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BOOSTING FACEBOOK ACCOUNT ARTIFICIALLY BY BUSINESS FIRMS

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ABSTRACT



Media either in print or electronic form reflects the image of the society we live in. It connects people in the rest of the world. We know about the people and happenings of other places and countries, as they know about us through the image created by the media. The has very media, influential power of the society. Social networking media have got wide acceptance in our society as a result of the changes in the social and cultural life pattern. And Facebook is the one of the most popular social networking media in our society. Because of the wider acceptance of Facebook in public. Business enterprises are very keen to popularize their image in the Facebook. Through the creation of account under the name of business on the Facebook. It has now grown as an important advertising and marketing platform for the business due to its cost effectiveness global reach. The business ability to influence the popularity of Facebook account (page) is limited. In order to overcome this limitation, the business may resort to certain unacceptable practices to stimulate the popularity of a Facebook account page. This is a conceptual work intended to reveal the shortcuts employed by business to market and popularize their image in the social networking site Facebook.

INTRODUCTION

Media have an influential power in the society. Social networking platform plays a vital role in the socio-cultural and democratic movements that take place around the world recently. The revolution that takes place in Arab nations like Syria, Yemen. The wall street revolution of U.S., The white ribbon movement in Russia. Are the some of the best examples that underlined the influential power that the social media on the society. It acts as a platform people express themselves and share their views independently. It can make or mar one's image. Therefore, it is very important for business to follow a conscious and stable social networking media strategy. Because of the wide spread acceptance of the internet and allied communication medium as well as due to the change in work and social life pattern social network media like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc., has got wide acceptance in our society.

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Another definition of social media is that it "depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals" H. Kietzmann, Jan; Kristopher Hermknes (2011).

The introduction of Facebook revolutionized the concept of social networking. It is one of the most widely used social networking platform in the present

scenario. And the business is very keen to exploit the Facebook as a medium for marketing and advertising the products as well as the business image. It is considered as very uncommon if a business does not have a Facebook account. The post of a social media manager has become common in a business firm. This shows the degree of integration between social media with the business enterprise. Because of this popularization of Facebook and its increased integration with business firm necessitate the businesses to improve the image of its Facebook account. When the business firm tries to improve the Facebook account and or account image in its on capacity, it results in the formation of the concept of Artificial boosting of Facebook accounts.

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL BOOSTING OF FACEBOOK ACCOUNT?

To understand the concept of artificial boosting or stimulating Facebook account. It is necessary to define the accepted as well as unexpected practices for boosting Facebook account. Artificial boosting of Facebook account means the increasing popularity of a Facebook account through the adoption of any unexpected practices or activities. Unaccepted practices mean any activities followed by a business that result in the provision of any monetary benefit to other Facebook members. To be more clear under this mechanism the business enterprise offers monetary rewards to the Facebook members in return of their Facebook activity specified by the business in advance.

MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORM

Though the history of social networking can be traced during the ears of 1978 with the Bulletin Board System (or

cBBS.) The BBS that was hosted on personal computers, requiring that users dial in through the medium of the host computer, exchanging information over phone lines with other users. This was the first system that allowed users to sign in and interact with each other, although it was quite slow since only one user could be logged in at a time. Later on in 1988 Internet Relay Chat (IRC) the first version of instant messaging came. Internet Relay Chat was Unix-based, limiting access to most people. It was used for the link and file sharing, and generally keeping in touch with one another.

However the new era in the field of social networking starts when Geocities launched its website in 1994. Its intent was to allow users to create their own websites, dividing them into "cities" based on the website's content. It was in 1995, TheGlobe.com was officially launched, offering users the ability to interact with people who held the same interests and publish their own content. Two years later, in 1997, AOL Instant Messenger and SixDegrees.com were launched. During this period instant messaging became popular and it was the first time internet users were able to create an account and friend each other.

New progress in the field of social networking marked by the entrance of Friendster in to the social networking platform. Friendster was considered as the pioneer of social networking that we have seen today. Friendster revolutionized the field of social networking. In its first three months, it is estimated that the social networking website acquired 3 million users, amounting to 1 in 126 internet users being members at the time. Friendster served as the launching point for the widely popular MySpace, who cloned Friendster and launched after just 10 days of coding.

With the popularization of MySpace. The habit of using web sites for socialization get evolved. In the following years, other social networking websites like Classmates.com, LinkedIn and Tribe.net started to pop up, including what was to be the most popular social networking website in internet history. In 2004 Facebook entered into the field of social networking. Because of its uniqueness in the concept of information sharing, it gained public attention very quickly. The other social networking giant Twitter was founded in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass and in July 2006, the site was launched.

THE FACEBOOK

Mark Zuckerberg, a 23 year old Harvard University psychology student developed a Facebook in February 2004. Within 24 hours, 1,200 Harvard students had signed up, and after one month, over half of the undergraduate population had an account. The network was promptly extended to other Boston universities, the Ivy League and eventually all US universities. It became Facebook.com in August 2005 after the address was purchased for \$200,000. US high schools could sign up from September 2005, then it began to spread worldwide, reaching the UK universities the following month.

As of September 2006, the network was extended beyond educational institutions to anyone with a registered email address. The site remains free to join, and makes a profit through advertising revenue. Yahoo and Google are among the companies which have expressed interest in Facebook, but it doesn't work. The site's features have continued to develop during 2007. Users can now give gifts to friends, post free classified advertisements and even develop their own applications - graffiti and Scrabble are particularly popular.

WHAT IS A FACEBOOK LIKE?

There were many interpretations for Facebook like. The official explanation that the Facebook.com provides is that "Clicking Like under something you or a friend posts on Facebook is an easy way to let someone know that you enjoy it, without leaving a comment. Just like a comment though, the fact that you liked it is noted beneath the item." That means, if someone make a like on Facebook it may due to any one or all of the following reasons:-

1. They find it funny.
2. They agree with what is being said.
3. They appreciate it in some way.
4. They are a fan of it.
5. ... They like it.

WHO IS A FOLLOWER IN FACEBOOK?

Following people on Facebook will allow you to see their public updates in News Feed. Keep up with journalists, celebrities, political figures and other people you're interested in but aren't friends with. Some well-known public figures with large followings are verified by Facebook and have a blue badge next to their names to help you know that they are who they claim to be. Keep in mind that not all authentic accounts are verified and that you can't request to have your account verified.

WHAT A TAG IN FACEBOOK MEAN?

A tag is a special kind of link. When you tag someone, you create a link to their Timeline. The post you tag the person may also be added to that person's Timeline. For example, you can tag a photo to show who's in the photo or post a status update and say who you're with. If you tag a friend in your status update, anyone who sees that the update can click on your friend's name and go to their Timeline. Your status update may also show up on that friend's Timeline.

When you tag someone, they'll be notified. Also, if you or a friend tags someone in your post and the post is set to Friends or more, the post could be visible to the audience you selected plus friends of the tagged person. Tags in photos and posts from people you aren't friends with may appear in Timeline review where you can decide if you want to allow them on your Timeline. You can also choose to review tags by anyone, including your friends

HOW A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT IS RATED?

In social networking platform a account is rated on the basis of factors like the activeness of the account, frequency of posts, frequency of visit and most importantly the number of followers for the account or the number of like and tag counts either for the post or for the page. And is true in the case of Facebook too. When it comes to the later three factors viz., Frequency of visit, Follower count and Like counts, have a unique characteristics. That is, these factors can't be directly influenced by a business or the ability of a business to influence these factors are very limited. The other members only visit, follow and like the social media account of the business. If they really feel to do so.

BOOSTING THE FACEBOOK ACCOUNT-ACCEPTED PRACTICES

As far as a business is considered, there are many ways to boost the account and or post in the Facebook. As the social networking sites are on the growth stage, new methods and practices were introduced frequently. And therefore it is very difficult to identify each and every option available to boost the Facebook account and or account. However a sincere attempt has made with regard to this.

Furthermore, there is no hard and fast rule to categories in between accepting account boosting practices with unaccepted account boosting practice. However the common parlance in the social networking world is that any practice that result in the direct cash payment and or benefit to other members of social networking site improve the popularity and image of social media account is considered as unexpected practice. And therefore the following listed activities are considered as accepted practices for boosting Facebook account and or page.

1. **Contests and Events:** - By organizing contests and events in the account page and proper communication will certainly increase the account visit and it will help to boost the social media presence.
2. **Frequent posting and content management:** - Through regular postings of new information relating to the business and products as well as through the proper management of the account content. It can attract new visit and followers.
3. **Management of Messages and Query:** - By sending a timely reply to messages and questions, it can easily gain the confidence and acceptance in the social platform.
4. **Opinion polls and surveys:** - By creating opinion polls and surveys relating to product and about customer views and hosting it on the account. It can attract new visits and followers.

WHY ARTIFICIAL BOOSTING TAKE PLACE?

The most important reason for the artificial boosting Facebook account was the increased integration of Facebook with

businesses as a marketing and promotional platform for its products. According to a report by Social Media Examiner, "86 percent of marketers indicate that social media is important for their business, up from 83 percent in 2012". It's fairly obvious that social media will continue to have a significant impact on the way marketers and business owners continue to communicate with consumers on a daily basis. Marketers should give attention to which social platforms help them reach their goals with relevant audiences, whether that's generating sales or greater visibility. With the multitude of social channels on the market and the growing need to create content at scale to fuel these networks, it's important to have actionable data to help better focus your social media-marketing efforts. In the case of social networking site Facebook, the popularity of an account is estimated on the basis of following factors:-

1. Number of unique visits generated by an account.
2. Total number of likes for the account and for various posts.
3. Total number of followers that the account have.

Facebook members do like and or follow a Facebook account or post of a business, only if they really feel an attachment or interest towards that business. That means the people who like and or follow the account of the business have some kind of relationship as well as knowledge about his corresponding business. To be more clear a business has only a little control over above mentioned three factors that are used to estimate the popularity of a Facebook account. In order to overcome the challenge of limited control and to improve the popularity and image of Facebook account some business resort to artificial boosting of Facebook accounts.

HOW ARTIFICIAL BOOSTING OF FACEBOOK ACCOUNT TAKE PLACE?

Any activity undertaken by a business beyond the accepted practices for boosting Facebook account will fall under the head of Facebook accounts. As these activities are against the accepted practices of using a Facebook account. There were no well defined methods or practices. However, following are the some of the artificial accounts, boosting techniques implemented by businesses.

1. **Distribution of Free Samples:** - It is the one of the most commonly used mechanism to boost the social media account. And if the same is done in accordance with the prior knowledge and sanction of Facebook, then it is OK. But in many cases the guidelines regarding offer period, quantity of sample distributed etc., were violated. Under this user of social networking sites (members) are offered products or services as a free sample in response to visiting the account page of the business, making posts and comments, following account, liking pages and posts etc.,
2. **Making Use of professional sites:** - There are also professional sites that offer guaranteed social network account followers, likes and visits. One can actually purchase social media account followers or visits for cash. Following are some of the sites that offers social networking account likes and followers for for cash. As per the statistics presented by these sites It found that the average cost for 1,000 followers is \$11. The price range comes around \$10 per thousand like. Following are the some of the sites that offers Facebook account likes as well as followers for cash.

1. www.fastfollowerz.com
2. www.fanslave.com
3. www.getpaidforlikes.com
4. www.liketocash.com
5. www.likecash.net.com
6. www.paidtolike.com
7. www.xfans.eu
8. www.youlikecash.com

3. **Using Crowd Sourcing Platform:** - Crowd sourcing has become effectively used by the businesses to stimulate their Facebook account artificially. There are a large number of crowd sourcing sites like micro workers, short tasks, mobile workers , etc. Where the members are provided with a large number of tasks (works). Members can perform tasks according to their qualification and interest. When the work is completed and submitted by the worker (member) and is cross checked and verified by the supplier of the work. The crowd sourcing site will credit the agreed money in the account of the worker. Now in crowd sourcing sites it's very common to find works such as liking of Facebook pages, following social networking account, visiting of social media account etc., From the workers' point of view it is very simple and the requirement is only the corresponding social media account.

CONCLUSION

Artificial boosting of Facebook account is a fact and is stretching its root day-after-day. It is very important to track down the artificial pushing up on Facebook account. It is true that no one is directly injured due to artificial boosting of Facebook accounts. But it can have the ability to mislead Facebook members as well as consumers. When it comes to the case of

Facebook account popularity and image. It is really a watering of the social networking image. A detailed study and cross analysis of the Facebook account of business can reveal more clear facts about artificial boosting. In a broad sense artificial boosting have the effect of watered marketing as it shows a rosier position of the Facebook account before other Facebook members. It is very non-viable to believe that artificial boosting is limited to Facebook. It may have spared to other social networking platform too. More studies are needed to verify this. The major reason for this kind of irregularity is the lack of organized and well defined rules and regulations to policing the social media. There were also many other reasons like lack of proper knowledge about social media ethics in public. Difference in national and regional rules and regulations in regulating social networking sites.

For the proper management of every system, there should be some organized set of code of conduct. There is a direct relationship between the fake social networking account and artificial boosting of social networking account. It is true that social networking sites were sincerely trying to ensure the credibility of account through various multi level security checks. The introduction of multi level security checks without conscious planning may kill the public interest in networking sites. Till now social networking is in its childish curve, therefore proper ruling and defining

accepted practices in social networking keep this medium of communication alive and contribute towards the progress of the socialization of the society.

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