

# Facebook as Means of Advertising: Consumers' Perspective in Sukkur, Pakistan.

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## Introduction

Making a good marketing campaign is the core responsibility for every company, but it becomes too difficult to have effective marketing campaigns for their products and services. The reason is, in this changing world ways to market through promotional channels are being getting near to infinite, and the other big reason is that people become too busy in their work, they don't have much time to spend on conventional channels (like: Television, Newspapers, magazines, Journals, Billboards etc.). Now they are more engaged with Internet, because of this change companies are shifting their marketing strategies from traditional channels to Internet. There are many ways through which companies can advertise their products and services through internet (like: e-mails, blogs, online forums, Google, individual websites, social networking websites etc.), of them social networking websites are more popular among people. So advertisement expenditure through these websites is increasing.

Among all social networking websites, Facebook is more popular and its popularity is increasing day by day, so companies prefer to advertise their products and services through Facebook ads.

Facebook is privately owned by Facebook Incorporation, was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow computer science students Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. Since September 2006, anyone over the age of 13 with a valid e-mail address can become a Facebook user. Every day 175million people logon Facebook. In fact, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg recently told Bloomberg business Week that the social network's advertisers have increased spending by "at least 10-fold" over the past year as Facebook crossed the 500 million member mark. Facebook is becoming popular on mobile devices. In 60 countries, about 200 mobile operators are offering this service to their users. Currently there are 200 million people using Facebook on mobile phone.([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))

The main purpose of this study is to conduct conclusive research to get insights about effectiveness of advertising of products through Facebook. The final analysis will assist us to know how that advertising through Facebook is affecting people.

## **Literature review**

Though researchers have done some work on Facebook use and on some other activities but on Facebook advertisements there are few researchers who have done researches on Facebook's use as a marketing tool. Caroline Fox (2010) finds that 42% users glance at adverts in Facebook. However he says 21% of users saw the advertisements and just half of that recall the types of products being advertised on Facebook. His findings are the starting point for marketers to use Facebook for marketing purpose. Xia (2009) adds that Facebook Groups are to a marketing tool, comparable to more traditional marketing tools (pamphlets, articles, web pages, newsletters etc), and not as marketing itself. This development of new media or marketing tool needs to be used by marketers.

Denyes (2010) found that businesses manage their Fan pages and these fan pages are used by consumers to receive product information and such information is shared within family and friends circle by consumers. These fan pages become very important for the small, medium and large businesses equally because they generate business leads, therefore every business must have the strategy for it (Lawler, 2009). This is further supported by Jones (2009) that social networking and advertising should be integral part of marketing strategy.

Technology and globalization are increasing the importance of social networking for individuals and businesses. Because businesses follow their customer and customers are available on Facebook. Therefore the electronic version of social networking is to be accepted by companies (Jones, 2009). Coon (2010) had a comprehensive study in this regard. He maintains that Company's can become "friends" with customers. They can show off their personality and connect with real people who use their products. Most importantly, they can listen and react in real time. There are many benefits to starting a social media marketing plan and many businesses have already seen great results. There is no telling what the future will hold for business, but social media will only continue to grow.

. "While most people don't mind ads, we found that their perception of specific ad categories tends to vary widely, between those they find least offensive (food and beverages) to the most offensive (dating ads)" (Morrison, 2010).

(Coon, 2010) Suggested that companies should look at what others are doing and what they have accomplished with ease with social media. Company's can become "friends" with customers. They can show off their personality and connect with real people who use their products. Most importantly, they can listen and react in real time. There are many benefits to starting a social media marketing plan and many businesses have already seen great results. There is no telling what the future will hold for business, but social media will only continue to grow.

Social networks such as Facebook are only in use to spread word-of mouth and brand a product or organization as opposed to directly influence consumer behavior. It seems main organizations use social networks to communicate the message concerning the event/offers

available for their organization as opposed to use it to directly influence consumer behavior. (Cawley, 2009).

### **Methodology**

For this study the survey research is used through self administered questionnaire is used. The questionnaire was developed and distributed among the participants. The sample size was 153 comprising of students, bankers and other professionals from Sukkur city. Sukkur is surrounded by the rural community, where traditional means of advertising are used by marketers. This study will help us know the popularity of Facebook and whether marketers can use it for advertising or not. SPSS was used for data analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

The sample consisted of 86.9% Males and 13.1% Females. The average age of the respondents was 24 yrs. Majority of the respondents log on to their Facebook account at least once a day even twice a day, there are few people who use to log on once on a month. Most of the respondents use their Facebook account to update their status, finding the friends, to chat with people or group discussions, get the updates, news, feeds etc., messages, and share information e.g. links, photos etc.

Majority of the respondents responded neutrally that they use Facebook for searching information on events and fan pages, finding the information about new products and for product specifications and recommendations. But majority of the respondents do not use Facebook to play games, or managing the company's page.

We asked about which product categories they observe in Facebook ads, majority of the respondents had observed fashion designing ads, Movies or TV Shows ads, and Education Program or Job Site ads. They responded neutrally about observing the Food and Beverages ads. And majority of them do not observe the Dating Site ads. That shows that most of the people watch the Facebook ads, and are familiar about the ads that are published in Facebook.

In next question we asked the respondents to rate some of the statements related to Facebook, majority of the respondents agree that they always watch the Facebook ads, they become fans of different brands, and they get updated information about the brands using Facebook. Most of the respondents do not respond to any of the Facebook ad while using Facebook, and they were neutral about passing the information about different brands to the other people, that means majority of the people do watch the Facebook ads and get updated about the different brands by using their Facebook account but they do not discuss about the different brands with other people. More than 70% of the respondents cumulatively agree that the Facebook is an effective way of communication. In last question they were asked to give opinion through a MCQs question that which media is most effective to advertise the different brands, the results shows that about 46% of the respondents think that television is the most effective media to advertise

any product, and about 37% of the respondents said that Social Networking Sites like Facebook as an most effective media to advertise the different brands.

Meanwhile television is the most effective media to advertise the brands as it is more used and because of variety of the different channels it is most popular media. That does not mean that the Facebook ads cannot be used to advertise the products, as by the results we can see that Facebook is second most effective media which means that it is also one of the popular media among people.

The Facebook ads are very much specific type of ads. company uses different ways to target different type of people to advertise the different brands that is by using the preferences of the people given in their profiles, their likes and dislikes, their frequent visits to different walls etc. using different preference and techniques the company advertise particular brand to the particular targets very easily, and one of the other major feature of Facebook ads is the feedback people customize their walls to advertise different types of brands and they even can remove the ads from their walls, when most of the people remove any ad from the wall they are asked to give feedback about the ad or why they wanted to remove this particular type of advertisements from their walls.

## Conclusion

Majority of respondents still consider television as the most important media for advertising but the increasing trend in users of Facebook that it was given 37% as effective media after television make the Facebook an attractive position. In addition the respondents are using Facebook for collecting and forwarding information to their friends about different brands, which indicates the increasing importance of Facebook for consumers.

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