

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BLOGGERS' INFLUENCE ON BUSINESSES AND ON THEIR CONSUMERS

A blog is an online source of information such as news, a diary or a journal that is updated frequently or periodically following a consistent schedule. The purpose of this paper is to consider blogging not just as an online information resource, but as a powerful tool for influencing businesses and consumers.

Many businesses use blogs for promotion purposes. According to research conducted by Research Now, around 9 out of 10 consumers (84%) make purchases after reading about a product or service on a blog [3]. As bloggers, they have earned large fan followings and have built great social authority. Bloggers provide content in their own distinctive voices, forging real connections with their readers as opposed to traditional advertising, which can come off as commercial and disingenuous.

When a blogger recommends a company or item, it appears more like a personal endorsement than paid marketing. Psychology academic and best-seller Robert Cialdini says that getting a person similar to the person you're trying to persuade to talk on your behalf is considerably more effective than doing it yourself. In a study conducted by Nielsen, friends and family were recognized as the most trustworthy of information sources on social media. According to Harvard research, about 95% of the cognition in human mind occurs outside the conscious brain, and inside the subconscious territory.

To appeal to a person's subconscious thinking, mere logic and reasoning doesn't suffice. You have to venture beyond facts and into emotional suggestions and powerful storytelling [1]. Bloggers simply tell your audience why they need your product, why they should buy from you and why they should do something a certain way. Doing so would help strengthen the pitch on social media or otherwise. While advertisers apply this tactic to ad copy, it is rarely seen on social media. That is one of the major reasons why employee advocacy is gaining prominence in current times.

Businesses are able to expand their reach to prospective clients who are truly interested in their offerings by cooperating with bloggers whose readership matches the brand's target demographic. Businesses can gain from increased content dissemination by using bloggers as brand ambassadors. When a blogger mentions a brand in a blog post or on social media, it may result in more likes, shares, and comments, which helps spread the company's message to more people. Blogging enables many business brands to hit various needs of the consumers as provided by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Consumers can fulfill all their needs, from basic to self-development. Blog readers were surveyed about the influence of blogs as it relates to the following steps of the purchase process: 21% decide on a product or service, 19% refine choices, 19% get support and answers, 17% discover products and services, 14% assure, 13% inspire a purchase, 7% execute a purchase [2].

On social media, it is important to identify the places where passionate conversations happen, and where shallow conversations happen. Passionate conversations are usually the ones that result in action, while shallow conversations are a waste of investment. Passionate conversations generally take place where people meet to discuss their interests and genuinely share and seek information. Typically, most industries have these on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn groups, Twitter chats, SubReddits, Google communities, hangouts) and on the internet in general (on Quora and sites like Goodreads) [1].

To better identify how much people in modern society are influenced by bloggers when buying products or services, we conducted a survey among the first-year students of our university.

The survey showed that about 70% of respondents follow the content of bloggers and influencers on social networks online; about 48% of the respondents make purchases under the influence of bloggers' recommendations; 76% of respondents are more inclined to purchase clothes, cosmetics and electronics according to the recommendations of bloggers; almost 80% of the survey participants consider bloggers' reviews and recommendations important when making a purchase decision; 52% of the respondents admit that brand preferences are partly influenced by bloggers; about 40% of respondents are most convinced to make a purchase when a blogger demonstrates a product in action; 67% of survey participants believe that bloggers' reviews and recommendations may be biased.

The study proved that bloggers and influencers have a significant influence on consumer behavior and their decisions about purchasing goods and services.

The majority of respondents follow the content of bloggers on social networks, and about half of them admit that they make purchases under the influence of bloggers' recommendations. Bloggers' reviews and recommendations turn out to be significant for most respondents when making a purchase decision. Product demonstrations in action and attractive promotions and discounts are key factors that convince people to make a purchase. However, the majority of respondents also admit that bloggers' reviews and recommendations may be biased, and recommend accepting them with a certain degree of criticism.

REFERENCES:

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