

Social Media – the easiest way to communicate and build Brand Loyalty through Advertising

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Abstract

Social Media is the biggest change since the industrial revolution. Social Media fulfils the fundamental human need – to communicate. It is not just a marketing tool but is an effective way of running a business by spreading an organisation's branded content to a potentially vast online audience. It has created a unique opportunity for businesses to connect and build brand loyalty with their customers. A consumer promotes the particular brand or product to their peers after being satisfied by its loyalty through the advertisements of the brand. In the present scenario, advertisements on Twitter, You Tube, blogs, and Facebook grab the consumers' attention keeping at par with the traditional mediums like newspapers and television. Social media advertising has become a staple of the 'media mix' as marketers tell their stories through attention-grabbing campaigns. Brands from all sectors like Sony, Red Bull, Dove, Tresemme, Cadbury, Revlon and Cinthol use multiple social media platforms to drive home their message. The present study aims to highlight the building up of brand loyalty in social media through the case studies of advertising campaigns of few consumer products.

Keywords: communicate, marketing, brand, brand loyalty, advertisement campaign

1. Introduction

The media today has well and truly spread its wings. From being limited to the whims of a few individuals, it has come a long way to become a means of social participation. While the fourth estate has been in order for a long while, it seems to have realized its true potential and purpose in the new millennium only in the true spirit of democracy as envisaged by Abraham Lincoln's of being an institution 'of the people, by the people and for the people'. This has been facilitated by the advent of the social media. With its capability to overcome the geographical barriers and the owing to the near-absence of gatekeepers, the social media seeks to provide a platform of information - sharing to all the participating individuals. This is significant because information and social awareness have emerged as important factors of human empowerment.

Social media – a suite of online services that facilitates two-way communication and content sharing has become a productive component of overall marketing strategy. These services enhance company's online visibility, strengthen relationships with clients and expand word-of-mouth advertising. Customers have discovered a whole new way to find out about products and services. Product review sites, ratings, discussion groups, facebook petitions, blogs, mobile price comparison applications, You Tube demonstrations are all social media tools. Customers themselves are controlling the flow of marketing information as they use social media to find products, ratings and reviews.

Social media is not just a marketing tool but a new way of running a business. Given its rapid rise in popularity and its hundreds of millions of worldwide users, social media marketing sounds quite tempting. Social media allows marketers to listen to customers more easily and cost-effectively. Social Media fulfils the fundamental human need – to communicate as it relies on a sharing culture, which means sharing information and being helpful. This, in turn nurtures

relationships, which is the essence of good marketing. The lure of social media advertising is massive as social networks offer an interesting proposition. And potentially, social media gives brands offer a uniquely captive audience for their content. When a customer feels loyal to a particular brand, they tend to stay lifelong supporters and champions of the brand. They even promote the product to their peers and continue to look forward to and purchase newer products of the brand.

Since its evolution and subsequent adoption, social media has changed the way businesses interact with their customers. This new dynamic has created a unique opportunity for businesses to connect and build brand loyalty with their customers. Because of its simplicity combined with immediacy, social media is an ideal way to reach out to or talk about a particular brand, product or service. Today, customers are talking about products on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. Businesses need to continuously monitor how their customers are engaging with their brand and based on these reactions, adapt their messaging across social media.

2. Research Objective

The present study aims to highlight that social media helps to communicate. We are social animals and like to communicate with each other. Social media facilitates this by helping us to communicate more easily, to more people, whenever we want.

Advertising is a critical component of the marketing mix of any brand. Thus, an understanding of effective advertising appeals for particular product or service is important to national and international brand promotions. In advertising, brand recall always matters. It is the brand recall at the point of purchase that guides the success or failure of the brand. The study tries to show the building up of brand loyalty in social media through the case studies of advertising campaigns of few consumer products.

3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

3.1. Advertising as a tool of Communication

Advertising is as old as man and has evolved since the industrial revolution as a tool of marketing communication. Innumerable products are being launched almost every day and companies are engaged in cut-throat competition to highlight their products. Here, enters the glamorous field of advertising. The more innovative the advertising, the better is the market. Advertising is a medium which helps to reach more people to communicate brand effectiveness. It is the most visible marketing tool which seeks to transmit an effective message from the marketer to a group of individuals. Though marketers use advertising, basically it is a communication process. Here, the advertiser is the source or sender, who transmits the message which passes through an appropriate medium like press, radio, television, hoardings and billboards and the internet. The message is decoded meaningfully and is received by the target audience for whom the product or service is meant. The response to the message is known by receiving the feedback from the recipient of the communication process. In that sense, advertising is not ordinary communication but marketing communication.

Figure 1. shows that the sender is the source of the message. It puts the message in symbolic form say an advertising copy. This is 'encoding'. The encoded message is carried by the media like television, press and internet. The message is received by the receiver who shows a particular response. This is 'decoding'. The decoded message is communicated back to the sender in the form of feedback. The message must accomplish three tasks in order to be effective:

- a) It must gain the attention of the receiver.
- b) It must be understood.
- c) It must stimulate the needs of the receiver and suggest appropriate method to satisfy these needs.

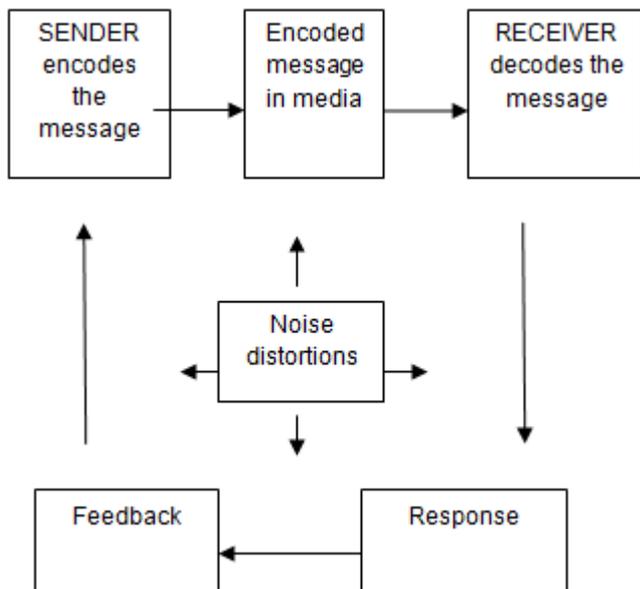


Figure 1. Communication Process

In this process, noise may distort the effectiveness of communication. Noise includes poor message planning or careless feedback of response.

Advertising aims at drawing attention to a product or service. It seeks to create awareness about the existence of the advertised product or service. It passes on information about the product or service in such a way that interest is created in the mind of the prospective consumer about the product or service. We are exposed to hundreds of advertisements everyday and even if someone claims that they do not have any effect on them, it is not true. Either consciously or subconsciously, advertisements have a tremendous effect on our lifestyle.

3.2. Brand Image, Brand Personality and Brand Equity

Brand is an intangible, legally protectable, valuable asset. It is how a company or product is perceived by customers or audience. Brand is the image and an inherent value that customer puts on a product or service. A brand is a promise to the customer. Branding is the process of creating a unique identity for a product and this identity creates a familiarity with a known product, which makes the consumers feel to buy it again. This is the reason behind the phenomenal success of some brands like Sony, Coca Cola, Tata etc. Branding creates memorability and establishes preferences, habits and loyalties. It thus encourages a relationship between a brand and its users. The major ingredient of branding is trust. A brand promises that the product will deliver the same satisfactory performance as it has in the past. Branding is particularly important for parity products, those for which there are few, if any major differences in features. For instance, the image that comes in our mind when one thinks of ‘Nirma Shudh Namak’ and ‘Tata Salt’. What creates the difference between one type of salt from another – is advertising. Advertising can establish a personality of the product and personality is important for positioning as well as building a brand image. Today, companies are heavily using advertising to build up equity in the brands. Companies have realised that good advertising doesn’t simply make sale of a product or service but also helps make a brand image in the minds of the consumer.

Brand awareness is the consumer's ability to recognize or recall the brand within the given product category to make the purchase decision. This also means that the consumer can propose, recommend, choose or use the brand. Objectives for most advertising are centred around creating and maintaining preferences. The first step towards making a consumer exercise his or her preference towards a brand is generating brand awareness. The creative ad copy, ad size and ad frequency contribute a lot in brand awareness and recognition. This is clear when brands like Lux, Hero Honda (now Hero Motocorp), McDonald's, Dove, Cadbury have achieved great brand awareness and recognition through continuous and creative advertising.

Brand Image

Professor Sid Levy, North Western University, in his article in Harvard Business Review, 1995, defined brand image as "the set of ideas, feelings and attitude that consumers have about the brand." Thus, it is an image in customer's mind that reflects what they think and feel about a product and how they value it. A brand has both physical and psychological dimensions. Physical dimensions are attributes, ingredients, design of the product, packaging, logo, shape, colour and the art of the product whereas psychological aspect includes the beliefs, values, emotions and personalities that people ascribe to the product. Tools such as distinctive names, slogans, and graphics are used to transform products and lock them into the memory of the consumers.

Research indicates that when a consumer buys or uses a particular brand, he or she expresses his or her own self through the use of the brand. This information about the consumer helps marketers to differentiate a brand in a product category. Marketers visualize a brand in human terms, i.e. the brand is viewed on the dimensions of human personality. For example, the personality profile of Maggi Noodles is '*Easy to cook and easy to eat*' and of Coca Cola is '*Thanda Matlab Coca Cola*'.

According to David Aaker, brands have equity because they generate awareness, they have loyal customers, a reputation for quality, own patents and have access to distribution network and associations. The study of brand equity has gained popularity since 1980s as marketers and researchers got convinced that brands are the most valuable assets of a firm. The factors associated with the brand indicate that main objective of an advertisement is to increase brand equity by increasing awareness, familiarity, favourable meanings and associations with the brand. Thus, the brand is what the consumer thinks, feels, and visualizes when he or she sees the brand name or symbol.

Brand Loyalty

We buy products to satisfy some physical and material needs. But, once the most basic and primitive needs are met – hunger, thirst, shelter, safety – we look to products for some other rewards as well. The average middle- income group family in urban India probably manages with rice bought from ration shop or unbranded rice from the market chosen principally on the basis of price, for most of the family meals. But, when guests are invited, the hostess would stretch her budget to buy the far more expensive basmati rice to earn the esteem of her guests. The concept of Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' is relevant to us in this context. These needs in order of importance are: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and finally self- actualization.

When a teenager buys a pair of jeans, he is not only buying denim jeans but a label which he will display to others and that label is 'Levis'. He is ready to pay and thus pays thrice as much for that brand value than for an identical pair of jeans which has an obscure label or none at all.

Jakoby & Chestnut (1978) implied that one of the underlying principles of brand loyalty is customer's consistency of choice. According to them, if a positive attitude indicates commitment and loyalty, then positive beliefs must also be stable over time, and if not due to behavioral habits, they turn to be split loyal. It is found in an earlier research (*Castlebury et al, 1994*), that when the average repeat level of attitudinal responses is 50%, it is taken that attitude leads to brand loyalty.

3.3. Social Media – the biggest change since the industrial revolution

The emergence of easily accessible communication tools has also changed the very concept of social communication. Today, individuals are empowered with the ability to share their message with a world-wide audience, thanks to the social media. What strikes out a distinct feature of the social media is its dynamic and flexible nature which clearly distinguishes it from the other media forms.

Social media is a tool of online marketing and is a way of running a business by spreading an organisation's branded content to a potentially vast online audience. Today, consumers are talking about products on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. Businesses need to continuously monitor how their customers are engaging with their brand and based on these reactions, marketers adapt their messaging across all media.

Social Media Marketing

Social media fulfils a fundamental human need – to communicate more easily to more people whenever we want and helps organisations to communicate with customers. That is why social networks like Facebook, Twitter are so powerful. Social media outlets offer instant feedback for consumers to express their satisfaction or displeasure with a particular brand's product or service. It gives consumers much greater influence over brand decisions, something that was only possible in the past through small customer panels. Consumer product companies are facing a brand new order – an unprecedented environment of constant change. To succeed, they see social media as a powerful opportunity to embed entirely new marketing approaches that allow them to conduct conversations with consumers to improve their products.

The term Social media marketing generally refers to using the online services for relationship building. Social media services or channels make innovative use of new online technologies, familiar communication and marketing goals. The different types of social media channels are discussed below:

Social Networking services: Originally developed to facilitate the exchange of personal information (messages, photos, audios, videos) to groups of friends and family, these full-featured services offer multiple functions. Companies use popular social networking sites to maintain an ongoing public dialogue with colleagues and customers. Twitter is the hugely popular micro-blogging network. It is a river of short messages usually with links to interesting content on a blog, a website or You tube.

Social media sharing services: These media channels facilitate posting and commenting on videos, photos and podcasts (audio). Videos can be posted on You Tube and photos via Flickr. Each of these social platforms attracts its own audience.

Blogs: Websites which are designed to easily update or change content and allow readers to post their own opinions or reactions. Blogging is an ongoing process and marketers can post the necessary changes of their marketing plans to keep the consumers updated.

According to media reports, Indian organizations use social media much more than the global average and their counterparts in emerging economies. 95.7% of the surveyed social media-savvy organizations in India use the medium to build communities and advocate usage while 76.1% use social media as a platform to highlight brand news. Around 16% of organizations, which use social media for both the above reasons, also use it for customer service, lead generation, and research indicating high social maturity and moving toward getting business meanings out of engagements. (*Source: India Trends Study 2013*).

Social media marketing carries many benefits and one of the most important is that the marketers don't have to front any cash for most services. Social media cast a wide net to capture more potential visitors. The classic conversion funnel in Figure 1.3 shows the value of bringing more traffic to the top of the funnel. If more people arrive at the top of the funnel, theoretically more will progress through the steps of prospect and qualified lead to become a customer. Only 2 to 4 percent of funnel entries yield desired results.

How Social Media works

Social media like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, You Tube help to spread or share useful information with potentially vast online audience. By posting articles and comments on blogs, photographs on to Flickr and videos on to You Tube, having a page on Facebook, allow other people to see the messages and if they like them, they share them with their friends. To summarize, it is not surprising that social media has grown so quickly because social media taps into something deep inside us all – the need to communicate, talk, share and be a part of the community. This is fundamental to us as social animals, and satisfies a deep need that is profoundly embedded into our genetic structure. The old push marketing model (of interrupting audiences and pushing ads to them) with 'sell, sell, sell' is being replaced by 'listen, listen, listen' to the conversations and 'share, share, share'.

3.4. Building Brand Loyalty through Social Media

Loyalty evokes a strong sense of emotion in human beings and is one of the pillars that support successful relationships. Business relationships between brand and customers are no different. When a customer feels loyal to a particular brand, they tend to stay lifelong with the brand. The customers then promote the brand to their friends and relatives and continue to look forward to and purchase newer products or services of the brand. Since its evolution and subsequent adoption, social media has completely changed the business scenario and introduced interaction with the customers. This new dynamic change has created a unique opportunity for businesses to connect and build brand loyalty with their customers through means of advertising and advertising campaigns. Social media site brings a revolution in the overall sale and traffic. And the most important fact is that, the key to every site's success is through good marketing and advertising. Even if a brand has really good and considerable content on their site, they still need to promote it to avoid getting missing at the back of the competition. Nowadays, companies use social media tool to launch a product and also to interact with its customers. In fact, there are many brands that have used social media to promote their brand to improve and some of those brands have achieved remarkable success.

4. Case study of product campaign using social media

While social is an evolving medium, the social media space in India is seeing an increase in integrated campaigns that are weaving in relevant social media platforms, that go beyond leveraging only Facebook and Twitter.

4.1. Re-launch of Cadbury Silk

“How far can you go for the biggest ever cube of Silk?” - asks Cadbury Silk, the recently renovated and much smoother, softer and silkier avatar than the earlier one. Facebook posts of ‘*Bid for Silk*’ claims what they would sacrifice or how far would they go to catch a taste of the new Silk. The wittiest person could take those cubes home! The bidding activity carried out over the weekend saw ‘*Bid for Silk*’ trend on Twitter for most of the weekend.

Also, a simple Facebook application was designed for the auction. One had to ‘like’ the page to access the application and bid to win gift hampers from Cadbury Silk. Fans could post their entries as comments in the application. The application displays the hourly winner at the Facebook page. The page administrators have also been encouraging participation through the comments. The auction was carried out simultaneously on Twitter, with the similar ‘*Bid for Silk*’. The exciting incentives led this trend throughout the weekend. Consumers who prefer Cadbury responded to the application thus showing an interest in the brand.

With the success of Facebook and twitter marketing, the brand had then introduced the all-new softer, smoother and silkier Cadbury Dairy Milk Silk through a Television commercial. This teaser campaign began with a cover page announcing the upcoming demise of Silk. Fans were asked to share their cherished memories with Silk and bid farewell to their favourite chocolate along with ‘*bye bye silk*’. The page administrator then continued sharing fan messages on the Facebook wall – some alarmed, some sad, some angry and some appealing Silk to come back. Some of the appeals were also in video form. Finally, on the 14th of February, the new avatar of Silk was unveiled on the cover photo, followed by the television commercial. The new teaser was viewed by many online consumers on You Tube. Brands are walking the extra mile to include more of their online communities, and pumping in exciting campaigns to keep their consumers engaged.

4.2. Cadbury Celebrations Raksha bandhan campaign

Cadbury Celebrations, a potpourri of Cadbury chocolates gifted a perfect advertising campaign on special occasion – Raksha Bandhan. The YouTube video advertisement of the chocolate brand has made a unique proposition to brothers. It has asked brothers to share messages for their sisters on the brand’s social media platforms. The campaign is rightly named ‘*Songs for Sisters*’ that perfectly blended with the occasion. Apart from YouTube ads, the most popular chocolate brand has leveraged both Facebook and Twitter to spread the word. The Facebook wall has actively invited its fans and users to send in their messages.

A simple Facebook application serves as a one-stop destination to see the videos that have been created and also to share messages for sisters. ‘*Songs for Sisters*’ has created a new and beautiful benchmark for the online audience. Marketers are well acquainted with their target consumers and they chose the perfect occasion to market their product through social media using various applications and contests.

4.3. Launching Dove’s new product

Dove is committed to a world where beauty is a source of confidence and the beauty brand has launched a new product that takes cares of split ends by working on the deepest level of hair. The ‘Dove Split End Rescue Shampoo’ that promises to reduce split-ends with its fiber actives, is being promoted through a variety of exciting campaigns on social

media. Dove has partnered with Indi blogger, an Indian bloggers community to involve bloggers and start conversations about the new product, through a blogging contest entitled '*Beautiful Ends to your Beautiful Braids*'! The contest invites bloggers to share a story about the beautiful braids they had once upon a time and how they got beautiful ends to their braids once again. The contest only demands for creativity and not the actual use of the shampoo. Bloggers have also been invited to a Facebook application '*Never split ever*' where one can send friendship postcards to her friends on Facebook. The idea is to convey forever friendship along with a chance to win exciting vouchers worth Rs. 1000 or hair styling kits.

Dove has been known for its campaigns around real women and real beauty, even before the advent of social media. As an extension to this approach, the brand has had a bevy of blogging contests indulging in conversations about a new product launch. For its new hair fall rescue treatment, Dove had created the '*Secret Diaries*' where real women shared their experiences with the product. Thus, Dove used the media platform tactfully to lure the existing and potential consumers to participate in the blogging contest.

5.4. KFC India Launches '*Curry Crunch*' with '*Curry Cature*' On Facebook

The social media friendly food brand has launched a new 'curry crunch' flavour with a special Indian twist – the Indian spices that create the distinctive Indian curry using an innovative campaign '*Curry Cature*' on facebook. The '*Curry cature*' campaign has an Indian touch in a funny way. The '*Curry Cature*' application gives an option to create our own caricature using the KFC application. The application asks the audience their chosen character and gender and asks to choose the photographs, which can be either from the webcam, a Facebook photo or even a photo from your computer. Once the photo is selected, it lets the user add all the bells and whistles – a moustache, glasses, turban, etc. to the photo. After adding the necessary details, the user can submit the photo to their gallery and share the photo.

KFC knows that the youth of today love to experiment with their looks, thus KFC could reach their target audience with the campaign. Also, the kinds of awards are exactly what the youth can be brought to participate in. Within the campaign too, they have well understood the Indian culture and have made sure to map the geographical preferences. KFC has always employed social media creatively be it for a fresh new flavour or for fan engagement.

5. Data Collection and interpretation

A structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection for the research purpose to see how audience accept social media and whether the advertising campaigns on various social media motivate them to build loyalty towards their branded product or service. The survey results out of the respondents surveyed, most of the audience spends more than 40 hours on social media per week and has personal profile on almost all the social networking sites. Figure 1.4. shows that out of 100 respondents surveyed, majority of the respondents watch the advertisements on various social media and in turn share information and gives feedback about a branded product to their peers.

In Table 1, it is clearly visible that customers buy products or services based on the advertisements on social media platform. This purchasing power of the audience is motivated by the brand loyalty. If a woman has a fetish for *Dove* Shampoo, repeated advertisements and advertisement campaign will lure her to visit the fan page of *Dove* on facebook and like the page and moreover the customer will take part in the blogging contest.

Even, there are few respondents who haven't bought any product or service yet but is keen to purchase after being informed by existing customers and collecting feedbacks from friends. Thus, word of mouth has a vital role in purchasing decision of a potential customer. Here, the fundamental need – to communicate is fulfilled by social media.

Out of 100 respondents surveyed, 65% is of the view that social media advertisements are more effective than other online advertisements as depicted in Table 2. Many online consumers avoid the pop-up advertisements while opening a website but they are an avid viewer of the You Tube advertisement campaigns and facebook promotional campaigns. The *KFC 'curry crunch'* campaign, as the audience feels is more effective as it reaches to the potential target audience (youth) through the *caricature* application on facebook.

6. Conclusion and Future Direction of Research

Social media provides an ever – growing opportunity to engage consumers in the online services provided by the companies. From launching a new product or service till engaging the consumers with their existing brand preferences, companies exploit the social medium platform with eye-catching advertising campaigns and promotional activities. We have come across from the present study how brands involve consumers into the blogging contests luring them with exciting gifts, liking a facebook page and participating in the facebook applications. The creative videos on You Tube are being viewed a number of times by a vast online audience. Indeed, we live in a digitalised society, where social media helps us to communicate with our friends and give feedback about a product or service. Marketers set their priorities and goals, they don't cover all social media outlets together. They pick up the more important ones initially and start engaging consumers. Marketers who understand and influence customer engagement better than their competitors are more likely to develop stronger brands and more loyal customers.

There is a growing need to examine, analyze and formulate definite approaches to the prospective use of the social media in the best interests of mankind in the upcoming days. Thus, there lies a growing need to experiment in this area. Today is a situation where the media manipulates the human mind to a point where the latter has got no control over the former, despite being the former's creator. Future research should examine more carefully the various aspects of social media and look forward to the ethics.

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8. Figures and Tables

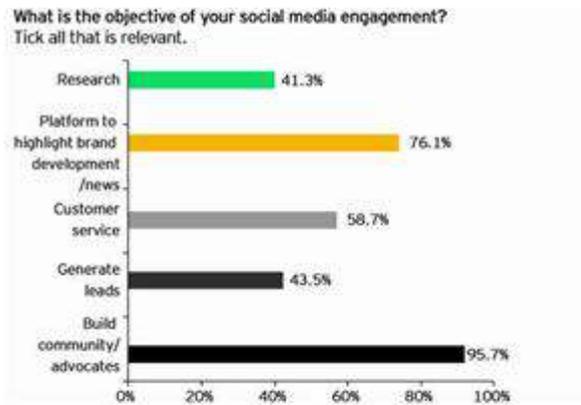


Figure 1.2. Graphical representation of the objective of using social media

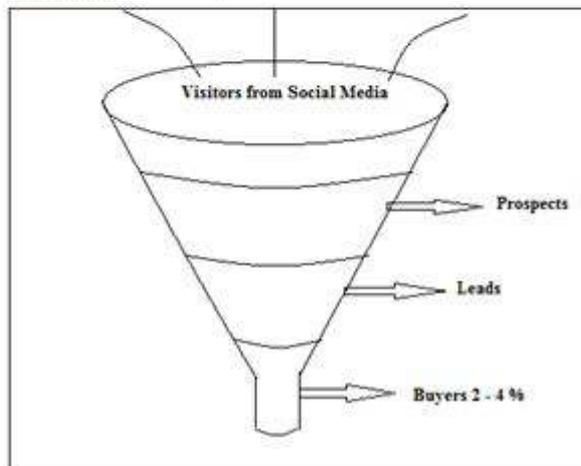


Figure 1.3. The classic conversion funnel

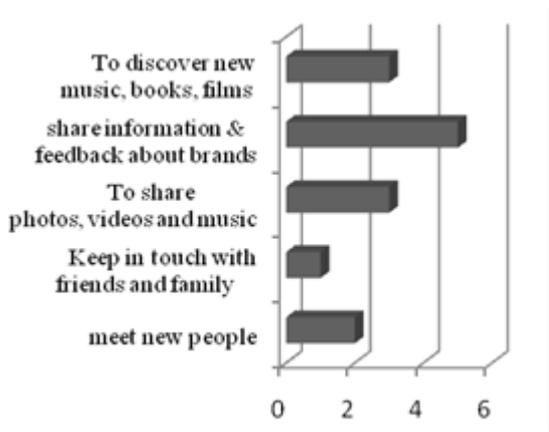


Figure 1.4. Graphical representation showing the uses of social media

Table 1. Purchasing power of product or service based on advertisements on a social media

	Response of Respondents	Total number of Respondents
I will never buy	5	100
I might buy	10	100
No, I haven't bought	12	100
Yes, I bought	49	100
I will buy again	24	100

Table 2. Effectiveness of advertisements on Social Media

	Response of Respondents	Total number of Respondents
Much less effective	0	100
Less effective	5	100
As effective	20	100
More effective	65	100
Much more effective	10	100