**E-COMMERCE AND MARKETING**

**SUBJECT NAME:**

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**ASSIGNMENT NAME: E-COMMERCE AND MARKETING**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report casts light on the social media marketing strategies and the marketing gimmicks as well as the promotional strategies, which may be implemented by the UK Gas and Oil Company, Esso Global. The factors of the social media marketing are critically evaluated to highlight the various pros and cons of the new mantra of the business organisation. Moreover, the organisations also look forward to the implementation of the eight features of the e-Commerce that helps the companies gain competitive advantage and widen customer base. With the advent of technology and the internet, this is a must achieve the target for all organisations to thrive on the hostile market. Thus, Esso Global will implement the features to upheld the promotional strategies and getting reinforced into the Oil and Gas Industry of the UK.

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**Introduction**

Social media marketing is the mantra of every business organisation in the recent times. The business world is not new to various strategies, which focus the social media to upheld their brand. In the case study, the UK Company Esso Global has also undertaken the strategy that aims the social media to enhance their brand value. Moreover, they are also trying to attract new businesses and retain the current ones through the implementation of social media marketing strategies and eight features of e-commerce.

**Findings and Analysis**

**Critical explanation of social media marketing**

Social media marketing is said to be a convergence of radical social actions, which has become the mantra of every business organisation. A decade back, the organisations celebrated the arrival of the golden age where they can influence the customers as well as the stakeholders through the advent of social media and positively affect the brand value. However, in the recent times of Youtube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, this has transformed into a vexing challenge. Michaelidou *et al.* (2011, p.1154) are of opinion that social media marketing or SMM is required or implemented by both small and big businesses to achieve brand imaging and marketing communication. The authors have cited that this “search maker” is useful to offer different feeds of the latest discovery. The small businesses implement strategies that aim to connect with the people and customers to widen their base of customer satisfaction.

In today’s world, people from every corner of the world indulge in searching for new options and contents through the social media. Social media giants such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Pinterest and Instagram attracts the business organisations as they allow sharing of their information, which would directly influence their brand value and customer services. According to Kim and Ko (2012, p.1482), social media marketing may be defined that it creates a platform that attracts the attention thereby encouraging the users to share it with other networks. Therefore, the authors have illustrated that if a corporate message is circulated, then it would spread from various users thereby resonating across the web through trusted sources rather than the organisation itself. Moreover, Vinerean *et al.* (2013, p.66) have commented that this platform has created enhanced communication through which the company, Esso Global may gain competitive advantage. Tuten and Solomon (2014, p.259) have cited that unlike paid media, the social media provide inexpensive services that spread through word of mouth. Furthermore, it also allows building relationships and free interaction as well.

The "hashtag" has become the new strategy of the business organisations. Many small business organisations have cited that once in a week they post a message on the Twitter that inquires the customers of their requirements. De Vries *et al.* (2012, p.84) have commented that business organisations aim to acquire at least a million followers through which they may connect with a wider base of customers. Moreover, Laroche *et al.* (2013, p.81) have cited that the business organisations recruit social media marketer whose sole responsibility is to provide strategies to gain the competitive advantage by targeting big clients. The company can also create blogs and micro blogs to attract the customers and can upheld their marketing gimmicks to widen the customer base. The authors have furthermore commented that the radical transition of the administration from the organisation to the customer is the underlying factor that drives the companies to aim the social media.

Moretti and Tuan (2014, p.119) have highlighted that social media marketing can also be regarded to cast light on the relationship marketing. It is an evolutionary idea where the traditional 4Ps of the marketing mix are utilised here to upgrade the customer services. The goal of relationship marketing is to retain the existing customers thereby constantly renew the customer base. They focus on satisfying the customers through the implementation of the Information and Communication technology (ICT). in the recent times, ICT has acquired rapid growth and therefore, application of this technology in highlighting the marketing mix can accelerate the popularity factor of the organisation. However, Laroche *et al.* (2013, p.80) are of opinion that although all the above discussed looks easy, nonetheless, it comes with a lot of perks. The authors have argued that the foremost requirement to improve the brand image is to penetrate the culture. In the age of digital media, many organisations and their brands have suffered loss due to failures to penetrate the "crowd culture". Recently, the social media has inflicted new technologies that allow the users to opt from the "pop-ups" or advertisements. This has created quite a stir in the business world. Castronovo and Huang (2012, p.117) have highlighted that with the advent of such hindrances, the organisations should plan and procure eye-catching advertisements where the content would reign enabling to focus the brand image that attracts the attention of the new businesses as well. Moreover, using various "links" to gain more followers and devotees can be the new mantra. Tuten and Solomon (2014, p.128) are of opinion that this may improve reliability and trust. The companies may also keep track of their rivals to enhance their performance to gain competitive advantage.

**Eight features of E-Commerce**

E-commerce has been prevailing since the last decade. However, with the advent of the social media marketing, e-commerce technology is reinvented, which has changed the profile of many small businesses. The company referred in the case study, Esso Global may utilise these eight features of e-Commerce to promote various strategies to reinforce into the Oil and gas Industry in the UK.

**Ubiquity:** E-commerce expanded with the advent of the internet and this feature can access the homes, libraries and cell phones of the customers. The company may utilise this feature to grab the customer base. Customers can connect to the internet everywhere nowadays with the introduction of WiFi-hotspots. In the case of Esso Global, they may access the technological advantage to allow the customers to access for petrol or oil services from any place in the country.

**Global reach:** Esso Global can meet target the global audience through the implementation of this feature. They can offer their services through multilingual websites that may be approached by customers hailing from different nationalities. Moreover, Qin (2010, p.125) has cited that the company should also include translation services as well.

**Universal standards:** Esso must follow the universal standards of presentation of information in the social media as well as the internet in accordance with the Universal Oil Products (UOP). Mohammad *et al.* (2010, p.600) have opined that the company may utilise the option where the customer may access the price of the oil and the nearest station within a few seconds of entering their official site.

**Richness:** The Company Esso Global may implement strategies that improve their videos, audio messages and even include interactive sessions with the customers. Moreover, Sheng and Joginpally (2012, p.12) are of opinion that they should make their video ads more catchy and eye grabbing to attract the customers. They may also utilise the ad section of Facebook, introduce blogs, hyperlinks and micro blogs as well to provide information to the customers.

**Interactivity:** Esso Global may introduce interactive sessions using e-commerce. The company can use the email system to address the different problems faced by the customer. The customer feels valued through such interactions. Online agents may interact with the customers if there is any issue. Moreover, services like feedback systems and rating options may allow the future customers to identify the pros and cons of the particular gas station or the product used.

**Information density:** Wymer and Regan (2013, p.1) are of opinion that e-Commerce allows the organisation to reduce the process of cost to store as well as communication information. The timeline increase and accuracy improve thus; the information becomes more accurate, plentiful and inexpensive. The company can apply shopping carts to receive information regarding product, payment, billing and the personal information of the customer as well, which may then be circulated to the respective departments according to their priority.

**Personalisation:** Thongpapanl and Ashraf (2011, p.4) have commented that the businesses aim for customisation processes and this feature allows to deliver personalised messages to the individuals in accordance with their choices. The organisation may dig into the searching history of the customer to provide a recommendation. For example, the Oil and gas company may analyse the customer's preference for a particular brand of petrol. On the next visit to the page, the customer would find the recommendation of this product with their prices and nearby locations as well.

**Social technology:** Esso Global may utilise the social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest to collect specific information and therefore post ads to attract the customers. The company can share the data and improve the brand image through sharing and marketing systems. This part has been discussed in details in the above section and Esso Global may implement all the said strategies to get reinforced into the Oil and Gas industry.

**Conclusion**

This report has cast light on the various factors required by the business organisations to reign the social media and grab competitive advantage by widening the customer base. The Oil and Gas Company Esso may utilise these strategies to grab the market by reintroducing marketing gimmicks in the social media sites. The eight features of e-commerce are also evaluated to focus on the various promotional strategies, which may be implemented by the company to get reinforced within the Oil and Gas Industry of the UK.