



A study on Impact of Consumer Generated Media on Consumer Behaviour: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract:

The research paper examines how the Consumer Generated Media impacts Consumer Behaviour. The increasing focus on CGM has shifted the way a company interact with its target customers. The consumers are also responding positively towards CGM, as it provided opportunity for them to interact with each other, able to access the information, view the comments, reviews and rates that can help them for purchase decision making. As a result, CGM become a significant area of creating & maintaining a competitive advantage.

Out & out CGM is becoming a weapon in the marketing sector, which is shaping the behaviour of a consumer on the social media networks. In assessing the impact of CGM on consumer behaviour, an exploration of existing literature helped in identifying the influence of CGM on consumer behaviour. This study may help the marketers to become cost effective & maximize their advertising efforts to generate purchase intention.

Key words: Consumer Generated Media, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Networks, Competitive advantage.

Introduction:

Growing network of communication, internet savvy consumers and Consumer Generated Media creating new hopes to marketers in the current competitive scenario. Most of the multinational companies focused on shaping and reshaping the behaviour of their target customers using CGM.

CGM has become an effective platform for the satisfied customers' to share their satisfaction towards a product by praising those products with likes, shares, reviews, recommendations and comments on social networks. Marketers are making this social space more transparent by sharing reviews, comments, likes, tweets and pins of their satisfied customers to create trust towards their brands and increase conversion rate. Researches have revealed that many people rely on this information, reviews, recommendations & likes from social network platforms for their future purchases.

CGM is a fast spreading & inexpensive platform that provides brands to reach millions of active social media users instantly. Marketers should ensure that the target audience had seen your products, liked them and shared them on social networks, which helps to influence consumer behaviour.

Literature Review:

Black Shaw (2005) defined CGM as encompassing media impressions created by consumers with their personal relevant experience and shared over social networks for easy access by other prospect consumers.

Prescott (2006) opined that CGM provides great opportunities for market research, customer relationship marketing and social media advertising, as CGM-related sites are the fastest growing websites on the social networks.

IProspect (2007) said that every one out of three Internet users in US takes advantage of social network sites featuring CGM to research about products and make decisions to buy or not the product.

Klaassen (2007) revealed that marketers began to recognize the frequency with which people report their affinities for brands on CGM sites such as social networks, web blogs and personal web pages—and they understand that consumer reviews and trusted recommendations are increasingly important marketing factors.

Boyd & Ellison (2008) defined Social networks as the platforms that allow individuals to create a profile and articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection. Users can view and traverse their connections

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defined User-generated content in CGM as “a group of all approaches through which people make use of Social Media.”

Jin Li, (2011) in his study examined how semantic style, structure of the organization and other features of online product/good reviews will affect the perceived helpfulness of reviews and projected how persuasion has accomplished in the virtual community.

Golden (2011) Social networking sites like YouTube, Facebook & Twitter are the sophisticated weapons that facilitate virtual relationships (Golden, 2011). It provides scope of users to post their experiences in the form of reviews and attracts the customers, as it is a very affordable and user-friendly form of marketing (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010).

Roche et al, (2017) in their study revealed that changing technology is one of the key factor, which is changing consumer behaviour, and that changing behaviour, be reflected by brands to generate & maximize their sales along with satisfying their customers.

Consumer Generated Media:

A visual or textual content created by the end users or consumers refers to Consumer Generated Media. Consumer Generated Media generated on social media networks through online by internet users develops a message/content based on their personal experience with a product/service but not based on WOM or any other mode.

In marketing, consumer-generated media is a content created by someone who are not official representatives of your business. It could be a video, audio, review etc posted on a social media platform by an internet user. If it involves your brand, and none of your executives/employees created it, it is user-generated content.

The need of CGM is growing day by day in corporate sector as it is generating trust, enhancing conversations among the consumers, enabling the consumers to access the information about a product/service and also able to provide social proof, which are going to act as a good persuasive factors in attracting the customers towards a particular product or service.

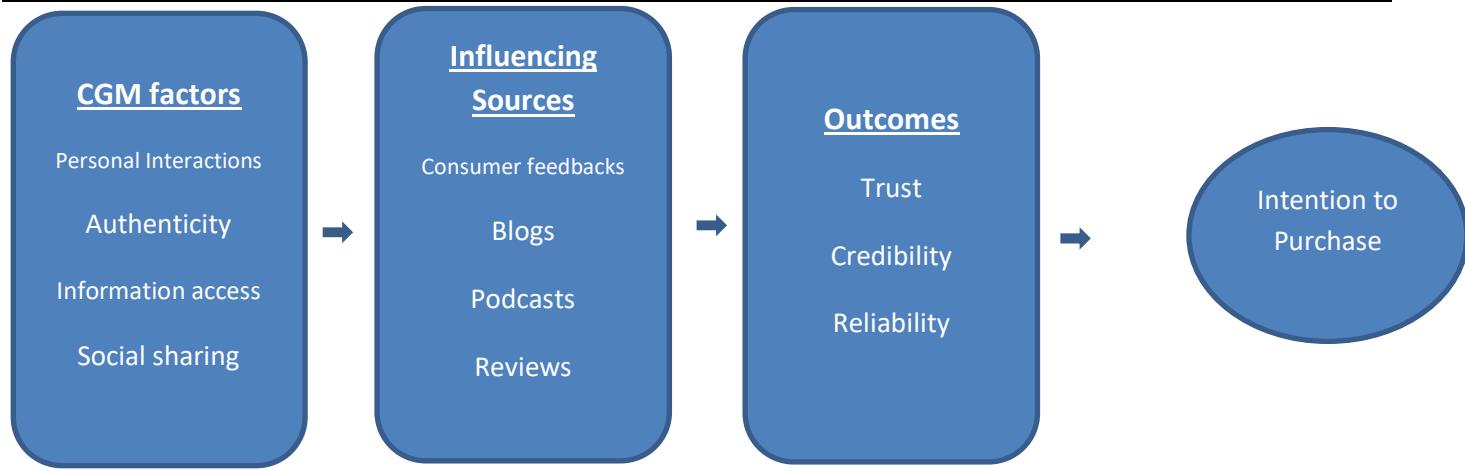
Consumers trust the recommendations done by the people they know rather than the paid forms of advertisements. CGM provides the viewers the real time experienced information, which is more genuine, rather than paid processed information. Seeing content from actual end users increases company's credibility and brings company brand's promises into perspective-social proof. Businesses that use customer generated content on their marketing channels can develop higher conversions, live chats, click-through rates to product pages, etc.

Impact on Consumer Behaviour:

The advent raise in internet adopters via mobile devices transformed the customers view from fictional advertising to non-fictional advertising. With the entry of social media networks, the fictional stories of marketers became saturated & unrealistic, made the consumers to through an eye towards Consumer Generated Media to share their personal opinions about a product/service usage. Moreover, this personal opinions, reviews, experiences, podcasts, ratings, consumer feedbacks, blogs had become powerful weapons in influencing & shaping the behaviours of various prospect customers.

Social Networking Sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. had developed a novel approach in launching the brand related content via end users & encouraging exchanges among themselves in their personal & community groups with common interests.

Thus, CGM had become the consumer's voice, providing them a platform to share & exchange the information across cultures, geographical boundaries & time zones.



Marketer's view towards CGM:

Marketer has started viewing CGM as a good opportunity in achieving the competitive advantage in the market. Using content created by end users makes the potential customers feel more authentic, reliable & credible.

To track on to a CGM strategy, a company will launch some sort of campaign encouraging consumers to send their experiences as content about their brands. It can be an Instagram post, impressive picture in tweet, video uploaded in YouTube, blog post, podcast or any other form of content used for brands marketing efforts. The brand can then take the content, which is generated through the campaign and uses that consumer-generated content in their marketing efforts & exposure.

Additionally, CGM is incredibly low cost since it will not cost the brand anything to produce the content, which makes their marketing cost to be more cost-effective.

Future of CGM:

Researcher opines that consumer generated content in CGM is going to be more effective in engaging, leveraging & influencing the prospect customers than the company's own branded content. By allowing customers to rate and review your products, you are letting them become third party endorsements for your brand.

Marketers may transform their campaign objectives from persuading likes on a social network to launching consumers on their own websites. The recognition of having their content designed on a brands website makes the customers delight.

CGM is not a short-lived marketing craze but it is a global phenomenon with intense impacts on how consumers obtain and share information about travel-related products and services. CGM is not just a market approach, but also a way to engage consumers

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