

# A STUDY ON MARKETING OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

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## ABSTRACT:

The organic products had the characteristics of the niche. On the other hand, there has been a general increase in demand for 'organic' or 'biodynamic' produce. Over the time, if this niche market proves profitable, it will attract more producers, there by changing the face of the niche from a potential monopoly toward a competitive market. The producers of organic products face increasing competition on the market. Because of the "Long tail" theory, social media can serve as a powerful marketing tool to organic products to promote their products.

The social-media is not only a communication tool for amusement, but it is also an important part of marketing strategies in business life. This paper aims at analyzing the role on marketing of organic products through social media platform. The concept of social media is top of the agenda for many business executives and consumers today. The producer, decision makers, sellers as well as consultants, try to identify ways in which firms can make profitable use of applications such as Google, YouTube, Face book, Whatsup, Instagram, linkedin, and twitter. However, this article intends to provide some clarification regarding traditional and social media marketing, the current scenario of marketing of organic products through social media at global, National and Local level and consumer socialization through social media marketing.

**Keywords:** Organic products, Social media marketing strategies, sources of social media marketing, e-Word of Mouth, SNM (Social network marketing).

## INTRODUCTION

The universe has become more international than ever before, by use various online sites and social media platforms to find information, read the news, connect with our friends globally or purchase from an online store. The buyers are in online and logged on to their social media networks several times a day, some are even living a second life in the online world. The social media networks can therefore be the best, fastest and even the only channel for a company to largely connect with the target consumers, many of them who are located in different parts of the world. The companies have never as inexpensively, efficiently or quickly been able to reach the same amount of consumers than what they are able to reach through their social media network. The marketing through the social media isn't anymore an option; it is a must for any company wanting to succeed. The customers are expecting a two way communication and a possibility to connect communicate and engage online with the company whenever they want to.

The social media marketing is stated to be the new level of integrated marketing communication. As an alternative of providing mass media process (mostly one-way communication), social media represents two-way communication between consumers. The digital form of word-of-mouth, social media revived the old types of decision-making before mass media; it represents the materialization, storage and retrieval of opinions between members of family, friends, neighbors, anybody talking about the same topic. The drawback of social media is the anonymous, large-scale, ephemeral nature of internet lead to difficulty in analyzing, interpreting and managing social media content.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY:

The social media is now a mainstream form of communication around the world, and continues to grow in popularity with the increase in the number of smartphones, and the ease of use whilst on the go. There are now 1.5 billion users of social networking platforms in the world and other industries have embraced these platforms in business and consumer engagement, however it has not been widely accepted in organic products .industry. Limited research available shows that there are increasing trends in organics products and agribusiness uptake in social media as the popularity of smartphones increase.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

**Shu-Chuan Chu & Yoojung Kim (2011)<sup>1</sup>:** This study examines how social relationship factors relate to e-WOM transmitted via online social websites. The study highlights the social and communal characteristics of social networking sites (SNSs) such as Face book, MySpace and Friendster. The study finds that tie strength, trust, normative and informational influence are positively associated with users' overall e-WOM behavior, whereas a negative relationship was found with regard to homophily.

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<sup>1</sup> Shu-Chuan Chu &Yoojung Kim (2011) Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in social networking sites, International Journal of Advertising: The Review of Marketing Communications, 30:1, Page no- 47-75.

**Xia Wang and et.al, (2012)<sup>2</sup>:** This study was focused on social media marketing case: The thesis objective was to understanding the current social media situation and activity among the students of higher education in Finland, The result show that 44% of 16-24 year olds and 44% of 25-34 year olds use social media networks actively every day. In Finland there are more women than men are registered as users for a social media networks. Young adults are the most frequent users of internet; this is also the explanation for the high user amount of 16-34 year olds in social media networks.

**Dilhan and, İbrahim (2014)<sup>3</sup>:** This study was emphasizes on the role of social media for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs); as a new marketing strategy tool for the firm performance perspective. The study is focused on a case study including the comparison and analysis of totally four American and Turkish companies. The number of likes and followers, richness of content, interaction with customers and the use of language in Facebook and Twitter accounts. The main suggestion of this paper for SMEs, planning to use social media mediums as a competitive marketing tool; is that they should spend time to create rich contents in social media accounts to attract their target customers' attention.

**Pechrova and Lohr (2015)<sup>4</sup>:** This study was examined on social media for organic products promotion. The aim of the article is to introduce new social media particularly face book as one of effective marketing tools for organic farmers or producers .This study concludes that the text of the messages for publication in social media should be short, and the company should utilize amusing and creative approaches in social media to better achieve set objectives and the company should utilize applications, games or other elements of virtual reality to increase the involvement of their fans.

**Helena and Cristina (2016)<sup>5</sup>:** The studies focusing on the firm's perspective centered not only on the usage of social media, but also on their implementation, optimization, and measurement of results. The study explores the perspectives of companies as they engage in social media marketing, especially in terms of understanding the key barriers and obstacles to their usage. The results also point to the need for qualitative studies to better grasp recourse to social media marketing utilization within the framework of marketing strategies.

**John Haff (2017)<sup>6</sup>:** This study was focused on Social Media Marketing Strategies in the Organic Food Industry. This article depicts on the results reveal which social media channels are being used and which

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<sup>2</sup> Xia Wang and et.al, (2012) Social Media Peer Communication and Impacts on Purchase Intentions: A Consumer Socialization Framework, *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 2, Page no- 198–208.

<sup>3</sup> Dilhan and İbrahim (2014) Exploring the role of social media for SMEs: as a new marketing strategy tool for the firm performance perspective, *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 150, Page no 511 – 520.

<sup>4</sup> Pechrova, and Lohr (2015) Social Media for Organic Products Promotion, *Agris on-line Papers in Economics and Informatics*, Volume VII, page no -41-50.

<sup>5</sup> Helena and Cristina (2016), *Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review and Implications*, *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 33(12): 1page no-029–1038.

<sup>6</sup> Haff, John (2017), "Social Media Marketing Strategies in the Organic Food Industry". Senior Theses and Capstone Projects. <https://scholar.dominican.edu/senior-theses/>, page no- 1-26.

social media marketing strategies are being used. The qualitative techniques were used to generate a pool of eight organic companies. The brands feature in the study focused on some media channels more than others. Twitter, Face book, and Instagram. Social networking and micro blogs are the preferred means to reach the consumer. This study established the greater use of transformational messaging by the organic food industry.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To understand the theoretical background of traditional and social media marketing.
- To analyzes the social media channels used by the organic food industry in global level, national level, and state level at present scenario.
- To assess the social media marketing strategies used by the organic food industry.
- To study the consumer socialization through social media.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The secondary data in this research will be used for exploring theories and former discoveries in the field of marketing of organic products in social media. The research is planned to be executed through using secondary data in the form of literatures, academic articles, and internal company information, related research publications in books, journals, periodicals, dairies and reports available on the chosen topic. And also internet was used to collect information on the theoretical background of marketing of organic products through social media network.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:**

#### **1. The theoretical background of traditional and social media marketing.**

Traditional marketing and tools are direct mail, print media, and broadcasting. The main difference between traditional marketing and modern marketing, in this context referring to social media, is the constant “two-way traffic” interactions between the B2C channels in social media platforms. In a traditional way of marketing, the ball is in the businesses’ court, the business decides on how to market a product and what the best way to sell the product. The results of; to whom, where and how the marketing should be targeted, come from surveys and different research methods i.e. exploratory research. These “old-fashioned” yet in many cases effective forms of research are costly and extremely time-consuming. In a modern marketing world, it’s quite the opposite; consumers are constantly participating in the businesses’ evolvment by commenting and following their actions. This gives more control to the customer resulting in a greater probability of the business influencing the customer in a profitable way. The businesses’ lose control as the give significant power to the customer and must strive to influence the customer in a positive way, as a state. We cannot control conversations with social media, but we can influence them. The social media Influence is the bedrock on which all economically viable relationships built. If this is done in the right way a

positive word-of-mouth can be generated and more potential customers can be reached in a positive manner, cost-free. The word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful and important tools to any business, on any platform; it can serve as the savior or the reason for the downfall of a business.

**The social media network:** There are many ways to describe what social media is but the core idea stays the same, it's about people communicating with one another in different ways within various online platforms. The social media refers to activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. This flexibility form of media has become a first-hand marketing tool for many modern as well as traditional companies. Within the marketing circles, social media is considered an important and still trending tool today and in the future. The theories of social media's influence on an individual's attitude or behavior are explained by expert's decade ago, some of them are social cognitive theory, the theory of social presence and the media richness theory, and the three laws of media, namely Sarnoff's Law, Metcalf's Law and Reed's Law coined by Sarnoff, Metcalf and Reed respectively. The research suggests that the existence of a "loyalty ladder" in social networking communities that splits users into categories such as;

1. The "Lurkers" who are uncommunicative to contribute to sites,
2. The "Tourists" are those who post comments but demonstrate no commitment to a network,
3. The "Minglers" who post with no regularity or frequency and
4. The "Evangelists / insiders" are those who are enthusiastic, expert and regular in their contributions.

## **2. The social media channels used by the organic food industry in the global level, national level, and state level at present scenario.**

According to Forrester research, the 75% of Internet surfers used "Social Media" in the second quarter of 2008 by joining social networks, reading blogs, or contributing reviews to shopping sites; it represents a significant rise from 56% in 2007. The progress is not limited to teenagers, either; members of Generation X, now 35-44 years old, increasingly populate the ranks of joiners, spectators, and critics. It is, therefore, reasonable to say that Social Media represents a revolutionary new trend that should be of interest to companies operating in online space-or any space, for that matter.

As of January 2009, the online social networking applications on Facebook registered more than 175 million active users. To put this number in perspective, this is only slightly less than the population of Brazil (190 million) and over twice the population of Germany (80 million). At the same time, in every minute, 10 hours of content were uploaded to the video sharing platform on YouTube. According to the researchers, an important goal of social media is also to engage people,

and the four primary ways to engage people are through: communication (i.e. Twitter), collaboration (i.e. Wikipedia), education (i.e. podcasts) and entertainment (i.e. YouTube).

**Table 1.shows the top social network sites worldwide ranked by number of active users as on 2018**

Rank	Social media network sites	No of active Users (in Millions)	Rank	Social media network sites	No of active Users (in Millions)
1	Facebook	2 196	11	Twitter	336
2	YouTube	1 900	12	Reddit	330
3	Whats App	1 500	13	BaiduTieba	300
4	Face book Messenger	1 300	14	Skype	300
5	We Chat	1 040	15	LinkedIn	294
6	Instagram	1 000	16	Viber	260
7	QQ	806	17	Snapchat	255
8	QZone	563	18	LINE	203
9	Doujin / TikTok	500	19	Pinterest	200
10	Sina weibo	411	20	Telegram	200
			21	Telegram	200

**Source: statista.com**

This statistic provides information on the most popular networks in worldwide as on July 2018, ranked by the number of active accounts. The market leader Facebook was the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts and currently sits at 2.2 billion monthly active users. The 6<sup>th</sup> one ranked photo-sharing app Instagram had 1 billion monthly active accounts. The most important social networks are usually available in multiple languages and enable users to connect with friends or people across geographical, political or economic borders. Approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks and these figures are still expected to grow as mobile device usage and mobile social networks increasingly gain attraction.

**Table 2. Shows the leading social network in India as in 2017.**

Rank	Social media network sites	No of active Users in %
1	Facebook	30
2	YouTube	30
3	WhatsApp	28
4	Facebook Messenger	20
5	Instagram	19
6	Google plus	19
7	Twitter	18
8	Skype	15
9	LinkedIn	15
10	Pinterest	11

11	Hike	10
12	Snap chat	10

Source: Social global web index, statistics 2018

The table 2. shows that up to 30 % of the Indian population is on Facebook and YouTube in 2017, with upwardly surging numbers. The third leading social media group in India is Whatsapp with a share of 28%. Of course, the most people would have multiple social media accounts and would be counted in each.

### The Table 3. Shows the market size of organic food across India from 2014 to 2022.

year	2014(in billion U.S. dollars)	2022(in billion U.S. dollars)
<b>Market size of organic food in India</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>1.36</b>

Source: www.statista.com

Table 3 shows the market size of organic food across India in 2014 with the forecast for 2020. The market size of organic food across India in 2020 is forecasted to be around 1.36 billion U.S. dollars, up from about 0.36 billion U.S. dollars in 2014.6

### The top 10 websites to buy organic food products in India and Karnataka.

The organic food is the latest lifestyle mantra. The natural ingredients used in the cultivation of organic foods are free of toxins and safe for consumption. The organic food has a better nutritional value too when compared to chemically treated food items. To go healthy by switching our food habits to the safer organic way.

### Table 4. Shows the top 10 best websites for organic food products in India and Karnataka.

Rank	Websites for organic food in India	Rank	Websites for organic food in Karnataka	Ratins
1	organicshop.in	1	gopalanorganics.com -Gopalan organics	4.7
2	farm2kitchen.com	2	organicindia.com	4.6
3	organicgarden.co.in	3	namdharifresh.com -Namdhari's fresh	4.3
4	amazon.com:	4	sahajaorganics.com	4.2
5	Naturallyyours.in	5	organicmandya.com	4.0
6	healthkart.com	6	Satvikorganic.com	4.0
7	mygreenkart.com:	7	honeyandspice.in - Honey and spice	4.0
8	gandhiana.org:	8	towness .com	4.0
9	organicindiashop.com:	9	purnaorganics.com -Purna organic pvt ltd	4.0
10	naturebasket.co.in:	10	lumiere.co.in -Lumiere organic store	3.8

Source: www.stylecraze.com

1. [www.organicshop.in](http://www.organicshop.in): This super amazing lifestyle website specializes in offering every organic product ranging from cosmetics to food; this site offers organic food from various famous organic brands. It ships worldwide and offers great discount coupons and vouchers.
2. [www.farm2kitchen.com](http://www.farm2kitchen.com): This Indian online organic food store is a good option for people looking forward to get high quality organic food items at affordable rates; it offers free shipping benefits to various Indian cities.
3. [www.organicgarden.co.in](http://www.organicgarden.co.in): This trusted online organic food store holds a city specific food agenda. Their different organic food items are city specific. For example, an organic food item specific to Mumbai might not be a part of the selling agenda in Delhi. Thus, always use a location filter to shop favorite organic food brands easily.
4. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com): The Amazon is a huge lifestyle web store that ships worldwide. It also sells various organic food items from leading international brands. A few worth mentioning brands that are available at Amazon are Nutiva, Earth's Best Organics and Viva Organic. Amazon also offers special discounts to its customers on the purchase of organic food items.
5. [www.naturallyyours.in](http://www.naturallyyours.in): This organic online superstore is a warehouse to organic cookies, pulses and much more. It also offers edible organic oils and ghee. The organic grocery of this online food store is also a home to organic spices, flour, baby food and much more. This is a budget-friendly online organic food store that offers organic food products at lowest possible prices.
6. [www.healthkart.com](http://www.healthkart.com): The Health kart is an Indian online store that offers a huge range of products like cosmetics, medicinal and much more. They also sell a few reputed organic food brands. This is one of the most trusted online sites that offer amazing discounts and free shipping (terms and conditions apply) to its customers.
7. [www.mygreenkart.com](http://www.mygreenkart.com): This online organic store offers organic cosmetics, organic hair care products, organic food items and much more. A few huge organic food brands it offers are Nourish Organics, Down to Earth, Herbal Hills, Organic India, Vedantika Herbals and Societe Naturelle. It holds a great chance to find our favorite organic food brand with this website.
8. [www.gandhiana.org](http://www.gandhiana.org): This organic food store is a warehouse to handpicked food items that offer utmost quality. This site takes the initiative of making the earth is greener, safer, and free of chemicals and adulteration. The adulteration-free organic food items it offers are gluten-free safe options for human consumption.
9. [www.organicindiashop.com](http://www.organicindiashop.com): This online organic store offers organic food items, beverages, health supplements and much more. The Most famous all its organic food brands is Organic India. This online website is a sensible option for people looking forward to Indian organic food brands largely.

10. [www.naturebasket.co.in](http://www.naturebasket.co.in): This is an organic food store that specializes in offering everything organic - spices, flour, sweets, recipes, mixes, rice, ghee, oils, tea and much more. This is a one stop organic food store for online shopping lovers. It offers a hand at famous organic brands like Borges, Dolce, Olitalia, SundropNutrilite, Dabur homemade, Nandini and Keya.

These amazing websites are houses to various national and international organic brands. They offer high quality organic supplements at unbelievably low prices. So, we can go organic today with a click of our mouse.

### 3. The social media marketing strategies used by the organic food industry.

The term 'social media' can be derived from two words which found it; media generally refers to advertising and the communication of ideas or information through publications/channels. The social media implies the interaction of individuals within a group or community. The social media can be a great tool for farmers, sellers, buyers to share information and build relationships with customers. This offers an overview of several social media tools, including how to use blogs, Facebook, email marketing and twitter and also provides tips and case studies on using them more effectively.

The internet gives a wide range of opportunities such as having a connection with people all around the World, creating, sharing and disseminating contents, gaining and searching information on unlimited number of subjects and staying up to date. The more or less, there are some indisputable outcomes and changes due to the emergence of the internet but especially the widespread use of social media. One of these important changes happens in business models as well. The beginning of the 21st century, the use of the internet and social media has become a part of business strategies. In addition to this, the companies started using unique qualities of web and shifted their market strategy to e-commerce. The web has become one of the most profitable tools of promoting the products and services to attract the target audience. A number of them got into the market as an e-retailer; some others became the content provider, transaction broker, market creator or service provider

**Social Network Marketing (SNM):** Due to the changes in technological infrastructure dramatically in the last decade it requires the social media and marketing works closely in business life. The marketing teams use various ways of social media. That increases the search ability of the brand or the company and creates two-way communications with customers. The term Social Network Marketing (SNM), arising out of this connection. Currently most predominant SNM practices involve creating and operating a company's fan page, managing promotions, maintaining public relations, and conducting market research.

**Word of Mouth (WOM) and e-WOM Marketing:** With the proliferation of social media websites, the importance of word of mouth marketing and peer recommendation is becoming more

pertinent for companies that are immersing themselves in an online conversation with consumer communities. The social media provides platforms for consumers to share experiences in their social networks, and to evaluate businesses through websites featuring reviews and recommendations of products and services. This practice of posting information on frequently-visited websites can build or destroy the reputation of a business organization. The appropriate communication channels and context of messages are crucial elements in developing trust, as they help to clarify expectations in prospective relationships between companies and their customers. So, the main target is to create an online brand reputation; another term, e-word of mouth marketing gives an opportunity for SMEs. The numbers of people talks and write in online about the brand in a positive way, the more effective marketing strategies work.

Currently there are various online applications (online feedback mechanisms, viral marketing, social networking, blogging) that are a form of e-WOM, however, considering the speed, scale and ubiquity of the internet, many researchers agrees that the effect of e-WOM are more impactful and even different from those of offline. The WOM favoring rapid product adoption or leading to increased sales and brand advocacy through solving product and customer problems faster and cost-effectively.

**Search Engines:** Search engines like Google and Bing use a combination of content relevance, to decide what pages should be ranked where, for a given search term. The search engine optimization specialists, the questions are always ‘which web links’ and ‘what is relevant content’. According to Moz.com an authoritative site on search marketing links account for around 40% of ranking factors.

**Designing for consumers who are looking for an online experience:** The organic bread bakery company from the USA reflects its mission and vision through the contents and posts they share on the Facebook business page (besides, they use the solar system and also share contents about the sustainability as well). They post information about healthy nutrition, recipes for special days, pictures of the products, employees and the actual family farm where their organic wheat comes from. Besides, they often share the pictures of the supermarkets and stores they work with. The company gives importance to awards. Since their mission is to sell organic products and care about human health; they have many awards such as “Leadership in Sustainability” award of being one of the best working places in the USA. In addition to this, they sometimes post some questions and surveys directly related with the industry. One of the noteworthy contents they share is a contest. Contests are a part of the company’s communication strategy. They often organize contests among adults and children resulting in small presents (like a free coupon or picnic baskets). This is an effective way to engage with the customers and followers through social media. It is obvious that their target customers are not only adults; but also all other age levels. As a result, they create a

positive impression. They always communicate with the winners of the contests through a Facebook business page and form two way communications. The Company prefers an informal language. Their wording is quite sincere. They answer almost every question through different words. The crucial thing is that; the wording reflects their passion and excitement to work.

#### 4. The consumer socialization through social media.

The consumer socialization theory predicts that communication among consumers affects their cognitive, affective, and behavioral through socialization, consumers learn consumption-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes in the marketplace. The widely applied socialization frameworks delineate consumer learning processes and how people perform their roles as consumers in society.



The consumer socialization theory also offers two theoretical perspectives for understanding and predicting consumer-to-consumer information transmission: a cognitive development model and social learning theory. The former focused on cognitive/psychological processes regards socialization as a function of qualitative stages in cognitive development which occur between infancy and adulthood. The latter instead emphasizes external, environmental sources of learning, or “socialization agents” (peers), which transmit norms, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors to learners. This viewpoint has been adopted to explain consumer socialization processes among adult populations, particularly among non-family members. The adult consumer’s placement-related attitudes and behaviors are subject to the influence of circles of friends and acquaintances; they also show that peer communication is the strongest predictor of product placement attitudes and behaviors.

The social media, especially social network sites, provide a virtual space for people to communicate through the Internet, which also might be an important agent of consumer socialization. The social media provide three conditions that encourage consumer socialization among peers online. First blogs instant messaging and social networking sites all provide communication tools that make the socialization process easy and convenient. For example, in

virtual communities, new members can be socialized easily into virtual groups through electronic communication and quickly learn task-related knowledge and skills through their interactions with other members. Second, increasing numbers of consumers visit social media websites to communicate with others and find information to help them make various consumption-related decisions. Third, social media facilitate education and information because they feature multitudes of friends or peers who act as socialization agents and provide vast product information and evaluations quickly. The drawing on the consumer socialization framework, online consumers' attitudes toward social network advertising depend greatly on socialization factors (i.e., peers). The peer communications online can influence consumers so strongly that they convert others into Internet shoppers. The retailers should encourage such communication by setting up tell friend functions on websites.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY**

The social media planning goes, the companies have to keep themselves updated and aware of the social media world around them as well as practical issues around digital platforms. The social media platforms are constantly changing, and sometimes the changes can be drastic, the image of the company gives out. To keep up to date and preventively adapting to the changes within the world of social media goes a long way for any business models.

### **CONCLUSION:**

In the future, the firms began adding online infrastructure to their business model as well. In addition to this, they changed the revenue models because of the remarkable return on the internet (ROI) and modified and renewed the key elements of traditional marketing. By the time of these groundbreaking developments, social media has also become a turning point due to its realistic opportunities from the standpoint of business such as cost effectiveness, time-saving, and engagement with customers. The more companies, especially small and medium organic entrepreneurs started taking the advantage of social media, the more it has become a popular marketing tool under the title of Social Network Marketing (SNM). There are some crucial and controversial points concerning the effectiveness of SNM. Predominantly debates take place over the measurement of success in terms of quality and quantity.

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