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PERSONALIZED COMMERCE IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Fatihah Norazami Abdullah

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah
fatih876@uitm.edu.my

Noriza Mohd Saad

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan
noriza@uitm.edu.my

Nor Edi Azhar Mohamed

Accounting and Finance Department, University Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN)
noredi@uniten.edu.my

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, personalized commerce has become a pivotal strategy for retailers looking to enhance customer engagement and drive sales. Social media platforms and influencers play a significant role in this transformation, offering unique opportunities to create highly tailored shopping experiences.

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest have evolved beyond simple networking sites into powerful commerce tools. These platforms collect vast amounts of user data, including interests, behaviors, and preferences, which can be harnessed to offer personalized shopping experiences (Chu et al., 2023).

1. Targeted Advertising

Social media platforms utilize sophisticated algorithms to display advertisements tailored to individual users based on online behavior. For instance, a user who frequently engages with fitness content might see some advertisements for workout gear or health supplements (Yan, 2024).

2. Shoppable Posts and Stories

Instagram and Facebook offer shoppable posts and stories, allowing users to purchase products directly from their feeds. These posts are often personalized based on user interactions, making the shopping experience seamless and intuitive (Yan, 2024).

3. Social Shopping Features

Features like Instagram Shops and Facebook Marketplace provide personalized product recommendations, creating a tailored shopping environment within the social media ecosystem (Yan, 2024).

THE ROLE OF INFLUENCERS

Influencers, with their large and engaged followings, are key players in personalized commerce. They help brands reach specific target audiences in an authentic and relatable manner.

1. **Influencer Collaborations:**

Brands collaborate with influencers to create sponsored content that showcases their products. These collaborations often include discount codes or exclusive offers, personalized for the influencer's audience (Satpathy & Verma, 2023).

2. **Authentic Recommendations:**

Influencers are crucial in modern digital marketing by sharing personal experiences and product reviews with their followers. These stories are viewed as more authentic and relatable than traditional advertisements, providing a trusted source of information. Influencers' endorsements are trusted due to their perceived expertise, transparency, and personal connection with their audience. This trust greatly impacts purchasing decisions, as followers are more inclined to value and act on recommendations from influencers they admire and relate to.

The effects of this authenticity are two folds. First, it boosts the product's credibility, as followers see the influencer's positive experiences as social proof. Second, it creates emotional engagement, making followers feel that the product is recommended by a trusted friend rather than a distant corporation. This blend of credibility and emotional resonance often results in higher conversion rates, as consumers are more likely to purchase products personally recommended by someone they trust (Prakashlal, 2023).

3. **Interactive Content:**

Influencers strategically utilize interactive contents such as polls, Q&A sessions, and live streams to engage with their audience and provide personalized product recommendations. These interactive methods serve various purposes within digital marketing.

Polls allow influencers to assess their followers' preferences and opinions on different topics or products, gathering valuable data that can inform future content and recommendations. For example, an influencer might conduct a poll to identify which type of product their audience is most interested in, enabling them to highlight items that match their followers' preferences.

Q&A sessions facilitate direct interaction between influencers and their audience, allowing followers to ask questions and receive personalized responses. This format not only boosts engagement but also enables influencers to address specific concerns or interests, providing tailored advice and product recommendations. The real-time aspect of Q&A sessions helps to build a more personal connection and trust with the audience.

Live streams offer an even more dynamic and immediate form of interaction. During live broadcasts, influencers can demonstrate products, share their experiences, and respond to viewer comments and questions in real time. These aspects of immediacy and transparency significantly enhance the authenticity of the interaction, making product recommendations more compelling. Additionally, live streams often include spontaneous and unscripted content, further reinforcing the influencer's perceived authenticity and reliability.

CONCLUSION

The growth of personalized commerce is mostly due to social media influencers and platforms, which provide creative means of customizing consumer experiences to personal tastes. Brands can develop individualized and compelling experiences that appeal to consumers by utilizing user data and genuine follower-influencer relationships.

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