

14.4: Social Media and Mobile Marketing

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Discuss social media marketing and its opportunities and challenges.
- Discuss mobile marketing and its opportunities and challenges.

Social Media Marketing



Figure 14.6 Social media marketing has created an opportunity for marketers to reach consumers in real time through campaigns run on digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and others. (credit: "Social Media Word Cloud" by cloudincome.com/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

As discussed in the previous section, internet and digital technology usage have surged across the globe, creating opportunities for marketers to engage with consumers in real time. Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful online marketing tool as consumer time spent on these platforms (see Figure 14.6) has grown substantially over the last decade. A growing share of Americans report using YouTube and Facebook more than any other social media platform. In segments under the age of 30, the most popular platforms are Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, and TikTok.

Social Media Marketing Defined

Social media marketing is defined as using social media platforms to deliver content that drives engagement with your brand. Companies from PepsiCo to Home Depot to the pizza restaurant located in town use social media to connect with users, share content, and, ultimately, generate sales. Marketers can create brand profiles and sponsored content that they pay for.

Warby Parker uses Instagram to create high-quality content and showcase different styles of eyeglasses based on face shape. Users may click on the post, read and reply to comments, like it, mark it as a favorite, or share it on their own feed. If they are in the market for new eyewear, the social media post may drive them to the company's website, where they can virtually try on different styles of eyeglasses and ultimately make a purchase.

Social media marketing offers some advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include that it is highly targeted, it allows for engagement with and among users, it is a great tool for driving visitors to a company's website, and it is easily measured.

Uses of Social Media Marketing

Marketers recognize that social media presents an exciting opportunity to connect with consumers across a variety of platforms. Unlike some other forms of promotion, social media marketing allows marketers to target audiences precisely. Marketers can create social media campaigns that target demographic attributes such as gender, age, and location in addition to psychographic attributes such as interests and viewing behavior.

For example, Facebook allows marketers to upload a list of customers that includes the demographic and psychographic attributes of the company's target audience. Facebook then creates what's called a "lookalike audience" that matches those customer attributes to the attributes of Facebook users so that the company's ads will show up in the feeds of the lookalike audience.

Social media marketing also allows users to engage with one another and company content. It's an excellent vehicle for marketers to distribute their online video and blog content and communicate promotional offers. Marketers can monitor engagement and participate in ongoing conversations with users who comment, like, and share content.

Harvard Business Review (HBR) provides a great example of how to use social media marketing effectively. HBR, a business management magazine published by the Harvard Business Publishing subsidiary of Harvard University, offers paid subscribers the latest research and articles on all things related to management.

During the pandemic, HBR gave people free access to all HBR content. The campaign ran on social media and resulted in increased traffic to the HBR website. This brings us to another important advantage of social media marketing. It can create traffic or visitors linking directly to the company's website from the social media platform.

Finally, social media marketing is highly measurable. Online marketers can evaluate key engagement metrics such as clicks, likes, and shares and optimize their social media campaigns so that they achieve the goals they set. For example, posting at 1:00 p.m. EST on Facebook gets the most shares, whereas posting content at 3:00 p.m. EST gets the most clicks.

A major disadvantage of social media marketing is that brands don't have complete control over the message. Consumers can freely write comments that are harmful to a brand's reputation. Amazon's Jeff Bezos famously wished everyone a "Happy Earth Day" in a tweet that showed him dogsledding above the Arctic Circle in Norway. He received serious backlash from Twitter users who pointed out at the time that Amazon employees were underpaid and overworked (Matyszczyk, 2018).

In addition to losing control over the message, social media marketing requires significant resources, including time and money. Content is key to creating engagement, and continuous creation of new and engaging content requires resources. Social media pages and posts also need to be monitored for engagement. For example, companies that are active on social media have a plan for reviewing and replying to sometimes hundreds of comments. Fortunately, there are great online tools to help automate replies to comments.

Facebook

Facebook, whose parent company was rebranded as Meta in 2021, is the largest social media platform, with over 2.9 billion monthly active users and \$117.92 billion in revenue from 2022; data is now available for 2023 online as well (Iqbal, 2024). These numbers make this platform attractive for reaching a diverse, global audience. Facebook is facing the challenge that a growing percentage of its users are baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), whereas teens are using other platforms, such as TikTok and YouTube, more frequently.

In addition, Facebook has been scrutinized because of how the company uses personal data. Six in ten social media users report that they've observed and temporarily believed something they've read on Facebook that turned out to be false information (Raymond, 2019).

In addition, there's a growing concern about the role that social media has played in dividing people. Fifty percent of users who are millennials say that Facebook fosters division, compared with only 38 percent of baby boomers (Raymond, 2019).

Facebook is still clearly the behemoth of social media platforms, and so long as it holds that position, marketers will continue to use it as a channel to deliver content and drive engagement with targeted customers.

Instagram

As a social media platform, Instagram's growth has exploded over the last decade. Although not as large as Facebook in terms of users, it still boasts 1 billion active users every month. Instagram attracts a younger demographic, mostly people under the age of 30, which makes it attractive for brands targeting this audience (Jackson, 2019).

The company previously known as Facebook purchased Instagram in 2012. The union of Facebook and Instagram under one corporate entity has provided synergistic benefits to users, companies included. First, social media allows users to cross-post on the two platforms. And second, this has the advantage of increasing reach and repetition of messages more efficiently.

From a social media advertising perspective, integrating Facebook and Instagram allows companies to manage and monitor campaigns across the two platforms easily. Furthermore, companies that have leveraged these integrative features have enjoyed

stronger campaign performances in terms of clicks, views, and website conversions.

Spotify uses Instagram Stories brilliantly during its #yearwrapped campaign that drops every December. Instagram Stories lets users post photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. It's become a very powerful sharing tool with more than 500 million users posting stories every day.

Spotify created a special webpage that presents visitors with their most listened to artists, songs, and other interesting insights related to their music habits over the year. Spotify gives visitors the option of sharing these highlights on other social platforms. This campaign has proved to be highly engaging, with more than 60 million Spotify users engaging with Spotify's Instagram Story and 3 billion #yearwrapped playlists streamed as a result of the campaign.

LinkedIn

For business professionals seeking networking, partnership, and employment opportunities, LinkedIn proves to be an excellent social media platform (see Figure 14.7). LinkedIn boasts 722 million users, who are known as members. Among social media platforms, LinkedIn is considered the most trusted, with 73% of members agreeing that LinkedIn protects members' privacy; new data is updated from 2024 (Newberry, 2024).



Figure 14.7 LinkedIn is a business professional platform that is used by marketers to reach consumers. (credit: "LinkedIn Pen" by Sheila Scarborough/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

LinkedIn Live is the platform's live streaming feature, which allows companies to engage directly with community members. Vimeo leveraged the feature when it held a "Working Lunch" series. Using a seminar format, it brought together experts across the business, communication, and technology industries and interested members. The goal was to engage with the audience, provide relevant information, and drive use and engagement of the platform.

Although not the largest social platform, LinkedIn most certainly serves as an important tool for connecting with business professionals in the B2B space.

Pinterest

With 478 million monthly users, Pinterest is a social platform that allows users to visually explore an endless array of ideas from recipes to home decor to crafts to personal style (Pinterest, n. d.). Users can use the platform's search bar to look for topics or people that interest them, which produces results related to search keywords.

For businesses, Pinterest offers a host of benefits as a social marketing tool. First, 97% of searches are unbranded (Pinterest, 2024). Simply put, consumers aren't looking for brand-specific content when browsing the platform. This is music to the ears of companies that can place their ads in Pinterest feeds near relevant content. For example, a user may search for "image of vintage running shoes" on Pinterest, which would result in a host of profiles featuring content related to the search terms. A well-placed New Balance advertisement featuring its vintage 720 sneaker would be a strategic marketing move in this situation (see Figure 14.8).



Figure 14.8 A marketer could place a New Balance sneaker advertisement on Pinterest near unbranded searches. (credit: “New Balance Limited Edition Pink Ribbon 3190 Running Shoes” by slgckgc/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Twitter

As a social platform, Twitter is a microblogging news and networking site where users typically post shorter messages known as tweets. After receiving complaints that 140 characters weren’t enough room to express ideas, Twitter expanded its character limit from 140 to 270 in 2017. It has approximately 238 million daily active users, with about 14.5 million living in the United States. It has seen steady growth in international appeal, and new data is available for 2023 statistics (Statista, 2024).

Similar to LinkedIn, Twitter is a popular B2B digital marketing tool, with 67% of all B2B businesses using the platform to reach business customers (Lin, 2023). Twitter users have a high expectation that a company will respond to a tweet; therefore, marketers who choose this platform should be prepared to engage with users directly. Twitter’s ownership and policy changes in 2022 led many people and companies to reconsider their relationship with the platform, but it will likely remain a major force in marketing and business for years to come.

Podcasts

Podcasts are often free, on-demand, downloadable audio recordings that cover a variety of topics and are typically made available on a weekly or monthly basis. Podcasts are distributed through applications such as Apple’s Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and Audible, but they can also be published on a company’s website. Podcasting has been growing at a “hockey stick” rate—200% year-on-year growth (Radcliff, 2020). Recognizing a huge opportunity, Spotify acquired podcasting company Megaphone in 2020 (Spotify, 2020). The acquisition positions Spotify as the “go-to” platform for premium podcast content, which offers new opportunities for advertisers. In a world where people question information they are given, podcast hosts stand out because 52% of listeners trust advertising when endorsed by the host (Spotify Editorial Team, 2019). The hosts can offer brand endorsements and approvals in addition to stories that they bring to life via audio. Listeners take in what the host says and then build it out in their own minds. Podcast creators leverage social media platforms to drive traffic to applications and sites where the podcasts can be played or downloaded.

Podcasts can be an effective digital marketing tool when marketers want to hyper-target a niche audience with relevant topics. They are typically created to share educational information and often result in a good return on investment because of the value they create for loyal listeners.

eLearning company Harappa Education produces the *Habits Matter* podcast, which focuses on topics about learning and personal growth. Listeners are attracted to the series because they want to learn something new without the noise of a marketing message. Podcasts are effective at creating value, building relationships, and subtly engaging target audiences.

📌 Link to Learning: Social Media Strategy

Social media marketing can be complex because of the variety of platforms and new features being constantly added. Check out this guide from HubSpot on how to [develop a social media strategy](#).

Also, check out the *Habits Matter* podcast. Hosted by Shreyasi Singh, the *Habits Matter* podcast explores humanity at work. Check it out [here at Apple](#) or [here at Spotify](#).

Social Media Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges

When marketers are considering social media as a digital marketing tool, they need to weigh its opportunities and challenges to determine if it's the right-fit channel for reaching targeted customers.

The major opportunities of social media marketing include reaching global customers, increasing brand awareness, engaging with targeted customers, and increasing website traffic. First, social media connects companies to billions of users across the globe. Because of this reach, companies can profitably connect with new and existing customers.

In addition, because of the billions of active users on social media, brands can increase awareness of their existence with targeted consumers. For example, a five-year-old swimsuit and beachwear company, Cupshe, had little to no brand recognition among U.S. consumers until it launched campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. In 2020, the company boasted \$150 million in sales without a single storefront (McCann, 2021). Consumers were exposed to the brand via social media ads, which then drove them to the company's website to browse styles and make purchases.

In addition to increasing brand awareness, social platforms help brands engage directly with consumers. Mass forms of promotion, such as advertising, offer only one-way communication from the company to the customer. Social media platforms allow for multidirectional communication between the company, users, and brand communities.

Finally, social media drives traffic to company websites. Users see a sponsored advertisement in their news feed that is highly relevant to their interests and click on the content to learn more, browse inventory, and, ultimately, make a purchase.

The major challenge facing marketers who use social media to reach target audiences is a growing distrust of social media platforms in terms of what they do with our private information. In addition, social media marketing requires dedicated campaign managers who can post fresh content frequently, monitor engagement, and respond to comments. The third disadvantage is that although multidirectional dialogue between consumers and the company is an advantage, the comments cannot be controlled. Users can tarnish the company's brand name if they share negative experiences or opinions about the brand.

📌 Link to Learning: What Goes Viral?

Why do some things go viral and others don't? Learn from BuzzFeed's publisher Dao Nguyen and her TED Talk on the tactics her team uses to make things go viral.



Integrated Social Media Marketing

Integrated social media marketing involves creating a clear, consistent, and synergistic message across all social media platforms. When consumers are presented with coordinated messages across social media platforms, brand awareness and purchase intention

increase.

Mobile Marketing: Definition and Strategies

Mobile marketing is defined as the use of multiple digital marketing channels that are designed to reach consumers on their smartphones and tablets. Given the variety of digital tools that marketers use to engage with consumers, it's important to discuss how mobile device use impacts digital marketing strategies. Usage of mobile devices to access the internet and applications has steadily increased over the last ten years (Wilson, 2021). As mobile device technology and digital technology has improved, people are doing everything from refinancing their homes to buying cars online. Mobile device usage will continue to grow, and as consumers spend more time on mobile devices, marketers must adapt their strategies to meet consumers where they are.

There are currently 6.4 billion smartphone users worldwide, and usage is expected to continue to grow over the next decade (Hanko, 2022). In 2022, U.S. mobile advertising spend is expected to reach \$137.13 billion, where it was \$100 billion in 2021 (Oberlo, 2024). Given these compelling statistics, companies must be prepared with an effective mobile marketing strategy. Marketing for mobile devices is not the same as marketing for desktops. Consumers expect a more personalized experience when they engage with brands on their smartphones.

Elements of a successful mobile marketing strategy should include responsive design, mobile-friendly emails, app development, and memorable URLs.

Link to Learning: U.S. Mobile Advertising

To learn more about the predicted growth of mobile advertising in the United States, [read this article from Oberlo](#). It states that U.S. spend is expected to grow 14% to \$156 billion in 2023 and up to \$174 billion in 2024.

Responsive Web Design

Responsive web design means that when people visit your website via their mobile device, the menus and content display in a way that is easy to read and engage with. Users don't need to pinch, expand, or scroll the screen to view content. Responsive web design became the standard in 2015 when Google announced that mobile-friendly websites would be prioritized over non-mobile-friendly designs in search results. Responsive web design is critical to ensuring that visitors have a good experience while navigating your website.

Mobile-Friendly Emails

Mobile-friendly emails are emails whose images, text, and links display in a user-friendly way when accessed via a mobile device. With 68% of emails being opened on mobile devices, responsive design is necessary to create a good user experience (Campaign Monitor, 2019). Similar to responsive web design, email content must display on mobile devices in a way that is simple for the user to consume.

One way that email marketers can meet mobile-friendly standards is to ensure that subject lines are between 41 and 50 characters. Subject lines should capture attention and paint a benefit for the subscriber. In addition, mobile-friendly emails often contain a pre-header, which is the first line of text in your email. It provides context for what the email contains. Finally, emails should be concise with a clear and easy-to-find call to action. Many emails contain buttons that link email viewers directly to the company's website. The button is typically rectangular and includes actionable language such as "Get Started" or "Shop the Sale."

Developing an App

For some companies, developing a mobile app is an important element in their mobile strategy. Because a shocking 90% of people's mobile usage is on smartphone apps, marketers must consider the value in creating one (Saccomani, 2022).

One benefit of developing a mobile app is that apps provide direct communication and engagement opportunities with customers at the touch of a button. Amazon's app, for example, makes it easy to search for and purchase products from mobile devices. The alternative is for users to open their browser on their phone, type in the Amazon URL, and search directly from the mobile site. Apps make it convenient for consumers.

Short/Memorable URLs

An internet site's address on the web is technically known as a uniform resource locator (URL). In the digital world, you could have a great website with great content and a strong social media presence, but visitors cannot reach your website without a well-constructed URL.

Having a shorter, memorable URL is an important marketing tactic for the following reasons. First, it's easy for people to remember. Second, shorter URLs are easier to share, whether it's through email, text, or social media. Finally, optimizing the length of a URL makes it much easier for Google to find and display in search results.

There are a number of applications, such as TinyURL and Bitly, that are capable of turning long URLs into shorter ones; however, the jury is still out on whether search engines perceive these URLs as trustworthy.

Mobile Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges

Mobile marketing presents clear opportunities for digital marketers. First, mobile device usage continues to grow as consumers stratify their time across various devices at once. In addition, mobile devices allow people to experience almost constant connectivity that ignores the boundaries that traditional marketing channels must observe, such as time and place. For example, Nothing Bundt Cakes' store hours of operation might be 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. However, accessing its website to place an order can happen at any time of day from any location.

The shift in mobile usage behavior provides a number of opportunities for marketers to connect with consumers in a place where they are spending more and more time. Additionally, consumers are using mobile devices to conduct product research, view customer reviews, and interact with brands on social media platforms.

In addition to mobile marketing opportunities, this channel also presents challenges to digital marketers. The first challenge is finding the right mix of mobile channels to reach your target audience. For some companies, SMS texting makes sense because customers are open to receiving promotional messages via text. If the company has a mobile application, it may consider sending push notifications that alert users to important information when they aren't engaging with the app. Understanding your target audience is key to determining which mobile tools make the most sense.

A second challenge with mobile marketing is measuring results. Although companies can easily measure things such as in-app purchases and emails opened and clicked, it's more difficult for marketers to see whether someone has seen a push notification or in-app message.

Knowledge Check

It's time to check your knowledge on the concepts presented in this section. Refer to the Answer Key at the end of the book for feedback.

1.

Which of the following is an advantage of social media marketing?

- a. Social media is highly targeted in its ability to reach segments of consumers who share common interests and demographics.
- b. With social media, marketers have complete control of the message.
- c. Social media is very easy to manage and requires few resources.
- d. Social media is the best channel for the B2B market.

2.

Which of the following is a challenge that marketers face when using social media marketing?

- a. Social media marketing does not allow companies to target multiple audiences at the same time.
- b. Social media use is unpredictable, with users only logging in once or twice per week.
- c. Companies do not have control over the message.
- d. Social media does a poor job of driving traffic to websites.

3.

Which of the following is a characteristic of a good mobile strategy?

- a. Mobile websites should have a responsive design so visitors have a good user experience.
- b. Emails should be sent to consumers on a weekly basis to stay engaged with mobile users.
- c. Avoid using push notification features to avoid overcommunicating with your users.
- d. Measure whether or not a mobile device user has seen a push notification.

4.

When a company's website adapts to whatever screen consumers are using and users don't need to pinch, expand, or scroll the screen to view content, this is known as _____.

- a. website design
- b. responsive marketing
- c. content marketing
- d. responsive web design

5.

Which of the following represents a challenge for mobile marketing?

- a. Mobile device usage is on the decline.
- b. It's challenging to measure mobile marketing campaigns.
- c. Responsive design is difficult to implement.
- d. People are using email less and less.

Marketing in Practice: National Geographic



Figure 14.9 National Geographic has utilized Instagram for a promotional strategy as a way to share never-before-seen photographs. (credit: "National Geographic" by Open Grid Scheduler/Grid Engine/flickr, Public Domain)

National Geographic has over 220 million followers on Instagram, boasting the leading brand account on the site (National Geographic, 2020). It shares stunning images of people, places, animals, and natural landscapes from all over the world. As a visual storyteller, *National Geographic* captures some of the most awe-inspiring, unfiltered images that the world has ever seen (see Figure 14.9).

Instagram has served as an effective vehicle for sharing these images globally. *National Geographic* has utilized the platform to drive engagement with followers. Its famous "Wanderlust" social media campaign invites amateur photographers from around the world to post the best photographs they've taken while traveling (Oxford, 2015). Followers use the #wanderlustcontest hashtag to connect with the *National Geographic* community of travelers. Its strategy to promote user-generated content was a great way to connect with followers and build continuous engagement.

In addition to its Wanderlust campaign, *National Geographic* uses Instagram and other social media platforms to share content that is central to the brand's values. For example, on "The Endangered Species Day" and "The Oceans Day," it pushes content related to wildlife and nature protection using powerful images and statistics (NatGeoWild, 2015).

Through social media, *National Geographic* is able to share its passion for nature and wildlife with a community of like-minded people. As a tool, social media allows *National Geographic* to engage with followers in a personal way.

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