

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTES IN THE MODERN BUSINESS WORLD



CHETHAN S.

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce Tourism and Travel Management
St Claret College, Bengaluru, Karnataka, INDIA
ORCID: 0000-0002-4949-6938

SINDHU BHAIRAVI G.U.

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce
MES College of Arts, Commerce, and Science, Bengaluru, Karnataka, INDIA
ORCID: 0000-0003-4352-5088

ABSTRACT

‘Impression’ – is what every brand or company strive to create in the minds of people or its customers. This is one of the important factors to create the market and to exist in the market for a longer period. In order to achieve it social media has become a strong tool. As we see a rise in the extent of usage of social media there is also a rise in the awareness of the manner of its usage. This is called as the social media etiquettes. This has to be followed by both the employers and employees in their personal social media accounts because their actions are always inter-connected with the company’s image. This paper tries to bring out the many facets of social media etiquettes.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a set of activities aimed at understanding the customer needs, producing the products, or providing services according to the needs and achieving customer satisfaction through after-sales services. The marketing approach has changed over the years following changing trends in society – from word-of-mouth to television and telephone commercials, from societal marketing to “guerrilla marketing,” and now to social media marketing. (Bagchi & Mohanty, 2020)

In this era of digitalization, marketing has also transformed from a traditional approach to a digital approach. Marketers have started to use all the possible mediums to communicate with customers over internet sites. Hence, we witness a rise in a new domain of marketing, i.e., social media marketing. Here, various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, etc., are being used to keep in touch with the customers. This has been a boon to the company in terms of building a brand value or image in the market in a less expensive manner.

As every situation has two sides- a positive and negative, likewise social media had also negatively affected the company’s image leading to impact the employees’ career. The following case studies explain a few of such examples-

1. A chef named Trilok Singh was fired from a restaurant in Dubai for an online threat against a student in Delhi over her views on the citizenship amendment act. This incident happened in the month of March 2020.
2. In May 2020, an Indian named Brajkishore Gupta, who was working in Stevin Rock mining company in the UAE, had been fired due to his Facebook posts. He had posted that Indian Muslims were spreaders and praised Delhi riots as divine justice. Both these posts were treated as anti- social messages/ Islamophobic, and hence he was terminated by the company.
3. In April 2020, the State Bank of India had notified its employer over refraining themselves from posting absurd messages regarding the bank, its operations, or the management policies on social media.
4. In 2016, ESPN terminated its employee named Schilling due to his derogatory statements on the transgender community. The reason given by ESPN company is that it is an inclusive company and does not entertain such acts from its employees.
5. In 2016, an employee of Bank of America had posted a racist comment on African Americans. Bank of America terminated that employee as it had received thousands of complaints regarding the comment.
6. A woman employed at daycare posted a Facebook comment stating about her new job and her dislikes for the job. She stated her hatred of being around kids. After reading this comment, she was asked not to come for the job by her employer.

All the above case studies showcase the social media behavior of the employees in their work lives. The companies took those steps to protect their good image in society. They did not want to portray themselves as immoral, unethical, and anti- social companies. Now, companies expect their employees also to be responsible for their personal media accounts and not act



in any manner that is opposite to the company's values or objectives and tarnish the company's name.

The question that arises here is whether the companies or employers are curbing the freedom of speech of the employees? However, the companies have a different say over this issue.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of social media etiquettes.
- To know the impact of Social media etiquettes on the company and its workers

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Varga Elena-Iulia, 2018) The paper aims to highlight the impact of social media on both the population and the business environment. Social media is transforming the way business is carried out. Recent studies show that a huge part of consumers would be more inclined to buy more often in the future because of a brand's presence on social media.

(Irene Garcia Medina, Pedro Alvaro Correia Pereira) The study analyses the current importance of social media for digital marketing communication. It shows a case study on traditional shops that use social media to obtain competitive advantages over shopping centers in Funchal (Madeira, Portugal). The study proposes a new model of business for successful marketing strategies. Also, the article explains how to manage the associated changes and how collaborators need to get used to working in a wider and more dynamic community.

(Emerald, 2012) The study investigated the use of social media as a new investigative tool in marketing research. The researcher has analyzed the existing social marketing literature and industry practice in marketing analysis and tells that the market research profession has been affected by developments in social media.

(Luo Lili , Wang Yuan , Han Lifeng, 2013)The paper contains a study on a successful, award-winning online video marketing project at an academic library in China. The study examined the different aspects of the library's online video marketing project. Four factors that contributed to the success of the library's video marketing project were identified: base video content on the real campus life, reflecting what students experience in their everyday activities; convey content in a humorous, light-hearted, and refreshing style; employ social media to share content and engage the target audience; and partner with students.

(Satu Aaltonen, Christina Kakderi, Verena Hausmann, Aleksej Heinze, 2013) The paper identifies and discusses the problems which arose when administrating an online social media survey in 31 European countries and gives a short preliminary insight into the results. Key findings suggest the existence of different social media etiquette rules, both among countries, ages, and types of use (personal or professional use). Results also show a complete lack of response in countries where no personal networks of the research team were present. This suggests a need to develop networks initially before meaningful information exchange can commence.



(Simon Kamau, Ibrahim Suba Kamara, 2016) The study presents a mini-review of university students' views of social media etiquette and online safety, focusing on issues of practice relevant to university students in selected disciplines, focusing on those in the Health Sciences Department at the Kabianga University. An evolving emergent research design was engaged using the search strategy, using Facebook, Twitter, netiquette, patient privacy, and social media, student behavior, and the internet. Therefore, there is a need to establish national and institutional policies regarding etiquette and privacy in the use of social media in public universities and health institutions. A less generic review addressing particular disciplines and circumstances is also recommended for more input regarding social media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Real incidents in various companies and institutions around the world in case studies have been taken into consideration to study the topic. These cases showcase the inappropriate comments over social media on the employees' career and on the company's brand.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

There is no quantitative data to analyze the numerical facts. But, depending upon many articles and case studies, the following interpretations and analyses have been made. The analysis is made through understanding the concepts of certain topics.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTES

Social Media, which includes Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., has become a mode of expression. People tend to share their talents and views on all the topics on their social media accounts. This has become a mode of expression where the right to speak is exercised to a greater extent.

It is indeed a good thing that people can voice out their opinions on various issues. However, that does not end there. Now, social media has become a place for quarrels and a platform for controversies. People tend to forget that thousands of people view their posts or comments, and it impacts everyone. There are many examples where celebrities have tarnished their images due to wrong posts or comments. That is the impact of social media. Hence, a set of dos and don'ts are essential while using social media, which are the etiquettes.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTES

The importance of social media etiquettes can be analyzed for different categories of society likewise.

Government:



- to preserve harmony in society.
- To provide the right information to the people.
- To handle various discrepancies of the people in a smooth manner.

General public:

- To project the goodness of oneself
- To ensure that the comments passed are not problematic to oneself and to others
- To exercise the freedom of speech/ expression in the right manner.

Employer:

- Acts as a tool to assess the personality of people while hiring them.
- To understand the mindset of employees and act accordingly.
- To build and maintain healthy relationships with the customers of the company.
- To protect the image of the company

Hence, it is necessary to follow social media etiquette by every individual because we should not forget that we are being observed by the known and unknown ones, which would gain good or bad results.

SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTES AT ORGANIZATION LEVEL

As already mentioned, the behavior of the company's employees over the social media platform impacts the image of the company. Hence, nowadays, many companies would prescribe the code of conduct on social media too for their employees, resulting in termination.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE ORGANIZATION

- To uphold the beliefs of the company
- To ensure the protection of goodwill of the company
- To bring about a conducive working atmosphere in the company
- To imbibe a sense of responsibility/ belongingness towards the company.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST ORGANIZATION

- Their policy acts against the constitutional rights of the right to speak.
- The employees are not the employer's property to monitor their thoughts and actions in their personal life.

Although the arguments against the organization are true, the organizations see it differently. They only state social media etiquette since the employees are a part of their organization. Their actions are directed towards the company's growth and image. Hence, until and unless the actions of the employees won't affect the company, the company would not interfere in the employees' private space.

CONCLUSION



Social media etiquettes play an important role and should be imparted to students and employees in the right manner. As a common man, it should be followed as it surely enhances the public image, and as an employee/ employer, it instills a sense of belonging towards the organization. Social media provides the platform to exercise the freedom of speech, but etiquettes show the manner in which that freedom can be used. It appears the organizations are being authoritative with their employees over their personal accounts, too, but from the company's perspective, it seems to be right. The company can take some minor actions against the employees when they feel that the behavior is not proper over the social media sites, instead of reprimanding them. Different issues must be handled differently instead of treating all the cases similarly.

On the other hand, employees are first the citizens of the country and later the organization's employees and hence are entitled to express their views. However, at the same time, one should behave responsibly as who knows what one's comment might lead to. As responsible people, we should give our opinions in a dignified manner, ensuring that such comments harm none.

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