APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL IN BEAUTY CARE INDUSTRY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVEMENT

(Special Reference to Sri Lanka)

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

The term beauty is more dynamic, providing never ending opportunities for the industry to grow its potential, expanding the space for innovation and improving new opportunities for market participants. It is a well diversified industry which consists of a market potential from head to feet rather simple makeup. Though businesses want to attract the whole market itself, making in-depth analysis of each market segment is vital as it is kind of a unique market with its inherent characteristics of growing capacity, emergence of niche markets, impact of online, person driven services etc.. The identification of market segments of beauty care industry can perform through the services that they are offering such as Manicures and Pedicures, Facials, Massage, Hydrotherapy, Micro pigmentation, Body Treatments, Dressing etc… and identification of the most attractive and competent segment for each business is crucial.

1.2. Beauty care Industry in Sri Lanka

The history of Sri Lankan beauty care enriches with a well established background which goes back to king's era. Though it has a strong root system, the overall development pattern of the industry in time to time is doubtful in relation to the global market. The lack in identification of new market trends and niche markets, adoption of the business to the dynamic market, home grown brands, identification and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the entrepreneurs can be revealed as the key gaps that to be filled in this regard.

1.3. Social Media Landscape in Sri Lanka

The phenomenal growth in social media landscape in world has impacted on Sri lanka in the same manner witnessing exceptional market potentials to different sectors of the macro environment including beauty care industry. As per the statistics, the total population of Sri Lanka was 20.36 Million in 2015 and active internet users were as 4.79 Million (23.5%). Social media users consisted of 13.5% of the total population and 58.3% of internet users were active in social media. More clearly it shows a 40% growth in the active social media users in relation to 2014 in spite of all other facts.

1.4. Application of Social Media in Beauty Care Industry as a Marketing Tool

As illustrated by above statistics, more than 50% of the internet users are in the platform of the social media and word of mouth is considered as one of the most powerful tools in marketing too. So a combination of these two factors will be a promising marketing tool for beauty care industry to reveal new aspects.

Strategy behind social media marketing is attracting new customers by promising a superior service through witnesses made by existing customers. It is note to worth that, social media may not give an immediate return and it is all about planting seeds and creating the foundation.

When customers recognize the brand sufficiently, at the right place and right time it will develop the brand reputation which may ultimately expand the customer base. Therefore it is crucial to identify key social medias which are more effective and stay consistent with updating and upgrading them.

1.5. Research objectives

1.5.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to assess the efficiency of social media as a marketing tool in beauty care industry.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the characteristics of Face Book Fan Pages in beauty care industry.
- To examine the weaknesses and provide recommendations on improvement of Face Book Fan Pages.

1.6. Methodology

Population consists of all hair care and beauty salons in Sri Lanka all over the country either small, medium or large scale, though it cannot be obtained the exact size of the population accurately due to lack of a sound data base. 600 hair care and beauty salons were selected as the sample which can be considered as a representative sample covering up all segments in the market of beauty care industry and data were collected through a questionnaire by analyzing the Face book Fan Pages maintained by each entrepreneur.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Data Analysis

Face Book Fan Pages were evaluated in relation to main aspects of availability of contact information, page reaches, use of advanced promotional tools, availability and suitability of profile picture & cover page, response rate and overall completeness of the page. Merits were given for each according to the level of applicability, suitability and completeness.

2.1. Geographical Distribution of the Sample

Table 1- Geographical Distribution of the Sample

Province	Total	Total (%)
Central	58	10%
Eastern	3	1%
North Central	11	2%
Northern	1	0%
North Western	40	7%
Sabaragamuwa	25	4%
Southern	32	5%
Uva	13	2%
Western	333	56%
N/A	84	14%
Total	600	100%

The majority of the sample, over 50% represented the western province while central province consisted of 10% and 14% has not mentioned sufficient information to identify the province which they belongs.

2.2. Completeness of fan pages

2.2.1. Availability of contact information

Figure 1 - Availability of contact information
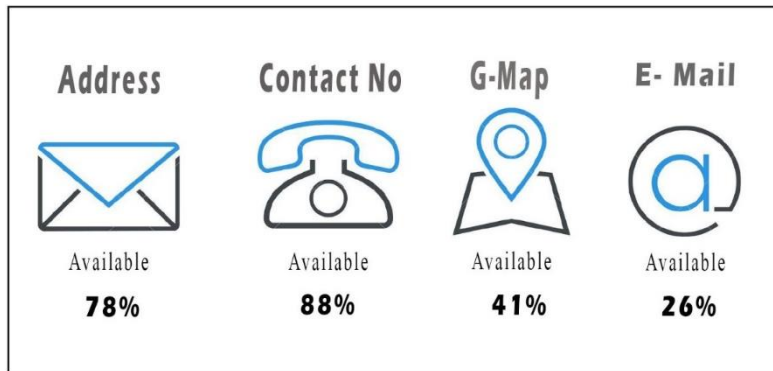
The availability of basic information was evaluated under the aspects of business address, contact number, location map and email address. As demonstrated by the above graph, 78% of respondents have mentioned their business address while availability of contact number is 88%, which is little higher than the business addresses. 41% of the sample has incorporated the location map accurately while 32% has located inaccurately. 27% of the sample has not used the tool at all. In case of email address, only 26% has included the email address in fan page. In overall, the availability of contact information is very critical and upgrading of them is must at least to a reasonable level to grab the market in real time.

### 2.2.2. Talking, checking and likes

Figure 2 - Talking, checking and likes

Page reaches were analyzed under 3 major aspects as talking, checking and likes. In talking and checking 99% of the sample had reaches below 500 and only 1% represented above 500. In the category of likes, 81% was below 1000 likes and 14% represented segment of 1,000-5,000. 2% had likes in the range of 5,000-10,000. 3% of marginal proportion has likes more than 10,000.

### 2.2.3. Availability and Suitability of Profile Picture & Cover page

Figure 3 - Availability and Suitability of Profile Picture & Cover page
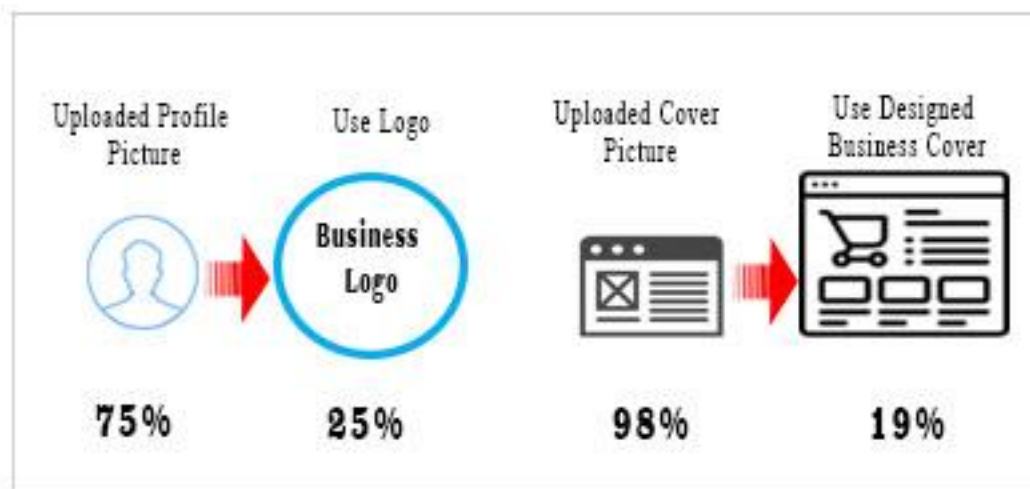
All the fan pages consisted of a profile picture though majority of 75% has not created it in a proper way and only 25% used their business logo as the profile picture. 98% of the sample had a cover page and 19% of that has developed it in an attractive manner by incorporating business details while 81% of that was not at a satisfactory level.

### 2.2.4. Use of Advanced Promotional Tools

Figure 4 - Use of Advanced Promotional Tools
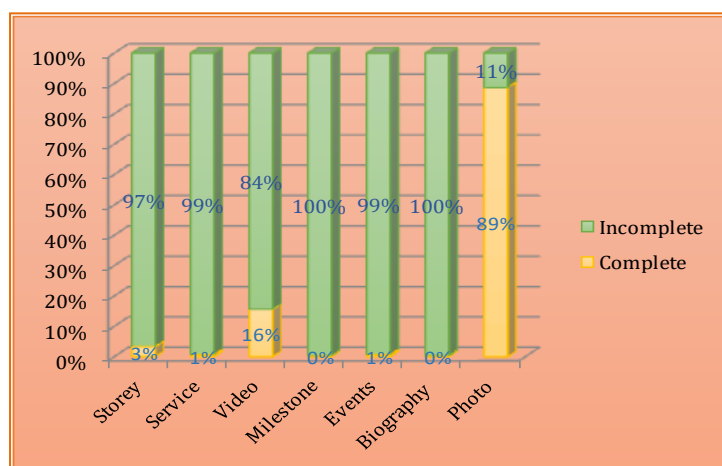
As illustrated by the above graph, the use of advanced promotional tools was at a minimal rate except the use of photos. Use of video was 16% while all other tools of storey, service, milestone, events and biography are below 5%. In some instances though they have used the tools, purpose was not business related.
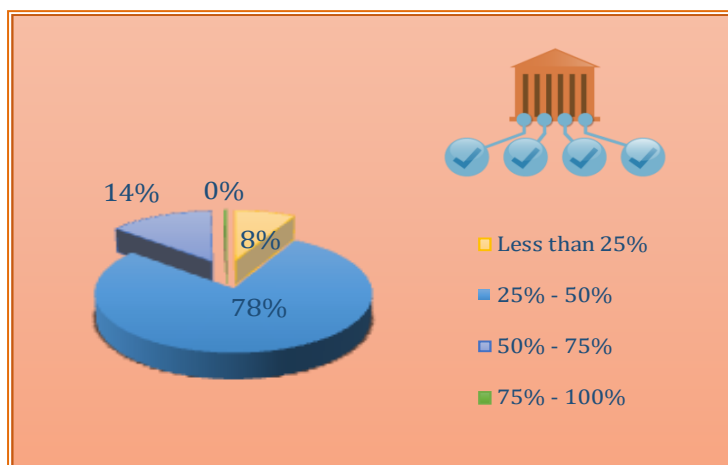
2.2.5. Response Rate

Figure 5 - Response Rate
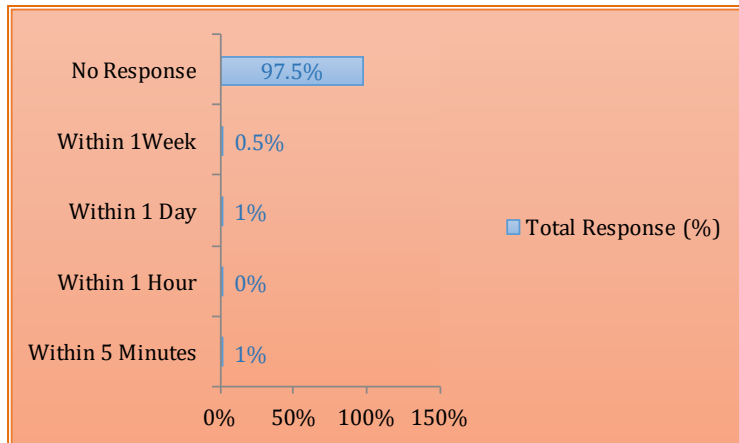
One of the most significant factors of a fan page is the rate of response to customer within a reasonable period of time. But majority of the sample of 97.5% was unable to respond at all while only 2% responded within a day.

2.3.Overall Completeness

Figure 6 - Overall Completeness

The level of overall completeness was evaluated by analyzing the strength of,

* Availability of business address, contact number, name of the owner, profile picture, cover page, email address, website and Google map
* Page reaches in terms of talking, checking and likes
* Suitability of used profile picture, cover page and Google map
* Application of using tools of services, milestones, events, storey, videos and photos and their appropriateness

The majority of the sample was at the level of 25% - 50% while 14% represented the category of 50% - 75%. Only 3% of the respondents were in the level of 75% - 100% which is marginal.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Recommendations and Conclusion

The technology is growing further at an exceptional rate by enabling both organizations and individuals to reach and engage with people locally and globally. This has completely transformed modern marketing, making it more critical than ever for business organizations both large and small, to have be an influence within the online world.

3.1. Improvement of existing Facebook Fan Pages

But due to lack of awareness on the compliments of social media marketing, there is a significant gap in use of social media as a marketing tool by businesses. As proven by the above analysis it is evident even at the grass root level. Therefore to fill the gap, existing Face Book Fan Pages should be upgraded using following strategies to exploit new ventures in businesses.

3.1.1. Profile Picture

The business logo should be incorporated to the profile picture and attention should be drawn to the suitability, simplicity and colour combination of the logo. As profile picture will show up repeatedly in the newsfeed, it should be clearly distinguishable and make sense with the brand.

3.1.2. Cover Page

Creating an eye-catching cover page to attract audience is more crucial as it is the most seen part of a Face book page. On the other hand, it is a space to advertise and to convey the tone of the brand as well. The incorporation of business details in brief will be more advantageous to be competitive in the market as well.

3.1.3. Videos

Videos are a killer way of increasing engagement of audience and it is almost guaranteed a higher view rate on Face book. But attention should be drawn to upload videos which are business related and frequent updating is must.

3.1.4. Milestone

Milestones refer to land marks related to the history of the organization. Most of organizations incorporate milestones to their page, but fail to identify milestones as a marketing tool. Hence to use milestone as a strategic marketing tool following tactics can be used.

- Include an engaging image in milestone may assist to capture attention.
- By adding a link in milestone may increase the curiosity to find out more.

3.1.5. Services

For businesses that are service related, the Service category in Face book page is a great way to feature offerings for customers. By adding the service type in a visual manner and the pricing with other relevant information may boost the value of the fan page as well as the business.
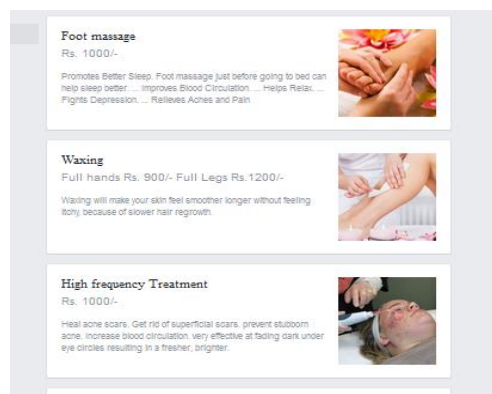
3.1.6.Events

The special events that will be taken place in the future can be included to improve the awareness of the customers and to provide an opportunity to attract the audience to those events as well. Furthermore presenting these on kind of a visual manner may catch up the immediate attention of the viewers and the availability of sufficient information will be crucial.
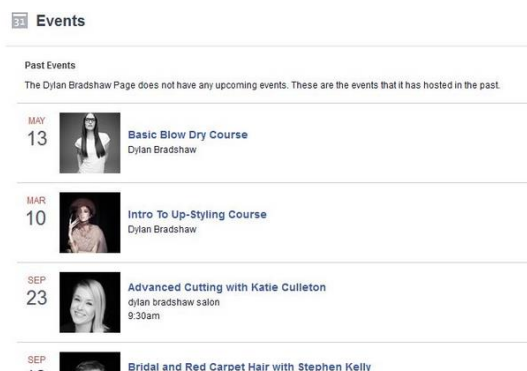
3.1.7.Biography

Construction of a biography for a business carries more weight than a personal biography. Following information may enhance the quality of biography and customers & potential customers will develop an understanding about the business.

- Key company personnel
- The professional and academic qualification of employees
- Carrier progress
- Special tasks, responsibilities or events undertook

3.1.8.Photos

The entire point of social media is to be social and human. So availability of images of services that have offered previously as evidences and even behind the scene photos may build the trust among customers and enhance the capacity to grab the right audience. On the other hand, it is more important to choose best out of good rather uploading entire bits and pieces. Basically People build trust on brands more through their experiences than other sources of advertising and it is more promising in the personal care market. So including quality photos of the business journey at the right time will be more crucial to witness the victory.

3.2. Improving the quality of entrepreneur

Transformation in the appearance of the Facebook Fan Page merely will not improve the quality of the page and it may not add a value to the business unless there is a upgrading in the inner part of the entrepreneur as well. Therefore attention should be drawn to following aspects to improve the "entrepreneur" as well.

3.2.1. Technical knowledge on operating the fan page

Most of the entrepreneurs in the beauty care industry are not well equipped with the technical knowledge that requires to operate and to do the necessary upgrading when requires. Hence there must be an intervention to improve the technical knowledge of them by government, private sector or a combination in real time.

3.2.2. Availability of technological infrastructure

The accessibility to internet is more critical in terms of the speed as well as frequency. To do the necessary updating, to review the responses from customers as well as to have an idea about the competitive position it is important to have technological infrastructures such as desktop, laptop, tab etc… The availability, suitability and ease of operating is to be considered in this regard.

3.2.3. Development of attitudes and skills

Everything start with an inception of an idea as well as mind revolution where someone is willing to change in terms of thinking and performing. Though above all are fulfilled without the attitude transformation the output will be only tangible rather intangible. Therefore capacity building in thinking pattern, IT literacy as well as to eliminate phobia on social media is must.

References

1) Social Media Landscape in Sri Lanka, Rajit Hewagama, 2015