***E-Commerce Communications***

**Introduction -**

This report will be covering the use of business intelligence tools and technologies associated with it. This report will discuss the choice for dashboards/visuals to help management in their decision-making process. Examine the strategies employed and the impact of E-Commerce on business organisations

**Why Communication is Essential in Ecommerce**

You have a well-thought-out business plan, you’ve researched your market, your product is solid and you even have an excellent product release strategy, so you’re ready to go aren’t you? Well, in all appearances, yes, but if you don’t have a detailed communication plan and strategy already thought out, then you don’t have the entire picture to ensure the success of your ecommerce business.

As Kristie Lorette from Small Business writes:

“In the business world, good communication is important for the daily operation of the company, but can also affect sales and profitability. Without good business communication, the internal and external structure of a business can face numerous challenges that can ultimately lead to its demise.”

**Social CRM**

Social CRM is one of the most useful tools that an Ecommerce company can have. In such a connected world, it would be a mistake to miss out on the incredible wealth of information at your disposal within your consumer base. The short and simple of it is that in order to effectively sell to this base, you have to know what they want. By engaging in active social CRM strategies and maintaining an open dialogue with your consumer base, you are far better positioned to make the right moves that will ensure success for your Ecommerce company.

Social engagement is not only an extremely useful tool for market research, allowing you to better cater your brand and product to your target demographic, but it is the beginning of customer service. Unlike a one-way communication where you market your brand to your key consumer base, social engagement allows this market to respond, and is therefore a two-way communication. This can allow you to improve your product and customer service methods, which in turn help to improve your business and sales, and all of this information is freely available in your social media channels.

Of course you would still have to pay a social media manager to maintain all of the platforms, but the reach that this gives your business is unparalleled to any other form of marketing at present. If your social advert shows up on Facebook in the news feed of your 25,000 connections, that is already great exposure on its own. Now consider that each person that you are connected to has about 2,000 connections of his or her own. The interconnectedness of the social networks help your reach increase exponentially with each new connection. So use this to your advantage. Listen to what your market is saying and respond to them. And know that to get your customers engaged – visiting and clicking through your site – does not start with flashy advertisements and direct marketing anymore, it begins with a personable relationship which can only be achieved through superior customer service. In Ecommerce, your customers are the heart and soul of your business, so treat them like it.

**Live Chat Options**

One method for offering personable customer service is the implementation of a live chat feature. Although this isn’t always possible due to the man hours it requires, especially when a company is newly emerging onto the scene. However, having a live chat option on a site can be immensely rewarding. Not only can customers get questions answered in real time, but they can have a conversation about the product, and the live chat can also help to persuade them towards making a purchase over abandoning the site. Being able to communicate with your customers can make the difference in both their shopping experience and your conversion and overall profit line; it anticipates the customer’s needs, helps to guide the consumer journey, and fulfill your business goals.

**FAQ and Contact Us Options**

Part of anticipating your customers’ needs is knowing the type of questions that they are going to ask. Make sure to have answers for them directly on your site in a FAQ section. It is also a good idea to have a large mailbox space and an email address with the same domain from a reliable company such as 1and1. Having a “Contact Us” link on the same page in case their question isn’t answered in the FAQ section is additionally a smart move. Make sure that email messages sent through the “Contact Us” form are responded to promptly (ideally within 24 hours). It is actually good to send an automated email that ensures the customer that their message was received and will be replied to ASAP. When a customer feels like they can reach out to a company and have their concerns heard and addressed, they are more likely to make a purchase and become a repeat client.

**Follow-up Email Communication**

After a purchase or cart abandonment, a follow up email can be very good for customer experience as well as for securing repeat business. This is actually an important part of social CRM. A follow up email is not a confirmation of purchase email. In a follow up email, you ask for feedback on whether the customer is satisfied with their purchase and shopping experience, if they would be willing to write a review stating that fact for your site, and offer them a coupon to be used on their next purchase if they do so. This makes the customer feel like their business is appreciated and that someone cares about how their experience was.

Getting a positive review means good publicity and higher authority for your site and can be a really good motivational factor to encourage new shoppers to convert. Offering customers a reward for writing a review and a general reward for shopping with you also helps them to feel appreciated, and it encourages repeat business. And, since customer retention is more profitable than customer acquisition, the time that you invest in turning successfully converted customers into long-term brand advocates will pay off much more than investing in trying to convert new customers.

The information that these customers can give on their experiences is also priceless. If there is something wrong with the product, you will only know if you hear it from the source. Also, any feedback on their shopping experience as a whole will help you to see what your strengths and weaknesses are, and where you can improve. Especially if someone abandons their cart, being able to follow up and ask why (if there is a contact means to do so) can likewise be invaluable information to attain.

At the end of the day, knowing exactly how you are going to communicate your brand, how you will engage your consumer base, and how you will maintain a dialogue with current customers all need to be considered before you even make the first sale. A business plan is not complete without a well-thought-out communication plan and strategy.

**Conclusion -**

In conclusion, this report covers the use of business intelligence tools and technologies associated with it. This report will discuss the choice for dashboards/visuals to help management in their decision-making process. Examine the strategies employed and the impact of E-Commerce on business organisations