beneficial by many brands and has helped the brands improve their perceived value. Our craft sector which is as old as the history of the human kind has millions of untold stories of its being. This research paper focuses on defining digital storytelling and how its use in social media can influence promotion of the craft sector. To achieve this, an exploratory research was done on a group selected participants. They were asked to express their perceived value and purchase intention for the product on the basis of their exposure to the website content of the selected crafts. On the other hand, another set of respondents was exposed to only digital stories of the craft men depicting their craft journey and their creation. Then the perception on the craft in terms of its commercial value was assessed with the help of another questionnaire. The perceptual mapping of the response was done. This research will help the services providers of the Indian craft to use the tool of storytelling more effectively while promoting the services at national and international platform.

Keywords: Craft Service.

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To highlight the significance of digital storytelling for the promotion of the Indian craft sector on social media.

II. INTRODUCTION

Branding democracy isn't what you say about your own brand but sum of what others say about it (Rowles, 2014). This has great influence on the perceived value of brand. Organizations have many way of highlighting their products. The approach which is done through online interfaces comes under the purview of digital marketing. Digital marketing has changed the dynamics of branding. It is no more logo or any other element of branding but it's nature has changed it to a two way communication between the brand and the consumer. Today, anybody can talk to any brand which is used in our daily lives. Most of the people use mobile for searching for a product of interest therefore digital platform is becoming a bridge of online and off-line experience. Storytelling is the process of developing a point of view for any brand. Through this process, the brands are able to attach and involve the target customer through an emotional bond. Additionally, also there have been many instances where story telling has been used to influence the behavior of the target consumers (Rowles, 2014, pp. 45-65).

"I saw a lady sitting with some fabric and some bright colored yarns at the door side of her house which was opening into a busy street. She was stitching those yarns in a pattern already traced on the fabric and had tears in her eyes. I thought of going to her and ask if everything was ok with her? I was about to step up to her but I realized that she had a very satisfying smile on her face. I wondered whether she is happy or sad? I could not stop myself from asking to which she replied with a smile. She looked at me and said that she is feeling nostalgic. She had seen her mother doing the same when she was young and use to wonder why her mother used to smile and cry at the same time and today she is also going through the same emotions. She was making a bedcover for her daughter to be gifted on her wedding as part of a ritual. This embroidery was *Phulkari*."

We have thousands of stories like these associated with the rich craft of India. We just look at these crafts as handicrafts where hand skills are used to develop lifestyle products. There are about 30 Indian crafts those have great commercial viability, but slowly all of those are losing charm because of industrial boom and fast fashion. It is the need of the hour to rejuvenate and re-ignite the value of craft for the consumers. The world is looking at Indian craft as source of inspiration but we are not valuing the same. In fashion or product design industry, craft is an integral part and we as design tutors should always find innovative ways of engaging students in different craft activities. To do so it is important to sensitize them to different crafts form, and this is where digital story telling can help us. Story telling is by far the best way to create an emotional connect. Looking at the insurance industry as an example, none of the insurance advertisement running on TV or newspapers are selling insurance through a direct message. All their advertisements are based

on an emotional storyline where it gets connected with the viewers as they start relating the same with themselves. This kind of emotional story telling compels one to buy insurance for oneself or the family. The interest of west in Indian craft is increasing day by day. There is a handful demand of rich and valuable craft that has centuries of tradition of Indian culture. These crafts have strong Indian aesthetics in terms of our rich motifs, colors, textiles, techniques of carving that designers, students, entrepreneurs, and craft lovers are seeking opportunity to study or appreciate Indian craft, but the awareness is very limited. There is a strong need of sensitizing the masses. Now is the time to establish an emotional connect between them. The best way of doing so is through story telling. We need to relate people with the craft by connecting them emotionally in terms of sharing the beauty of the craft. The real picture of this beautiful craft industry is not that beautiful. The master craftsmen who have put India on this shining platform where west looks at us as craft rich country, the reality is that they are not able to put there means together. Since 1947 when India got independence, different governments have been taking initiatives to promote craftsmen but day by day the condition is diminishing. Younger generations of these master craftsmen are not ready to take up this as their means to livelihood as they get better wages and payouts from some other unskilled or just managerial jobs. Government has been putting up exhibitions and fairs since independence to promote crafts but, the connection of the craft with the buyer is missing which needs to be developed.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Today 50% of us use our mobile to search for a product of our choice (Yadav, 2017). Digital media is bridging the gap between creation of value and the promise made to the target audience. It has to appeal to them so that they are ready to engage into it. The business to business relationship revolves around a different dynamics, till a business partner is fully convinced about the takeaway from the partnership, he would not engage in it. The role of digital media in case of business to business (BTB) partnership becomes educating the customer so that he is able to get fully involved in it.

3.1 It is all about content

User's journey of exploration of choosing a product on Internet is not a function of single element. There are multiple factors involved in it. Information on social media is considered to be one of the most reliable source of information in the process of decision making. To source products from a trusted site, the customer depends upon the review of services by the other users, associated organization, and payment procedure as his deciding criteria. Content marketing is about providing the users useful information which would help the customers to take a decision with confidence. For example water rafting services it would be the team building exercise and advice for footwear it'll be travelling and fitness tips (Rowles, 2014).

3.2 Google's Zero Moment Of Truth Model

3.3

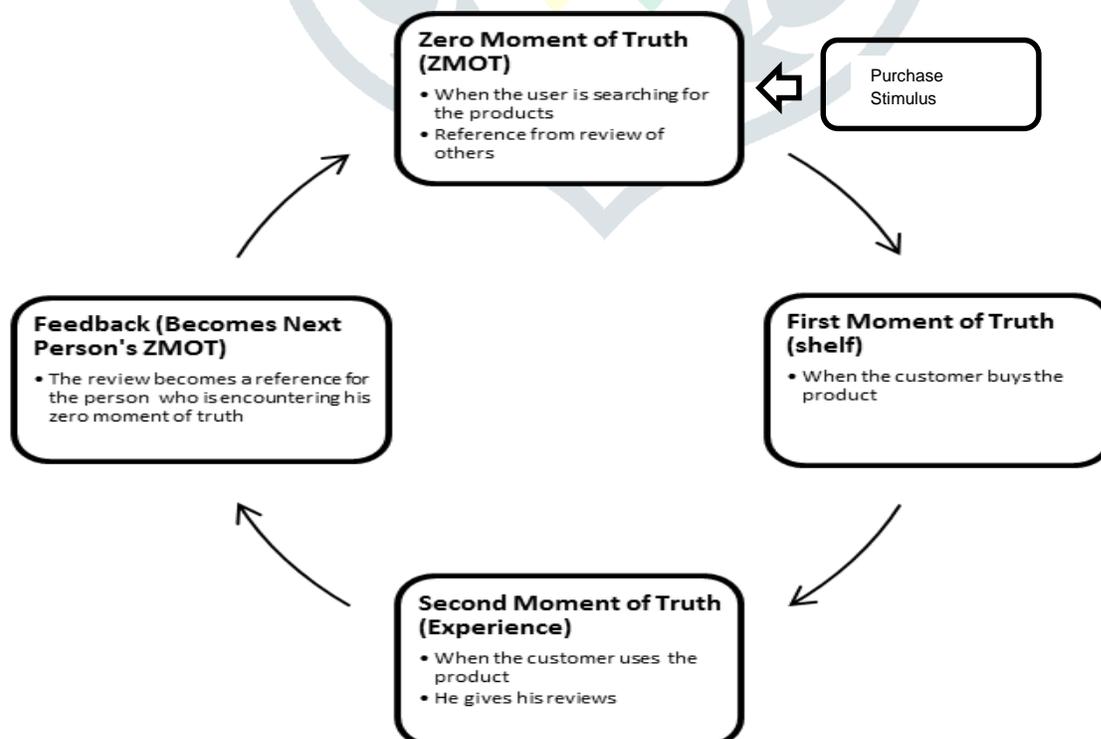


Fig: 1: Google's Zero Moment of Truth Model (Rowles, 2014)

The Above model is extremely influential as it shows the journey of consumer buying with zero moment of truth. Once the need for a particular product is stimulated in the mind of customers, they search for the product by exploring the services on platforms of discussions, on the close group of friends, referring to the reviews. As the customer progressive further he makes purchases (first moment of truth) and encounters second moment of truth at home by using or consuming the product. A strong derivation out of this model is the feedback loop which triggers the customer leave his reviews after using the product and he becomes a source of information for the next person who is encountering his zero moment of truth (ZMOT). This is how the cycle remains virtuous and becomes extremely important for the marketers to work around it (Rowles, 2014).

3.3 Authentic Value Proposition

While having a value proposition is important, but what is equally important is to gain complete authenticity about it. The organization has to commit to offer the cool value proposition with honesty. Selecting any appropriate technique to reach the target audience is important (Rowles, 2014). Content on social media plays a major role in making it interesting or for people to follow it. Its effectiveness is measured by the number of its followers. Mobile experience of social media In India has been identified as extremely important. It has been observed that social networking mostly done through mobiles today. Studies say that 60% of the people do social networking on mobile. Therefore, it is extremely important to consider mobile interface along with its constraints for example most of the content on Twitter are shared with links on it. The best thing about social platforms is that multiple channels can be integrated. It gives an opportunity to even integrate online and offline experience by merging the two into a seamless experience for the consumer. Having knowledge of Google analytics and search engine optimization helps the service provider gets a better engagement of the customer. Careful selection of search engine spiders and keywords provides a service provider higher chances of success. While deciding the content of the page elements like title of the page, heading and subheadings must be created carefully incorporating key words into it, the service provider has to continuously think about choosing the right keywords (Rowles, 2014). Traffic building is all about linking your content with the other website, where people find it interesting to read. Having a useful and authentic linked sites build up the confidence of the audience and therefore gets traffic to your site. This increases the credibility and visibility of the content. This links building is only possible when the content of the page is interesting and worth reading (Oindrilla Chakraborty, 2017).

3.4 Story telling

Storytelling is fundamental to societies, nations and their cultures. It has an ability to go beyond age groups, genders and capture the attention of the listeners irrespective of their backgrounds. The stories can have a very high social presence which brings people psychologically closer to the media and brings dynamism to this channel. Stories enable the narrator to construct a meaningful idea and goals making the narration meaningful to the listeners. As the journey of the story has a reflection on experiences people, they are able to relate to the situation with their daily lives. The value added by the stories and metaphor can have a substantial impact on the listener. Stories are capable of sharing knowledge with the receivers who are able to interpret the same with their own experiences, allowing them to build personalized cognition about the story's problem, solution and explanation in their deeper understanding. Therefore storytelling remains natural and engaging. It is an interesting form of communication with a diverse audience. Stories allow listeners to imagine their own personal elements and have their own conclusions out of the narration (Gill, 2011). Following elements are the points considered while writing a story

- Characters (who is the story about?)
- Conflict (what is the problem?)
- Place (where does the story happens?)
- Plot (what happens to the character?)
- Main idea (the focus of the story)
- Back story (what happens even before the story begins?)
- Theme of the story is also very important (what is the universal situation about the story could be related to a wider human conditions)
- At the end the tone of the story (the attitude and atmosphere of the story)

Some of the suggestions made by the book "Writing for the Web" by Linda Felder are that the story must have a beginning, middle and an end. Beginning in the middle starts exciting planned point and then it goes to the end. It has to start with a problem in the beginning and then in the middle the same problem is escalated and the main character is geared up to solve the problem and towards the end of the story the character is struggling with the situation and finally comes out with success (Felder, 2012). In a paper "Digital service for the jobs on Mobile Phone for Blue-Collar Workers" written by Anita Yadav suggested that a small initiative on the web can increase the success of an organization tremendously. India has been one of the fastest growing mobile countries in the world. Introduction of 3G in India was a major turning point for the users where the base grew from 42 million in 2013 to 284 million in 2017 this trend implied that the traditional mobile services were replaced by high-speed data driven value added services where in the services and their users has an equal chance of conversing. The

service provider started providing services through social networking, gaming, bank and hotels. Mobile phone has been a great game changer device for this business (Yadav, 2017).

3.5 Craft Services in India

There are lots of initiatives by individuals, craft lovers, government bodies to uplift and work towards visibility of Indian crafts globally. These service providers are working towards preserving and promoting the rich Indian crafts via exchange programs, craft visits, craft excursions to different parts of India. Few of the service providers are working towards building a strong network of craftsmen and buyers where they are working for a transparent revenue pattern. Any project or effort towards craft support or craftsmen should not be limited to the resources or upgrading of skills. This kind of support and help to the craftsmen will be a very short term help. The main aim of any such organization or individual should be to sensitize the population on the sensibility towards craft and traditional heritage of the nation. To ensure that the craftsmen continue working on their craft and train more people, one will have to create opportunities by involving youth globally. One such organization is “*Paramparik Karigar*” founded in 1996, it is working towards the uplifting craftsmen by working closely with them. They provide them resources which help them upgrade their design skills and understand of the global aspect in design. They are also giving them a transparent platform where they help them market their products to domestic and international buyers. They are working with school students, college graduates to spread awareness of Indian heritage and crafts through various forms of workshops (Paramparik Karigar, 1996). One more private entity is “*happy miles*”. They are few young minds who are collaborating with students of schools and colleges and craftsmen. Their model is a combination of tourism and craft study. They work closely with schools and colleges organizing educational cum recreational trips to major centers of crafts in different states. Their innovative approach of taking tourism and craft study together by organizing field trips to educate and sensitize young professionals and design aspirants is another example of craft enthusiasts (Happy Miles, n.d.).

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, storytelling as a tool, status of craft digital services and craft was explored by reviewing secondary data. Alongside, data around understanding the power of digital marketing was also explored. In the second phase a conclusive research was conducted with the help of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to a set of 100 female participants. Out of which 40 participated in the survey. Structured questionnaire on storytelling and situation of the story was created it included open and close ended questions. The data was collected from only those who would appreciate the value of craft and services. Sample composition has only female respondents with a majority of them working as employees, freelancers and entrepreneurs. They were pre-dominantly post graduates and graduates. The survey was done on two different sets of respondents. For the first set of respondents the questionnaire was sent along with a visual posting a website having a picture of product along with a detailed description of the product. Whereas, in the second survey, the questionnaire had a picture of the product along with a short story mentioning about the artisan, his family and his journey of developing the product. The respondents were asked to pen down their first expression on the product and their perspective whether somebody will purchase the product at the price point mentioned in the questionnaire. The qualitative response was converted to a measurable scale for the purpose analysis. The response was then expressed through a perceptual map.

V. RESULT

5.1. Questionnaire 1 (with reference picture of the product appearing on the website)

The questionnaire with product description had a mix of age group. 8.3% of the female respondents were less than 30 years, 25% of the females were more than 50 years and balance 66.7% belonged to 30-50 years of age bracket. Responding to the question about describing the product with the help of appropriate adjectives, only 58% of the people responded to this question. The responses on this were ranging from physical attributed like classic, simple, earthy, ethnic to perceptual attributes like elegant, beautiful. 100% of the respondents declined intention of purchasing this product at the specified price point. This sample could not get 100% participation. The responses were skewed more towards the physical attributes for the product.

5.2 Questionnaire 2 (with reference picture of the product along with its story)

The questionnaire with picture and story had an age mix of 17% of less than 30 years, 8% more than 50 years and 75% between 30-50 years of the female participants. 100% of the respondents gave adjectives to describe the product. The responses were skewed towards describing eternal beauty of the product rather than describing its physical attributes. Moreover, 33% of the people responded positively on their intention of buying the products. In this questionnaire, the perceptual map shows better description of the attribute, intention to purchase and inclination towards buying the product.

VI. CONCLUSION

As above discussed result direct us to the following points

1. The customers are able to relate to the product emotionally and can relate to the background.
2. The people who were shown story with the product could connect to them emotionally and were influenced to buy the product.
3. Digital Story telling is an effective tool for selling the product effectively.
4. Rational explanation of product enables the customer to appreciate its physical, he is not able emotionally has any bond.
5. Perceptual mapping done on both the samples showed varied result

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The service provider of craft service must develop storytelling in digital format. This will provide them edge over other and will promote the less performing craft products to growing segment. Craft men must also develop a pool of narratives for the service providers to digitize in meaningfully.

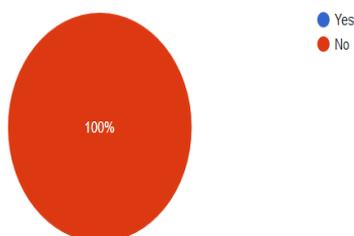
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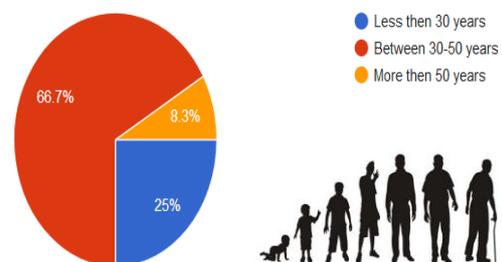
Appendix 1

Questionnaire 1 having picture of the product with its product description on it as appearing on the website of the vendor

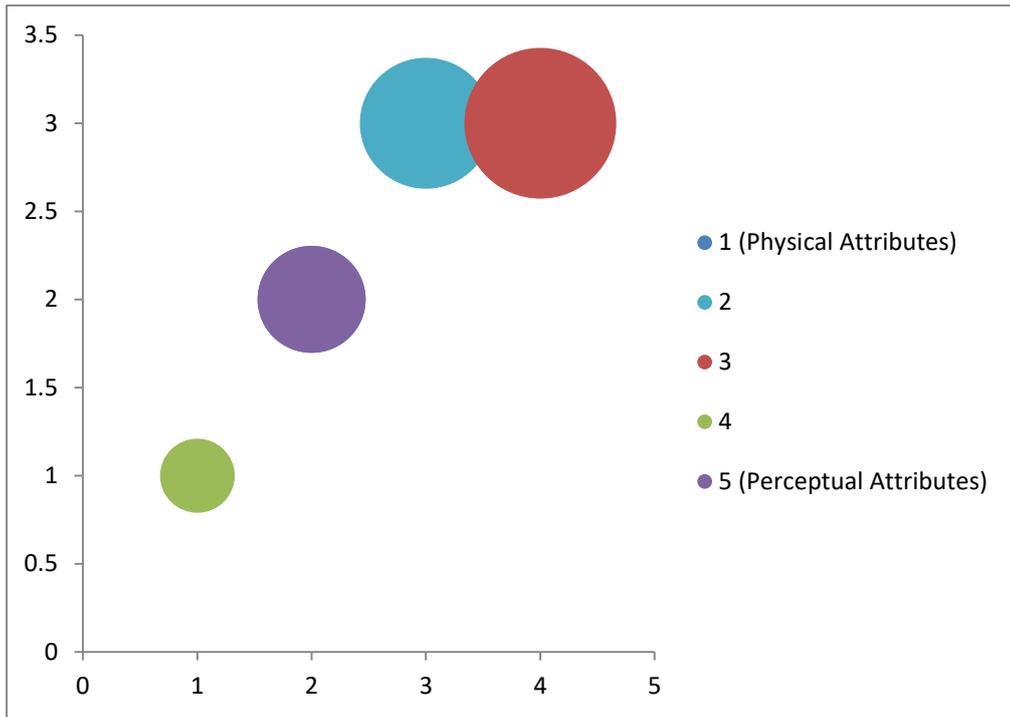
Buying intentions for the product



Age



Perceptual Attribute



Physical Attribute

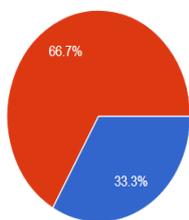
Perceptual Attribute

*Size of the bubbles signify the percentage of the responses for the attribute

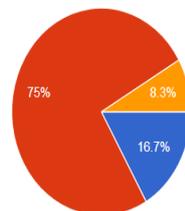
Annexure 2

Questionnaire 2 having a product picture along with its story

Buying intentions for the product

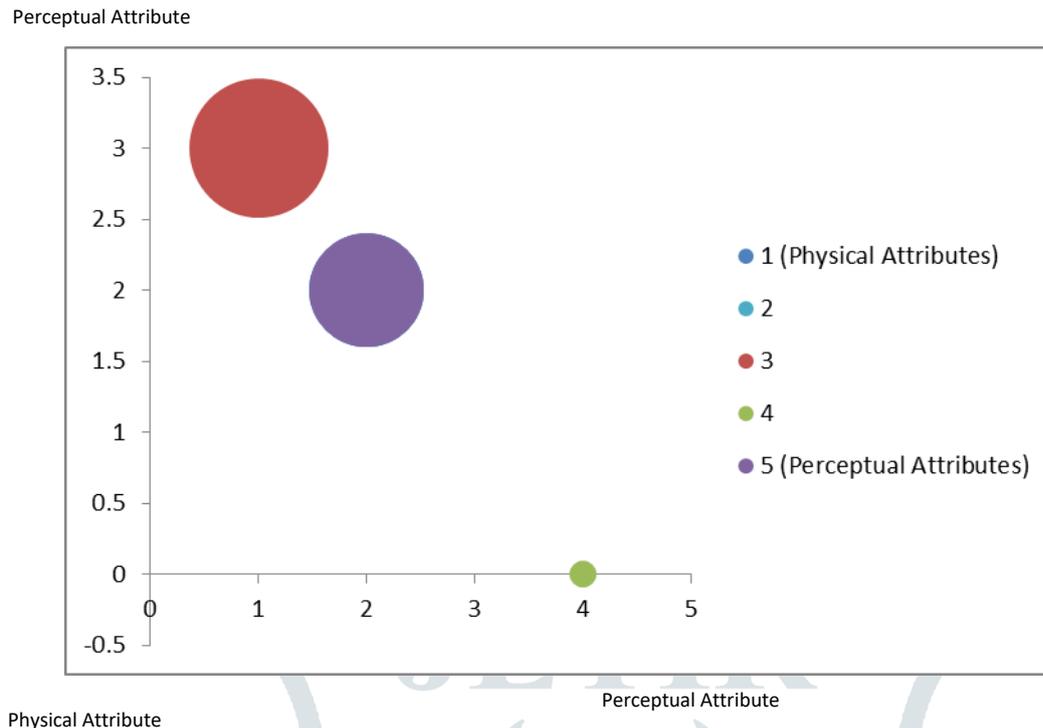


● Yes
● No



● Less than 30 years
● Between 30-50 years
● 50 years and above





*Size of the bubbles signify the percentage of the responses for the attribute

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