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ADVENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES : OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT:

Social Media is the in thing all over the globe. The advent and dramatic rise in its use and popularity has tremendously impacted the Public Relations. The professionals of public relations too have become tech-savvy in general and social media-savvy in particular in order to be effective in their profession.

The advent of technology has helped them to complete their tasks at a faster pace and to deliver their services across the globe. In this study, the trends in public relations and the sweeping changes that were altering the face of the public

relations will be analyzed in the backdrop of social media revolution.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media ,
advent and dramatic rise .*

INTRODUCTION:

The traditional way of public relations practice have given way to the modern technology-based social media platforms, where the technology has got wide reach and its presence is all-pervasive. The developments and growth in social media have expanded the operational base of the public relations practices of the organisations.

The pertinent issues like having and hiring the social media experts by organisations has become a sort of standard practices these days. The organization's social media presence and the perception studies relevant to their organization are also getting embedded in the holistic practice of public relations.

NEED FOR ORGANISATIONS TO HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE:

As the present times are driven by social media in many areas, there is a need that organisations have to have social media presence in order to create a niche for them in their areas of business or service, the social media presence will help the organisation present itself in a right manner to the outside world and its targeted audience. The second most important factor is that the proper social media presence will also give the opportunity to the organisation to send the right messages across.

Having better social media presence is also helpful in a way that it allows organizations to counter the negative campaign carried out by the competitor organizations. Interactive social

media presence also helps the organisation's to establish direct contact with the people and other targeted people so as to maintain meaningful dialogue and interaction with the people. The social media presence helps the organization to be immediately responsive to the needs of the people and to be accountable to their needs in relation to their company. The organizations are also hiring the communication specialists and other social media experts to offer the best possible social media presence to create an impact among the niche group.

POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS:

The organizations are mainly choosing the popular social media platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Youtube and Twitter etc., it has become a

sort of mandatory for the organisations to have the Facebook account and to create the huge followers base to its official account. This particular platform offers them to have the huge number of followers and to post the material and photo and other developments related to it.

The followers of the particular company's Facebook page can also leave their remarks thus giving the organization a chance to get their feedback directly or indirectly. Keeping the customers updated about the developments is also one of the main functions with the Facebook page of the company. It is unimaginable that corporate entities and other major organizations without any Facebook page these days. It is aimed at improving the brand image and updating the customers all the time. It is the best possible medium to connect with the people.

Digital era public relations also include carrying out research, customizing its content or products, and then pitching in the content to reach the targeted groups and building strong relations with the targeted customers or prospective customers.

Digital media has instant dissemination capacity and it reaches across the globe and has the potential to reach to the people in the best possible customized way. Interactivity is the best feature of the social media public relations. The content creation and dissemination have also undergone changes in a tremendous manner.

The digital public relations also strive for the reputation building and basically work for the creation of awareness in the first place. The convergence method related to the creation of content and its delivery in the best method of social contact is also another goal of the digital public relations. The world is now a virtual global village and all the people are connected to others if only they have the technology access like mobile phones, internet and the devices to access them.

Riding on the social media technology and other supporting developments, companies are now turning as global companies. The connectivity has increased in a possible dramatic way and the public relations practice has become a highly demanding job for them. The need to speed much higher in the days of social media and the companies are always under the public glare in the social media platforms.

Different companies plan different strategies and their main goal is to reach the people and engage them and wean them away from the competitors so as to maintain the customer base intact. This gives them competitive advantage in this global era of digital platforms. The focus is on the number of platforms and the number of ways to reach out to the people related to their products or services.

Public relations through the digital platforms also aim at finding out the influencers who voice in support of the brands and create awareness and help promote the brand's voice through them which they cannot do on their own.

In order to make the brand more visible it is imperative to have a great social media presence and gain the support of the target audience. How the companies present themselves to the outside world is very important and how they carve out a niche for them is also vital in building and maintaining the reputation of the company.

Digital public relations also help the brands to develop and maintain relations with the media and influencers. It also facilitates the brand's message development and dissemination in a speedier manner, this helps in social sharing being converted into the press releases, and help create and leverage special campaign hashtags.

Search engines, e-mails, websites, mobile apps, and other range of platforms offer the brands to embark on the digital public relations in a big way. It is faster paced, more delicately handled, it is interesting to mention that platforms like twitter have become primary communication channels with the companies to reach out to the targeted audiences.

CONCLUSION:

It has become evident that social media has a tremendous influence on the public relations. The field of public relations has changed forever unimaginably. The social media platforms have become the main channels of public relations. The traditional public relations tools to have got changed in tune with the social media channels.

The people are increasingly accessing social media platforms for information and other services. The image building and brand reputation have become buzz words in the social media era. The social media-savvy people have the capacity to create or damage the image of the brands in a jiffy. The social media users are increasing by the day and it has become a sort of mandatory for all the brands to have right social media presence.

In the fast changing times of the social media world, it is highly important to the organizations to have the right social media presence and to have a niche of their own by riding on the power of social media, which has become all pervasive of late.

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