
THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE PROMOTION OF RAMOJI FILM CITY, HYDERABAD – A STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING TOOL

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to study the promotion of Ramoji Film City, which is the largest film studio in Asia and second biggest studio in the world. Apart from that it is also a leisure park and thematic leisure destination with magic of cinema. There have been studies conducted on destination marketing in the past but a gap arises in the approach of the destination marketers and the current trends. Today's world is tech savy and most of the people are on the internet and engaging themselves in some form of social media. That is the reason social media happens to be one of the best channel of marketing. Now the question arises why only social media, the answer is because most of the potential travelers are on the social networks. Hence it forms the best mode of distribution. For the purpose of study leading social networking sites such as Face book, twitter, Linked In , Google+ and You Tube are being considered and how is ramoji Film City linked to the people through these social networking sites is being studied. The advantages and disadvantage of social media marketing will be found out and suggestions to overcome the barriers will be proposed.

Keywords: *Thematic, Social Media, Face Book, Twitter, Linked In, Google+, You Tube*

Introduction

The advantage of social media marketing is that, it has reduced the gap between the customers and the organizations. An estimated number of 1.2 billion persons are using Social Media applications and nearly 20% of overall

time spent online is spent on social networking sites. Not only physical goods but also services, transport and entertainment are promoted via social media. Ramoji film city is one of the biggest film cities in the world spread over 2000 acres of land. It houses a theme park, Hotels, mechanical rides and lot of entertainment. It is a tourist paradise and any tour to Andhra Pradesh is incomplete without visiting Ramoji Film city. Today's world is tech savvy and most of the people are on the internet and engaging themselves in some form of social media. The question arises why should RFC use social media marketing? The reason is because; most of the potential tourists are on the social networking sites. Travelers or consumers are benefited by the experience shared by the already experienced travelers which is perceived as authentic and first hand information. Thus the potential tourist has an option to interact with the vendors, service providers, localities of the destination and decide on their travel. For the purpose of study leading social networking sites such as Linked In, Face book, Google plus, Instagram and twitter have been studied. Though most of the destination marketing organizations have been using social media marketing extensively, it has been observed that RFC has only lately added a Face book page and that too it is not much active on it. RFC continues to attract thousands of tourists domestic and foreigners' year on year and has bagged the best tourist destination award. In this paper an attempt is being made to check the impact of social media marketing in the promotion of Ramoji Film City.

The biggest Question to be answered is though RFC not being active on social networking sites, how has it been able to draw huge crowds and has stood as one of the most visited tourist destination in India. The problem to be solved is does social networking sites really have a positive impact on the marketing of tourist destinations.

OBJECTIVES

- To study and examine the status of Ramoji Film City on the social networking sites.
- To analyze which social networking site has positive impact on the promotion of Ramoji Film City.
- To assess the cost effectiveness of Social media marketing to traditional marketing in the promotion of RFC.
- To measure the impact of Social media marketing on the sales output of RFC.

Research Methodology

It is a non-parametric study where quantitative technique is being used to analyze the Data.

Data collection: Secondary Data was collected from Journal articles, books and magazines. Hypotheses were framed based on the literature reviewed. Null Hypothesis is being tested for its relevance by applying correlation and Chi square tests.

Primary data was collected with the help of a Survey questionnaire and also interviews were conducted on the staff of RFC with the help of structured and unstructured questionnaire. Altogether 300 Questionnaires were administered. After excluding extreme answers and half filled questionnaires, 240 Questionnaires were finally considered.

SAMPLING: Stratified sampling is used where in clusters were formed based on the units represented.

Period of study: Data has been gathered over a period of Five years from 2008 to 2012.

Literature Review

There have been several studies conducted on the application of Social media in the marketing of Physical goods, transport, products etc. But very few researchers feature the use of social media in the marketing of Tourist destinations. Hence for the purpose of this study, several studies referring to the application of social media marketing to various products is being considered and based on them Hypotheses are being constructed.

(Bimber, 2000).A study was conducted by the author on the social networking sites and their use by the general public. It was noticed that gender played a role in the internet uses Factors such as socioeconomic status have also been shown to predict the types of Internet uses

(Buhalis& Law, 2008) has expressed in his theory that Consumer-centric marketing has taken off, using the Web 2.0 platform to build brand awareness, strengthens brand associations and gain useful insights into traveler behavior and perceptions of the Tourism product

(Buttle, 1998) is of the opinion that word of mouth (WOM) is nine times as effective as advertising in changing consumer perception of a product or service. It is observed that social media is very effective in creating word of mouth publicity and information goes viral in seconds

(**Carson, 2007**) is of the opinion that, by looking at visitor stories and monitoring what guests are saying about destinations, DMOs can collect valuable information concerning the emotional connections visitors make with their destination. He further quotes that Blogs are equally useful in monitoring visitor attitudes towards a destination.

(**Dwyer, Hiltz, 2009**) is of the opinion that, Attractive content and online discussions will be valuable for people. Three indexes have considered in writing attractive containing of social media. Using the same language and tones to the target audience Attractive content should be written by using the very language and of significance.

(**Espejel, et al., 2008**) in his studies has come out with the opinion that Social network consists of connecting people to people, people to organizations, communities forums etc. Online shopping is one of the most frequently implemented options used among various people in the world .It helps people purchase goods and services very easily and virtually reduce unnecessary transportation to shopping centers

(**Hargittai, 2011**), has expressed that there was a systematic difference between people who used SNS and those who did not use, a study found that using a particular SNS was not randomly distributed among internet users It was also found that ethnicity played a role in SNS adoption. However, to date, little research has explored in details the characteristics of the adoption of Face book especially in India Understanding what drives SNS adoption among Indian consumers will help to fill the gap in the literature.

(**Hill and Gardner (1990)** defined decision making as to refer to thoughts during the choice for a brand. Hence advertising a tourist destination on various social networking sites will strengthen the thoughts of the consumers in deciding on visiting a particular tourist destination.

(**Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001,**) has shown from his studies thatFactors such as socioeconomic status have also been shown to predict the types of Internet users. The study projected that the following are some of the prominent social networking sites on which the consumers are active, view and share their experiences Google +, Face book, Linked In, twitter.

(**Kiel and Layton (1981)** observed the consumer decision process and stated that consumers can be categorized as high, low, and selective searchers, depending on the information they encounter during this processIt has been found that the phenomenon of blogging and other aspects of social media have the potential to bring dramatic changes to many aspects of public relations.

(**Lam et al., 2010**) Lam and colleagues call brand switching as social mobility between brand identities It must be borne in mind, however, that

consumers' switching behavior is not predictable and relates to all the industries and services.

(Limber, 2000). Many studies found that gender played a role in the internet uses. Factors such as socioeconomic status have also been shown to predict the types of Internet users. Hence the market can be segmented according to the type of internet user. Ex. It was mostly observed that the age group of 30-50 yrs was mostly active on face book

(Lin & Lu, 2011) has opined that, Social networks exist in a cyber space, thereby allowing individuals to build their profiles and share texts, images, photos, videos, blogs and links with other website members; in fact, they are currently the world's fastest growing personal networking tools. This has given an idea for considering organizations to build attractive pages to promote their products and services.

(Miller (1993) described search behavior as a method by which individuals develop a set of alternatives for consideration for making a choice among these. With the advent of social networking sites people are curious to share the photographs of the places they visit and also leave a comment on them, this forms an information for the potential tourist.

According to **Moe and Yang (2009)**, consumer search behavior has been studied only in a purchase setting, since it has always been considered to be an important stage in the decision-making process. The same has been replicated in marketing a tourist destination in the current scenario.

(Park, H. et. al 2011) in his study has suggested that a core strength of social networking sites such as Face book is their broad appeal; organizations and businesses engage in conversations with consumers through unique interactive features, such as sharing videos and photos and commenting on posts. This further justifies users' characterization of advertisement messages via Face book as appealing and exciting.

(Schiff man & Kanuk, 2010). Have conducted various studies on internet communication and have commented that various new platforms for communication and ideas have been developed by the internet. Internet is a very powerful tool which has revolved the business on a world scale. The best advantage of online communication is that it is free of geographical limitation. It facilitates individuals to pass on a message to others quickly, thus creating exponential growth in the spread of information in the social network

There have been noticeable gaps in the theories studied earlier, hence on thoroughly examining them the following Hypotheses were constructed

Hypotheses

- (1) There is no perceived positive impact of Social media marketing on the sales of Ramoji Film City.
- (2) There is no significant association between cost effectiveness of Social media marketing to traditional marketing.

A Brief on RFC

The sprawling 2000-acre Ramoji Film City was set up by Ramoji Group in 1996, is the land of million dreams, where comprehensive and world-class filmmaking facilities await dream merchants for a celluloid journey. Certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's largest film studio complex, at Ramoji Film City a filmmaker can walk with a script and walk out with film. The massive dreamscape vibrant with flamboyant locales, picturesque avenues, make-believe sets and outstanding film-making infrastructure make it as filmmakers' paradise. Numerous films in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya, Bhojपुरi, English and several TV commercials and serials are produced here every year

Apart from comprehensive movie-making opportunities that it is best known for, Ramoji Film City is also an extremely popular destination for tourists seeking recreation. Approximately 1.5 million tourists visit Ramoji Film City annually. The wonderland is also a perfect location for

- Corporate Events
- Fairy-tale & Grand Weddings
- Entertainment Events
- Holiday Makers
- Honeymooners

Social Media and Destination Promotion

Consumer-centric marketing has taken off, using the Web 2.0 platform to build brand awareness, strengthen brand associations and gain useful insights into traveler behavior and perceptions of the Tourism product (Buhalis & Law, 2008). According to Moe and Yang (2009), consumer search behavior has been studied only in a purchase setting, since it has always been considered to be an important stage in the decision-making process. Miller (1993) described search behavior as a method by which individuals develop a set of alternatives for consideration for making a choice among these. In addition, Kiel and Layton (1981) observed the consumer decision process and stated that consumers can be categorized as high, low, and selective searchers, depending on the information they encounter during this process. It has been found that the

phenomenon of blogging and other aspects of social media have the potential to bring dramatic changes to many aspects of public relations. , a study found that using a particular SNS was not randomly distributed among internet users (Hargittai, 2008).The use of blogging, for instance promotes self-expression, self-reflection, and reflective dialogue from learners social skills.

Various new platforms for communication and ideas have been developed by the internet. Internet is a very powerful tool which has revolved the business on a world scale. The best advantage of online communication is that it is free of geographical limitation. It facilitates individuals to pass on an e-mail message to others, thus creating exponential growth in the spread of information in the social network (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). The power of word of mouth (WOM) was not only recognized as far back in time as Aristotle, but has been shown to influence consumer behaviour, attitudes, intentions, awareness, expectations and perceptions (Buttle, 1998). Social network consists of connecting people to people, people to organizations, communities forums etc. Online shopping is one of the most frequently implemented options used among various people in the world (Espejel et al., 2008). It helps people purchase goods and services very easily and virtually reduce unnecessary transportation to shopping centers

Social Networking Sites and their Influence on the Marketing of RFC.

A study was conducted on the social networking sites and their use by the general public. It was noticed that gender played a role in the internet uses (Bimber, 2000). Factors such as socioeconomic status have also been shown to predict the types of Internet uses (Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001.).The study projected that the following are some of the prominent social networking sites on which the consumers are active, view and share their experiences.

twitterThat which started as a simple SMS service has the distinction of adding 3000000 new users every single day. Currently 110 million people are members of twitter. More than 600 million searches are made on twitter every day. User generated content is quickly becoming the source for credible travel information. Though the results are somewhat mixed, the research suggests that travelers perceive user generated content(UGC) to be more trustworthy than information provided by more traditional marketers (Cox et al., 2009). The web platform of twitter is only one forth and the rest 75% comprises of more than 50,000 third party applications. More than 300 million people search for some kind of information on twitter.Lam et al. (2010) propose that when a new brand is introduced, this causes consumers of incumbent brands to rethink their connection with those brands and subsequently to decide whether or not to switch. This happens because some customers may perceive the new

brand as having a more attractive identity than the brand they currently use. The most prominent feature of twitter is that all the tweets are donated to the library of congress to have free access which can be used for research. However, a study showed that there was no significant difference in terms of the educational level and innovativeness of the respondents between adopters and non-adopters of SNS twitter (Lin, Chiu, & Lim, 2011).

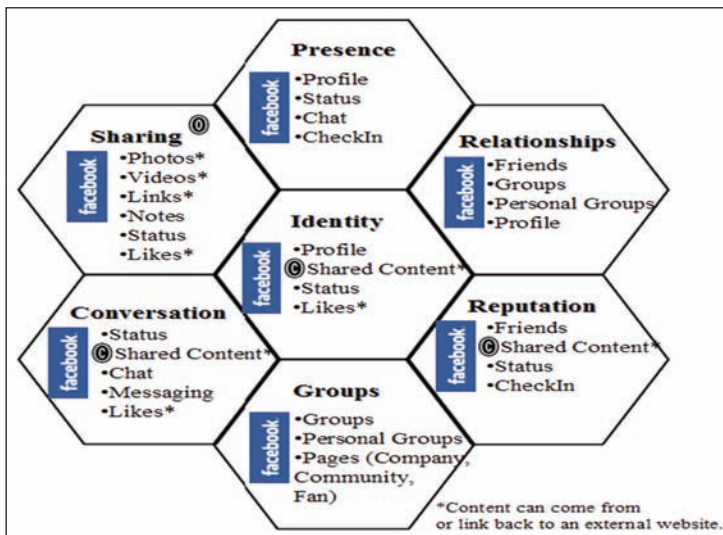
Honeycomb Model for Social networking sites

There have been several theories on social media and their impact on networking, customer care, building relations, information sharing and so on. When closely observed on face book each of the entities have their own speciality, but all these entities share their periphery with other entities, hence the below mentioned model aptly describes the interwoven relations among various networks.

The Honey Comb Model of Social Networking through Face Book

The following model shows how each of the entities are formed and they are networked. The network connection is very strong and the communication can flow upwards, downwards, sideways or in any direction. This is possible because each of the entity shares a wall with other entity Thus there is a chance of any message or information on the social network to go viral and reach lakhs of people in minutes.

Fig. 1: Honeycomb Model for Social networking sites



Source: <http://nform.com/publications/social-software-building-block>

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Blogging Currently there are 133 million blogs listed on blog directory Technocrati. 77% of internet users read blogs and one in five bloggers update their blog every day. Two thirds of the bloggers are males and 60% of the total bloggers are in the age group of 18-44 yrs. More than 10hrs in a week is spent on blogging. 15% of bloggers use corporate blogging and corporate blogging accounts for 14% of total blogs. Blogs are equally useful in monitoring visitor attitudes towards a destination (Carson, 2007). It has been observed that about 50% of the bloggers are married and they are present on more than one blog. On an average bloggers use five different social sites for blogging. Attractive content should be written by using the very language and a significant important (Dwyer, Hiltz, 2009).

YouTube You tube is used to provide virtual tour of a destination to the viewers. Greater care and attention is required in preparing the video for You tube and the electronic channels chosen to distribute the video will have a great impact on attracting visitors to the destination. You tube receives more than 2 billion viewers' per day. You tube is available in 19 countries and 12 languages. Over 70% of the You Tube users in India are in the age group of 20 – 40 yrs. "Me at the zoo" was the first video uploaded on the YouTube in the year April 2005. More than 65,000 videos are being uploaded every day. There are various types of videos right from nature, wild life, animals, and sports. Music videos account for the 20% of the uploads.

Face Book It is the most widely used and popular social networking site use by the people worldwide. It is difficult indeed very dangerous to underestimate the huge changes that the face book revolution has created. Most of the organizations communicate and engage their customers by sharing posts, videos and photos on social networking sites (Park, et al, 2011). The message passed through social networking sites especially Face book are effective as they are shared among their friends and soon they get viral and spread fast, they are also trust worthy as they are shared by their friends.

Some of the facts noticed and expressed by the survey respondents are

The average Face Book user is connected to 60 pages, groups and events.

More than 150 million people engage with Face Book on the external website every month.

The average Face Book user has 130 friends.

More than 25 billion pieces of content (web lnks, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc) are shared each month.

The number of people accessing Face Book through their mobile is more than 100 million.

There are more than 100 million entrepreneurs and developers from 180 countries on the Face Book (Face Book, press office 2011).

Data Analysis

I. An average yearly expenditure by Ramoji Film City on social media marketing is tabulated and the figures are correlated with the corresponding Sales. The following table gives the correlation results.

Null Hypothesis 1H₀ – There is no perceived positive impact of Social media marketing on the sales of Ramoji Film City

Year	Amount spent on social media marketing (in crores)	Sales outcome from amount spent on social media marketing (in crores)
2008	.10	2.2
2009	.12	3.2
2010	1.3	2.8*
2011	.14	4.0
2012	.16	4.8

$r = 0.01$

The correlation results show that there is a very feeble relation. between Amounts spent on social media marketing and the sales.

Hence 1H₀ is rejected. Thus we can say that the relation between amount spent on social media marketing and sales outcome from it are negligible or independent.

II An average Amount spent by Ramoji Film City on social media marketing and corresponding spend on Traditional marketing and their corresponding sales output are studied using chi square test to check if there is any association between the cost effectiveness of social media marketing and traditional marketing

- (1) Null Hypothesis 2H₀ – There is no significant association between cost effectiveness of Social media marketing to traditional marketing.

Chi Square

	sales expenditure (lakhs)	sales output	Total
Social media marketing	60 (56.25)	180(183.75)	240
Traditional marketing	90 (93.75)	310 (306.25)	400
Total	150	490	640

$$240 \times 150/640 = 56.25$$

$$400 \times 150/640 = 93.75$$

$$240 \times 490/640 = 183.75$$

$$400 \times 490/640 = 306.25$$

O_i	E_i	O_i-E_i	(O_i-E_i)²/E_i
60	56.25	3.75	0.25
90	93.75	-3.75	0.15
180	183.75	-3.75	0.076
310	306.25	3.75	0.045

$$X^2 = 0.521$$

$$Df = (r - 1) \times (c - 1) = 2 - 1 \times 2 - 1 = 1$$

@1 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance $X^2 = 3.841$

As $X_{cal} 0.521 < X_{table}$ Null Hypotheses is accepted.

Hence there is no significant difference between the cost effectiveness of social media marketing and traditional marketing.

Findings

1. Among all the Social networking sites Face book is being frequently used by Ramoji Film city, followed by twitter and LinkedIn.
2. Social media is the most happening activity now days. One which started for networking in the university campus by the students, has now been used for networking across the globe and used for sharing information, pictures, and business all the way.
3. RFC started in the year 1996 has made its presence prominent through traditional channels of marketing. The company has not used social networking sites for marketing in the past and even now the organization is not active on social networks.
4. Social media happens to be the quickest and cheapest communication mode for the promotion of tourist destinations. For the same reason though new, it has been put to practice by most of the Destination marketing organizations and travel agencies for their product promotion.
5. There is no relation between Amount spent on social media marketing and volume of tourist visiting a destination. Though the volume of tourist visiting RFC is tremendous at this point there cannot be a demarcation as to how many of them were driven by social media
6. There is no significant difference between the cost effectiveness of social media marketing and traditional marketing in the marketing of

tourist destinations. Though in the natural scenario it is felt that social media marketing is cheaper than traditional media, the perception of the management of RFC is that social media marketing needs investment in terms of training the staff and needs additional manpower to monitor it on a continuous basis.

7. Social media marketing is an effective tool for Marketing, but for RFC in the current scenario traditional marketing has proved to be successful. As the management of RFC is of traditional views and ideas not much thought is given on social media marketing, but in the coming days in order to gear up with the competition RFC has to look at social media as one of the sought after tools for marketing.

Suggestions And Conclusion

In the case of Ramoji Film City the outcome of the study has shown that social media marketing is a lucrative task and needs regular updates, follow ups, hence full time concentration is inevitable and the management is considering this option off late. Though organizations have invested huge sums on social media marketing, the gain is only meagre, reason being imperfect application of the channel. Though social network is a vast structure and mammoth sized in operations the secret lies in the right utility of it. Many a Destination marketing organizations have used social media marketing, some have partially gained and many have benefitted considerably. It is seen that there is no association in the cost effectiveness of social media marketing and traditional marketing in the sales of Ramoji Film City, hence there is no special preference felt to go for social media marketing

Social media marketing is a novel concept of marketing as compared to traditional media. Currently there are more than 2000 social networking sites; each network has its own specialization. The market is very competitive for Destination marketing organizations and these marketing organizations would like to leave no chance in highlighting and promoting their Destination. Ramoji film city aimed at Film studio has gained high popularity and has attracted many Visitors, Observing the hype created in the market for RFC , the management added several features related to film making and entertainment, this again was a great hit among the visitors, thus due to its potential RFC has now become the most sought after destination among the tourist. Through internet the world has become a small space and with social media every corner of the world is connected by each second of the day, Having reached International stature RFC felt the need to go on social networking sites. Of all the Social Networking sites it is noticed that RFC has a better presence on Face book. Though rfc's presence on social networking sites is weak, in the coming days a need is felt to develop a strong presence

on the social networking sites. RFC has become one of the best film studios in the world only after HOLLYWOOD, in order to retain the tourist flow and grow stronger as a best tourist destination in the world, it is suggested that RFC has to maintain strong social networking and be active on them.

Hence at this stage it can be concluded that Social media marketing does not have a visible positive impact on the promotion of Ramoji film city. But future trends may prove social media marketing as an effective tool for marketing

Scope for further studies

In the study only the management and the staff of RFC were surveyed, but the tourist also can be studied to gather better information on their opinion and response about social media marketing.

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