



ISSN: 2249-894X
 IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)
 UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514
 VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 8 | MAY - 2019



JAIPUR RUGS: CATCHING THE CUSTOMER VIA WEB WORLD

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ABSTRACT:

Internet marketing is the most buzzing and practicing word in industry where in companies are working via e-platforms. It is very difficult to imagine our individual lives without e-business technologies. A smart phone in hands of common man, made the e-platforms accessible therefore the e-platforms are the most convenient and any time-anywhere approach to catch a customer. An impact of the accessibility is,

whether it is a startup or an established company, all are trying to create their impressive presence on such platforms. The paper is an attempt to study internet marketing strategies of Jaipur Rugs Ltd. that is known name from traditional industry of carpet manufacturing. The company is traditional one but has been recognized at global level. The company is weaving thread of internet marketing in its comprehensive marketing strategy and due to the dynamic global market, the strategy is yet to be explored.

KEYWORDS: Jaipur Rugs, internet marketing, e-marketing, rugs industry, marketing strategies.

INTRODUCTION

In this high-tech era where information floats faster than light, competition in industry is not based on only quality of services or products, but also the way via they tap their prospective customers. Innovations in marketing strategy is demand of the time and in this regard Jaipur Rugs is one of the front line companies in traditional industry of carpet manufacturing in Jaipur (Rajasthan-India). As per a study Exports of handmade

carpets from India stood at US\$ 1,427.00 million in 2017-18. Indian handmade carpets are exported to many countries in the world, US being the largest importer (US\$ 731.84 million) followed by Germany (US\$ 140.58 million), UK (US\$ 78.52 million), Australia (US\$ 56.25 million) and UAE (US\$ 51.15 million). During April-October 2018, exports of handmade carpets from India stood at Rs 5,892.06 crore (US\$ 853.55 million).

JAIPUR RUGS: INSIGHTS AND STRUCTURE

Jaipur rugs was established by founder Mr. Nand Kishore Chaudhary who started initially

with two looms and three artisans to manufacture handmade rugs, and today the count has reached to 40000 artisans and 7 states across India. The aim of the founder along with making profits was also being socially attached, as it provides artisans a better livelihood and employment opportunities. The company continued to carry forward its business in handmade rugs instead of shifting to machine-made carpets. Keeping this in perspective and realising the demand and appreciation in the foreign market for this craftsmanship, the company is providing high quality, intricate custom-made and other varieties

of rugs abroad.

As per the official sources, for expansion of the operation in the next five years the company plans to add 60000 artisans and other manufacturing centres to increase its current major exporting country count from 40 to more than 50 nations. The company has also proposed to sell rugs within the national border by franchisee model, and if the demand in the initial years is good, then more franchisee stores will be seen in next five years in prominent cities of India. In this context, company has made its presence in Mumbai too.

INTERNET MARKETING

By deploying innovative information and communications technology throughout an organization and beyond (through links to partners and customers), an organization can enhance its competitiveness and Jaipur Rugs identified the technology as an opportunity. In order to grab the customer in international market, Jaipur Rugs not only introduced technology in its process but also in marketing strategy. Due to the variety in taste and the availability of options, now today's customers are constantly looking for the best, in such scenario, marketing becomes an important function even if the industry is handmade rugs. Further, adopting internet marketing becomes a good decision as it is a very popular mode of creating awareness about the company and its products. Therefore, the company is putting its efforts to launch new platforms to approach the customer across the ocean. Initially, Jaipur Rugs was paying for its website services to other IT company, but five years ago in 2007, it endorsed its in-house IT services rather depending on some other company for website updations. Now Jaipur Rugs have very sound online presence with award-winning of many websites.

Jaipur Rugs Main website developed in nine different languages as per the Company marketing strategies. Along with this, the in-house Internet-Marketing team of JAIPUR developed the Jaipur Rugs Foundation, Jaipur Rugs Incorporated USA Ecommerce websites. The effort was recognized at international level when they won the prestigious GD USA- 2012-Best Website Design Award in 2012.

With around 300 employees and a turnover US\$14.3 million, Jaipur Rugs has an annual IT spend of US\$341,976 (INR 15 million). Jaipur Rugs has an internet-marketing department devoted to marketing strategies such as corporate branding, corporate identity and corporate reputation along with building relationship with its clients.

The Internet Marketing team of Jaipur Rugs consists of well-trained professionals who support the on-the-field marketing team. On the basis of received queries, the professionals provide leads to the on-the-field marketing team who works to convert the leads into deal. By this approach, the company grabs an opportunity to assist the client by providing a better insight about the product and quality before placing order for final purchase. These techniques are helpful in enhancing the presence of the company outside of India. The case study focuses on these Internet Marketing strategies, and upcoming plans of the company.

Jaipur Rugs has around 20 websites displaying the various products of rugs along with pictures, types of rugs, related history etc. The internet marketing team keeps updating their website regularly with innovative products to keep the customer interested in. The company is on the top of the first page of various big search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo, which is a result of search engine optimisation; therefore, they have very high up the list just through normal searching. Within four years of establishment of the Internet Marketing team, it has become possible that a single word 'rugs' typed on search engine, automatically directs the user to the company web-site and this helps the company to get almost 90% leads out of the total enquiries. The internet marketing team is taking benefit of the new ERP software making it easier for the company to process enquiry and close sales in a more positive and efficient way.

Increasing the social media presence via Facebook is another strategy for getting access to geographically dispersed customers. The media is used for recognition and for feedback on product.

The prominent responsibilities of the Internet Marketing Department at Jaipur Rugs are as following:

- Brand awareness that is necessary to create brand loyalty for long-term, be able to influence its name to new international markets of the world and to increase its foothold globally.
- Integration of lead generation to on-field marketing team
- Informing visitors about the participation in various trade fairs
- Informing about revision of the designs and the latest patterns to visitors as well as design department.

Facilitating the Marketing department, Internet Marketing Department performs the following functions to strengthen the customer relations and visibility at international market -

Domain hosting as well as maintaining as per renewals and up gradations.

- Graphic designing for making the website, the company logo and other visual graphics presentable and creative to attract traffic on internet. It also works to sync the various websites together to generate more business and revenue opportunities.
- Marketing tools are designed here according to markets' needs, ranging from exclusive business cards to brochures, letter heads, envelopes, to other promotional products such as notebooks, bags, apparel etc. are designed in-house with a solid team of graphic designers.
- Pre launch test - It is to ascertain that the website designed for the company is simple to handle, free of bugs, flexible and ready for a full launch on internet. Therefore they constant try innovations on trial and error basis internally before rolling out any communication officially on the web. Also take care of maintenance of web-page and keeps regular updating on the latest in designs and other features.
- Review & updating - This is to keep in check how the website is responding in numbers of hits per month and bounce rate. Further, to resolve if any issue with the website and to monitor that it is updated regularly to stay the customers informed. To keep the supply chain cycle on track at international level, the team updates status of the product on weekly basis to the representatives of the company abroad who work as agent for the organization.
- Final on-line posting- The team assists the Marketing Department for furnishing information about company's new product development and its participation in various renowned international trade fairs. The department, with the approval of Head, ITM enters the finalised graphics, information, events etc. It monitors activities all around the world to prepare the organisation for new strategies for dealing with upcoming challenges well in advance.
- Development through ASP.net SQL server in background - They manage their own server according to the incoming online traffic, also it helps them to save expenses in hiring a public server.
- Monthly performance review - A continuous review and correction is done monthly to ascertain number of visitors coming on the website and to get the bounce rate. Through this review, the ITM department observes the latest trends and accordingly changes its strategy. They also focus on updating the websites to increase the level of web-page hits using the key words in the most appropriate way, even without making any pay to the search engines. After this evaluation, the ITM department with key officers decides on new product development and the better ways of delivering on the web targeting the strong presence of the company in the virtual world.

NEXT STEP IN WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The company has heightened its desire to reaching out directly to the end consumers through strategize communication via web world. At present, Jaipur Rugs is involved with business-to-business deals but with time, the company is planning to set up direct relationships with the end consumers. At the same time, focus would be on the idea of fostering emotional attachment between its end-consumers and artisans. Jaipur Rugs also intends to be more focused and target group specific with

regard to the communication strategies in the social media to make a better online brand presence and it has recently introduced its own E-Commerce portal.

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2. Carpet Industry And Exports, December 2018, retrieved from <https://www.ibef.org/exports/carpet-industry-in-india.aspx>

Websites

1. <https://www.jaipurrugs.com/>

Questions

- Q1. Comment on the activities of the Internet Marketing Department at Jaipur Rugs.
- Q2. Conduct a SWOT analysis of the e-marketing strategies at Jaipur Rugs.
- Q3. Suggest the ways the company can protect its designs from imitating strategy of competitors at internet.

Teaching Notes

1. The purpose of the case or the objectives that the participants should achieve? The purpose of the case is to enable the students understand about the IT based innovative marketing strategies.

2. Issues involved in this case, Teaching strategies to be adopted and time to be spent on each issue:

-Issues involved and strategies:

- Internet Marketing in Rugs Industry
- Role and benefits of Internet Marketing
- Process adopted for IT based marketing strategy

- Teaching Strategies

Case Discussion: Focused on various IT based marketing activities and their importance. Ten minutes may be allotted to each issue.

3. The link between the case, the concept and the tools/ technique relevant in the situation

The students/ participants should be able to comprehend the link between the concept and the actual practices in the field.

4. Preparation expected from the participants. Technical notes, industry notes/ readings from journals and books that need to accompany the case.

The students should be well versed with the concept of Internet Marketing.

5. Cross reference if any to other cases and situations

Any standard case and text material on Internet Marketing.

6. Is individual or group analysis of the case needed? If group, then ideal size of the group to be mentioned.

The case needs to be analyzed at both individual as well as group levels. The group size should be 4-6 members.

7. Assignments to be given to the participants before and after the session?

The students/participants should go through the standard text books on Internet Marketing before analyzing this case. They should also analyze other cases on Internet Marketing after discussing this case.



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