



Customer Engaged in Online Brand Communities

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Introduction

The term “**Online Brand Community**” is defined as the community or the group of peoples in some online platforms where a certain group of people comes together into a common platform in order to share some information or some common interests of the products or any services offered. It is a place where the people in the community connects with the particular website or the platform just to share information and interact with both the brands as well as the common interest people.

It is the place where the group of people connects emotionally with their desired brands to share the common interest and information. The importance of online brand is to built some relationship with their customers, group members and the brands that helps in creating brands loyalty and demand. It helps in increasing the business of the brands in an easy way with their customers and helps in answering the different queries of the customers, keeps daily interaction with the customers in a friendly and professional manner.

The term customer engagement is defined as the company which creates a relationship with their customers in order to nurture or to bring up the brands loyalty and their awareness. This process is achieved by the doing various marketing campaigns, creating some new contents or in order to post the new content or to post the content to their websites through the means of outreach through various social media platforms.

It means the online interaction that the company or the brands have with their customers through various communication channels like the use of websites, emails, paid ads, social media, through remarketing the products and the brands.

Most of the customers are engaged with the different brand communities as this is their way to showcase their love, support, loyalty and passion for the brands they like with the other consumers.

Some customers support some particular specific brand communities because they prefer that particular specific brand.

With the increase in the digital media and rising of the internet usages among the users the craze of social media and online shopping platforms has been increased in a rapid rate. Shopping online is one of the most popular online activities one is doing since the last few years.

This helps the brands to interact more with their customers and to establish a good relation with the customers. This interaction has completely changed their relations with both brands and the customers. Most of the merchdisers uses their different social media platforms to sell, promote their products, to meet their customers' needs and demands as well.

This interaction among the different brands and the customers has increased the usage of the web on social media has given rise to the term "**Online Brand Community**". With the increase of more online participation, all the brands are now appreciating their existence in the online communities. Due to which majority of the companies are setting their business in the online mode more rapidly. The trust of the customers on their particular brands they like shows the brand's commitment in desire to maintain the brands relationship with their customers.

The trust and the commitment are the leading factor that determines the brand engagement and the experience shared with the brands loyalty in the online services which plays a major role in exploring the customers intra-action and trans-action in developing the brands trust. The customer brand engagement perfectly defines the customers behavior towards the brand that significantly helps the companies to generate more sales and revenue.

It mainly considers the customer in role behavior like the brands loyalty, brands trust and the customers feedback for the particular brand management and in engaging the positive words about the brand. With the increase in the change of the different social media marketing strategy the focus gets shifted from fan base to more actively engaged customers.

Brands can also increase their engagement by providing certain unique services and experiences to their customers like many other well-established brands are doing. All these established brands have successfully uplifted the customers interest and motivates them to interact, contribute and recommend them to others.

The prime objective for all the brands is their customers and their values. This helps in the brand value creation and this helps them in determining the customers perceived values.

The increase in the online shopping concept relates with the new different ways and methods through which the customer can interact they're with their brands. The customers participation creates a value co-creation that benefits the companies as well as the customers themselves.

The customers feedback plays a vital role in adding some values and services to develop a new product or the services. Keeping beside the customers feedback the company also improves their service quality which in return helps the brands to perform better and to gain customer loyalty.

For Example:

- 1) **Lego Ideas:** This community helps in bringing the ardent fans as well as the creators across the globe to evaluate some new ideas from the LEGO kits. The community has more than 1.8 million connected members connecting and sharing their love and loyalty to the LEGO Products. Everyday some new members joint the community. It also provides a hub for innovation, collaboration and creation of ideas into reality. This community mostly works under three sections namely activities, contests and the product ideas.
- 2) **Harley Owners Group (Harley Davidson):** This is one of the famous brands among the youth who has some love in bikes. This community has more than 1Million of active members. This community helps in connection Harley lovers across the globe with the reason of promoting the Harley's lifestyle and culture. This community helps in providing their members with some sort of special benefits like hosting some events, roadshows and many more that provides a huge interest and experience for riding Harley Davidson.
- 3) **Duolingo:** This community helps in increasing the access to learn free languages. The main reason for the Duolingo's success is because of their community members. Currently the community has an active 300 million users and provides almost more than 100 different languages course.
- 4) **Salesforce Trailblazer:** This is one of the excellent examples for the community that being built around some specific product or have some shared goals. This community helps in bringing together to learn, collaborate and to get most out of their unique implementations to the society or the community members.
- 5) **Airbnb:** This is one of the excellent examples for the community that is providing the amazing place that is useful and actionable tips for the hosts of any size. Basically, it is a place where anyone can share laughter and vent their frustrations and can even do debates as well. It also provides platform for people to help to grow their vacation rental business as well.
- 6) **Sephora:** Basically, this community deals with the beauty products. The community has a powerful beauty presence in all over the countries that are present around the world. This has unparalleled and prestige products in almost every category and provides an unbiased service from many beauty experts through interactive shopping environments.
- 7) **Starbucks:** This is the most famous community in the world in which many persons around the world is engaged with. The community stores here serve many under resourced communities and also the military communities also they work equally with the farmers as well as with the youth and the women who all are the part of their community. This community is also being the part of some other local non profitable organizations as well.

- 8) **Oracle Community:** This community is most famous among the tech guys who loves new technology as the part of their life. The My Oracle Community supports a multi-channel interaction for mostly the premium customers who are being the part of their community team. This community provides services like to share certain information, to post any particular question and also can able to reply the answers as well. They also collaborate with other peer communities that provides information regarding their oracle products, their service and related technologies.

Problem Statement:



With the emergence of the digital technology and the evaluation of Social Media Platforms the concept of **Online Brand Community** has been emerged to a considerable extent. In this modern era, the brands also connect themselves with their customers in a modern way.

They perform this task in different forms but mostly through online medium. These branded communities have been digitally created and being owned by the group of people or the organizations from where one can gather the information and connects with their loving brand whatever it would be either the brands product, services or the brands mission.

Often times these communities usually connects either with their employees, investors, promoters or their stakeholders as well. Whenever any of the brand builds their community using some social channels like Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, Quora, etc. or may even using their own community platforms that helps them to empower their marketing and sales departments.

The brands that launch their branded communities are helping in building the deeper and the meaningful relation with their customers.

Literature Review

An online brand community is a specifically designed geographically bounded community based on the social relationships among the different brands. (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). All the online brand communities have some specific features present in themselves and is not been separated by any geographical barriers. (Wellman, 1979). Brand shares their contribution with their customers. (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

Different organizations are being accelerate by brand communities in order to perform some tasks related to the particular brands. (Habibi et al., 2014). Customers are the biggest source for the brands product improvement and new innovation that helps to fix the problems for the other brands. (Fuller, 2010; Schau et al., 2009). Customers are acted as the brands promoters in order to safeguard their favorite brands. (Habibi et al., 2014).

Customers are joined with the different brand communities in order to indulged some heroic and realistic values for participating in the brand communities. (Schau et al., 2009). From the last some years it has been seen a huge increase in the overall customer engagement for the brands. (Islam and Rahman, 2016). Several brands have been proposed their sub brands that includes all the following list like customer engagement, customer brand engagement, brand engagement and customers behaviour in the overall engagement of the products. (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Hollebeek, 2011).

Since now a days customers are growing and contributing their brands also, they are having the power for doing the bargaining as well. (Baumöl et al., 2016). The term engagement has been typically a multi functional concept that describes all the cognitive, behavioural and emotional concepts very well. (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2018). While some other researches recognize that behavioural concept is the major reason for the engagement towards a particular brand by their customers. (Groeger et al., 2016).

Many researches shows that the usage of the internet has correspondingly increased the brand engagement. (Simon and Tossan, 2018). Due to the privacy and the security related issues, there is a decline in the online customers brand engagement. (Mosteller and Poddar, 2017).

Brands commitment and loyalty towards their words is one of the most dependable factors for the brands engagement. (Casalo et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Spratt et al., 2009). Brand engagement is the most important part towards the customers loyalty. (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek et al., 2018; So et al., 2016). Oliver (1999).

A research states that brand engagement is induced only by the customers power of purchasing but also depends upon the brand related interactions. (Hamzah et al., 2014). Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013, p. 2). Brand engagement is the most important and the vital reason for the brands trust and development. (Khan and Fatma, 2017; Mathew and Thomas, 2018).

Whenever, a customer has some good and favorable experience the customers feels that the brand is capable enough in fulfilling the customers trust, experience and promises. (Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Fournier, 1998; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014).

The customers brand interaction and experience are the center for the customers trust development. (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019).

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to know what is the importance of the brand image and the consumers engagement with their particular brands. The main purpose of this study is to know that what kind of image the particular customer has and how much is he/she aware of the brand community that they really like.

The main objective of this is to find out how efficiently the customers are having awareness and how they show engagement for the particular brand of their likes and choice. The approach of this research has been both in the terms of exploratory as well as descriptive as we have discussed in the methodology chapter.

Although the study is more based upon the quantitative form of the online surveys, we have done in the form of google form and some other qualitative research through the verbal and psychometric analysis.

As per our study we came up with the conclusion that the customer in the world market is well aware of the certain communities and also some of them has their keen interest on some particular community.

In addition to same, some of the consumers who have replied that they are aware of the particular community has a relatively positive image for that community and personally there are being engaged with that community.