

A Study on How Marketing on Digital Platforms Affects Customer Behavior in Bhilwara City's Restaurant Industry

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Abstract

Digital marketing has brought about significant changes in the restaurant industry and is crucial to their success and visibility. These days, running a profitable business requires it. One of the largest benefits is the ability to reach a broader audience through various online media. Social media platforms are especially useful for restaurants to showcase their culinary innovations, engage with customers, and build a loyal following. Thanks to targeted advertising, restaurants can now tailor their messaging to appeal to certain demographics and ensure that the right people see their promotions. This makes the brand more visible and draws in prospective clients who are more inclined to buy from you.

The hotel sector has undergone a change since social media was introduced since it offers a vast platform for interacting and attracting new customers. Because of the untapped popularity of these platforms—which are the most significant factor after word-of-mouth—a research on the market efficacy of digital marketing media like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Tripadvisor, Zomato, and others has been necessary.

The study is to investigate the factors that influence digital brand recognition, their effect on customer perception, and the most effective approach to leverage these technologies to leave a lasting impression on millennial and Gen-Z customers through customer-generated content. To further our grasp of the subject, the research makes use of both primary and secondary data.

The research reveals that the customers are actively using digital platforms instead of traditional advertising media to look up information about various restaurants. They find these platforms to be dependable and practical, which facilitates more informed choices and reduces time wastage.

Keywords: Digital Platforms, Restaurants, Marketing, Social Media, Customers.

Introduction

The emergence of digital platforms has brought about a significant transformation in the hospitality sector, affecting restaurants' operational procedures, client interactions, and competitive positioning. Digitalization has had a wide-ranging and significant influence on everything from social media marketing to online bookings. Digital platforms have simplified procedures in the hotel industry, increasing productivity and giving visitors a smooth experience. Online booking platforms provide travelers the freedom to arrange and personalize their trips while also streamlining the handling of hotel reservations for lodging establishments. Similar to this, digital platforms have now become very important instruments for marketing, customer service, and operational optimization in the restaurant business. The mechanics of how companies in various areas function have been altered by the digital revolution, which additionally redefined customer expectations and preferences in the digital age.

Numerous elements of running a restaurant have altered as a result of digitization, including recruiting practices, marketing campaigns, and customer interactions. This has presented restaurant owners with both new opportunities and problems. Although not particularly new, digital marketing is an effective strategy with several benefits, including low cost and popularity. Without regard to social or cultural barriers, it has the ability to swiftly increase brand recognition and garner attention from a large volume of traffic. Based on a number of previous studies, the benefits of social media marketing are said to range from functional, hedonistic, and financial aspects to social and psychological factors. This technology is essential for drawing customers into virtual experiences and identifying their demands, which will improve their engagement and have a good impact on the restaurant sector. A business may be able to close a deal with a potential client by interacting with them online, which would increase sales. Digital marketing channels such as YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook may be used by hotels to learn about their guests' preferences before, during, and after their trip.

Brand-building consists of three phases: ideation, connection development, and business creation. In order to meet and surpass guest expectations and address customer concerns, company managers nowadays must remain abreast of technological advancements, customer trends, and social media activity. Any organization that focuses on vulnerability has to be well-represented online. A visually appealing gateway with informative, broad audience-relevant material, vibrant photos, or virtual tours draws internet visitors and piques their interest in staying at a hotel that meets their demands.

Since Facebook and Instagram are the most widely used platforms, both are independent and chain restaurant owners view it as the best place to start when developing a social media plan due to its adaptability and widespread reach. However, given the dynamic nature of the sector, putting into practice a thoughtful and well-planned digital marketing programme is crucial. It takes time, effort, and expert advice to get a firm to open up to digital marketing methods, which target news updates, promotions, and guest engagement. Being present on just one vertical is insufficient. There has been an increase in mobile device traffic. To generate income, having a website that is optimised for mobile devices can significantly impact the likelihood of securing a reservation.

The fast evolution of digital marketing trends has made it challenging for hospitality organisations to remain in the forefront. The only person who can redirect traffic to the website and turn casual visitors taking virtual tours into customers using genuine services is an expert with marketing experience and industry understanding. Numerous digital marketing domains should be connected and linked as different consumer groups require different approaches depending on goals and ambitions.

Objective

- To study the influence of digital platforms on customer behavior.

Literature Review

These days, digital marketing is a key component of any organization, regardless of size or nature. Digital marketing's growing influence has changed how companies advertise their products to both current and possible customers. The way firms advertise their products to both current and possible customers have changed as a result of the necessity for digital marketing. In the food industry, consumers now have fast access to a wealth of information on the newest deals and greatest discounts, which has never been felt before.

According to Edelman (2010), marketers cannot continue with the traditional methods of doing business. It started as a form of communication and has expanded not just into another source of additional money but most significantly, to create and sustain long-term connections with the many players in the market. Every digital campaign that is deployed may be monitored for reach, engagement, and conversion. This has given marketing research a completely new meaning, enabling it to comprehend client wants like never before.

Mhlanga & Tichaawa (2017) asserts that encouraging remarks on social media offer advantages such as a rise in intentions to buy new menu items since comments and reviews reduce the risk of making a purchase. According to studies, patrons of restaurants are more inclined to believe comments or reviews left by other patrons on social media platforms than that are posted on the restaurant's website.

According to Sinclaire and Vogus (2011) Positive social media comments help the restaurant's brand image grow, which may ultimately result in a decrease in promotional cost.

Daniel (2011) reports that around 44 percent of first-time restaurant patrons rely on favourable remarks about the establishment, with prior customers typically contributing 10 percent of the comments.

Having a good internet presence is crucial for all businesses. Keeping your website up to date and employing powerful internet marketing strategies—such as social media—are excellent means of generating more leads. Establish goals and incorporate many measuring systems, as there are numerous approaches to consider. The online and physical areas that coexist in our living environment define our daily surroundings. The tourist business has to build user-friendly and expeditious tourism products in response to the growing popularity of internet offers. The most popular alert option is Google Alerts, which is followed by looking for the restaurant's name or another relevant phrase on a search engine like Google. The two main objectives of keeping an eye on internet activity were keeping track of any activity related to the restaurant and determining whether a client need assistance.

Clemons (2009) carried out a study which revealed that over 40% of marketing experts thought social media advertising will eventually outperform traditional print and other media advertising. The biggest problem, though, is weighing the value of the time and resources invested against the outcome. When fans receive customised marketing offers on social media, they have a higher chance of buying, sharing, and interacting.

"We are delighted to announce that we have selected WATConsult as our digital media partner after a rigorous selection process," said Mr. Anand Thakur, Chief Digital Officer of Jubliant Foodworks (2017). We think the brand will advance thanks to their creative strategy. With this partnership, we want to use their wealth of digital experience to enhance and broaden our digital outreach. The current scenario indicates a growing tendency among these corporate organisations to hire a specialised agency for digital marketing.

Van Djick (2013) noted that the emergence of social media at the commence of the new millennium has given rise to new channels for sharing opinions on goods and services. A significant rise in customer empowerment has resulted from this incident, as consumers now have a plethora of immediate instruments at their disposal to influence others with their thoughts, suggestions, or grievances.

Davis et al. (2014) evaluated the value of social media communities for brand management. Five distinct drivers of brand consumption in social media were discovered by their study: self-oriented, emotional, social, functional, and relational.

The emergence of digitalization has brought about significant changes to both the corporate environment and marketing techniques. Regarding digital marketing, it is a vital resource for every company. Digital marketing heavily relies on positioning and branding. Having an online presence opens up countless possibilities for content sharing and consumer acquisition.

Digital marketing is being employed by businesses primarily because it is more affordable and more accessible than traditional marketing. According to Konrath (2006), having a compelling value proposition that sets you apart from the competition is crucial for success in digital marketing. Using an electronic device (a computer, tablet, gaming console, or smartphone) to contact clients is where the phrase "digital marketing" originates. To put it another way, digital marketing is the practice of promoting a brand or product using one or more digital platforms.

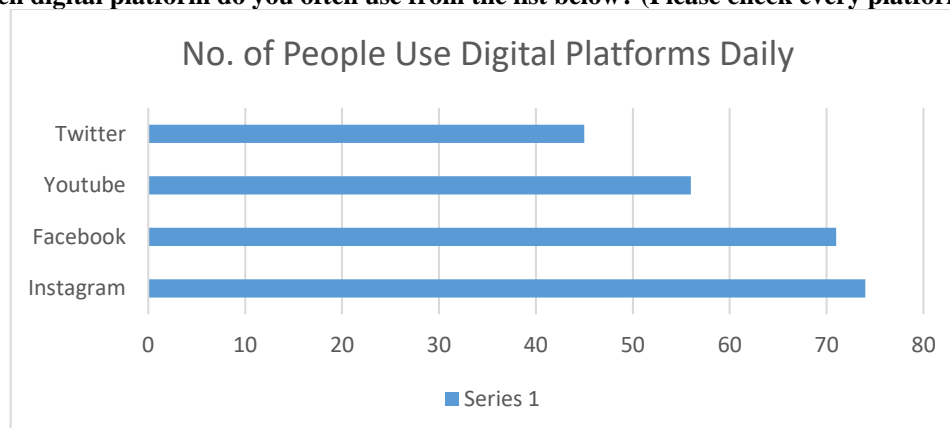
Research Methodology

This study finds out the significant impact that digital platforms have on restaurant patrons' behaviour, with a particular emphasis on the Bhilwara city of Rajasthan. The study uses primary and secondary sources in its extensive data collecting strategy. A well-crafted questionnaire is used to collect primary data, while credible sources such books, websites, journals, and publications are used to collect secondary data. Data is collected using the survey technique, with a sample size of 80 respondents. Random sampling is a key component of the sample design, guaranteeing a representative and varied cross-section of the intended audience. The study employs a dual research approach that integrates exploratory and descriptive components to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the dynamics between digital platforms and consumer behavior in the local restaurant industry.

Data Analysis and Findings

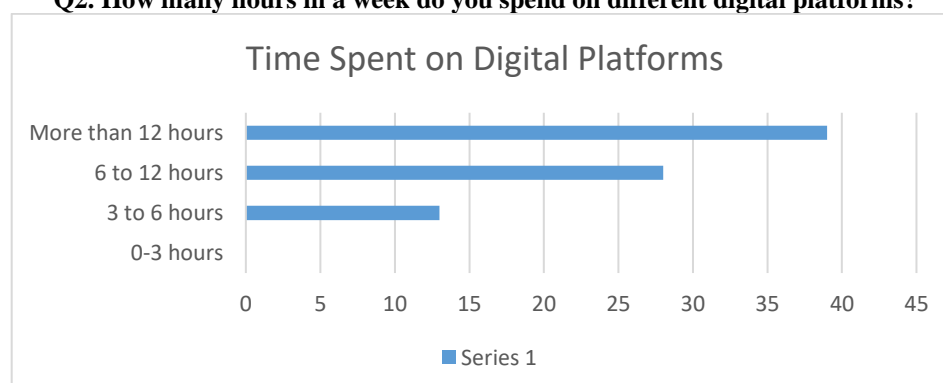
Just 80 of the 100 customers of various eateries in Bhilwara City who received the questionnaire link through emails and SMS completed it. The results of this study provide important new information to researchers and marketers on the widely held belief that younger people utilize digital platforms more regularly rather it is observed that customers of other age groups also use digital platforms to make selection informed and easy.

Q1. Which digital platform do you often use from the list below? (Please check every platform you use.)



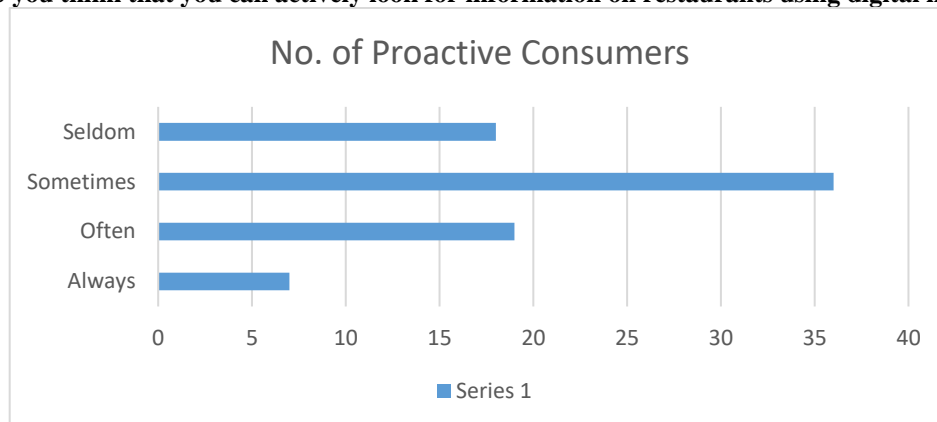
Interpretation: Instagram is the most popular digital platform used by respondents on daily basis closely followed by Facebook.

Q2. How many hours in a week do you spend on different digital platforms?



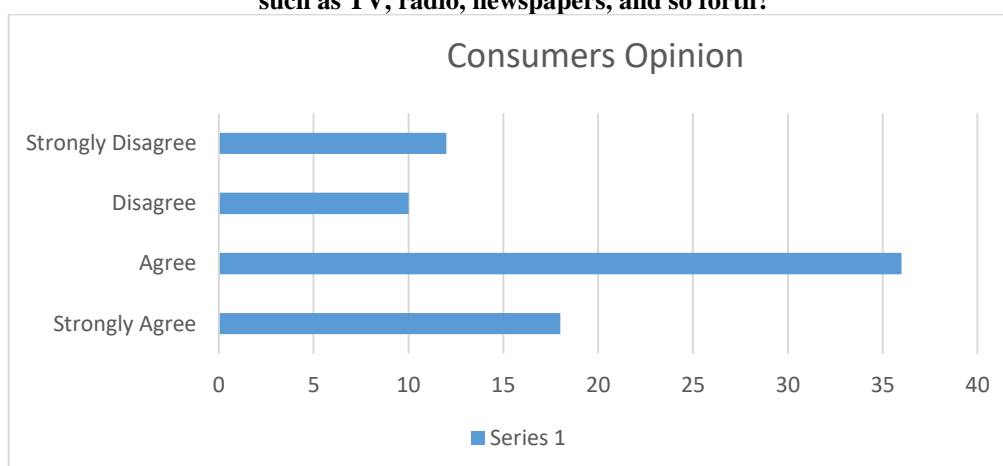
Interpretation: As per the data collected maximum people use digital platforms extensively i.e. more than 12 hours a week.

Q3. Do you think that you can actively look for information on restaurants using digital medium?



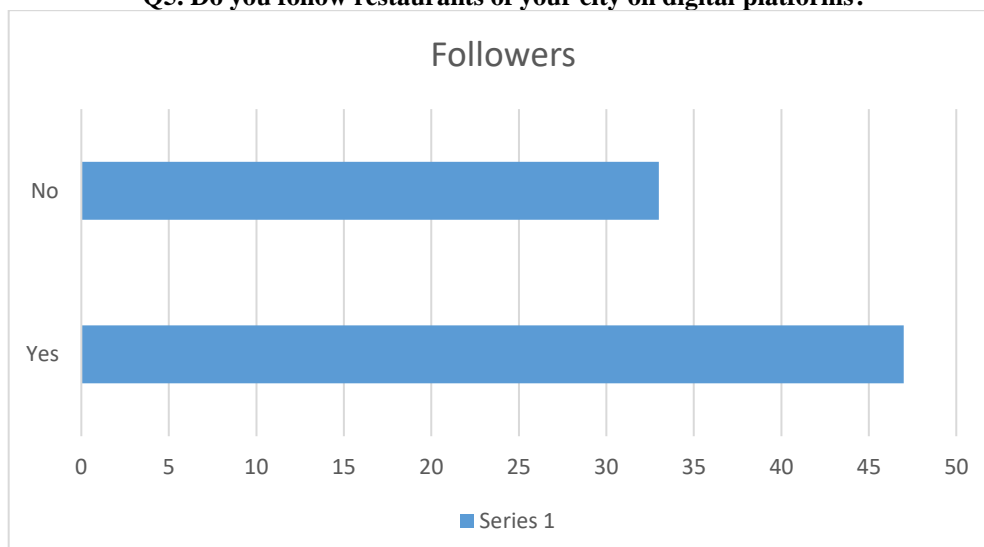
Interpretation: The major chunk of customers accepted that they can occasionally proactively look for information on restaurants using digital media.

Q4. Do you believe that looking for information on restaurants online is simpler than using traditional media, such as TV, radio, newspapers, and so forth?



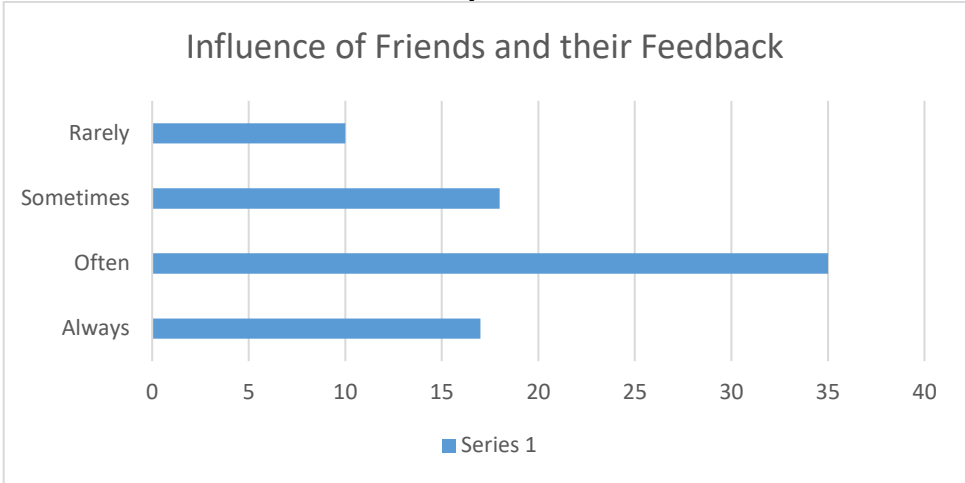
Interpretation: Majority of consumers agreed that using digital medium for searching information regarding restaurants is easier than traditional ways.

Q5. Do you follow restaurants of your city on digital platforms?



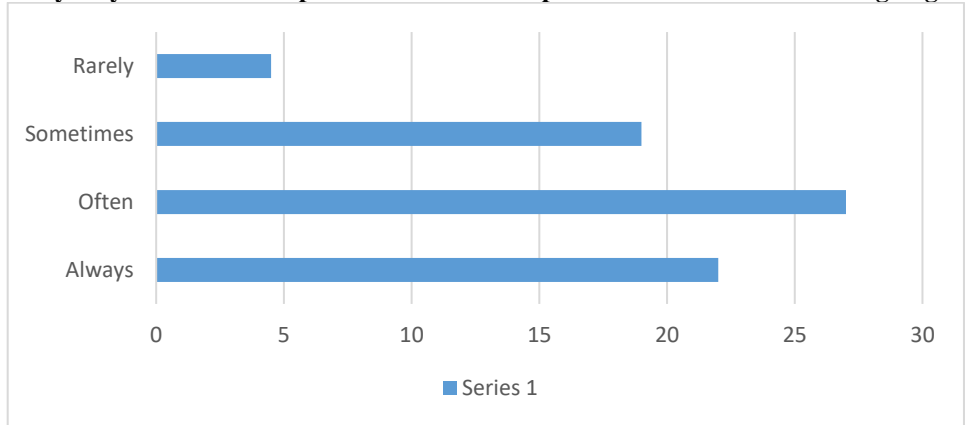
Interpretation: Majority of the users follow restaurants on various digital platforms for updates and offers.

Q6. When choosing a restaurant, does the advice or comments from your "Friends" on social media actually influence your choice?



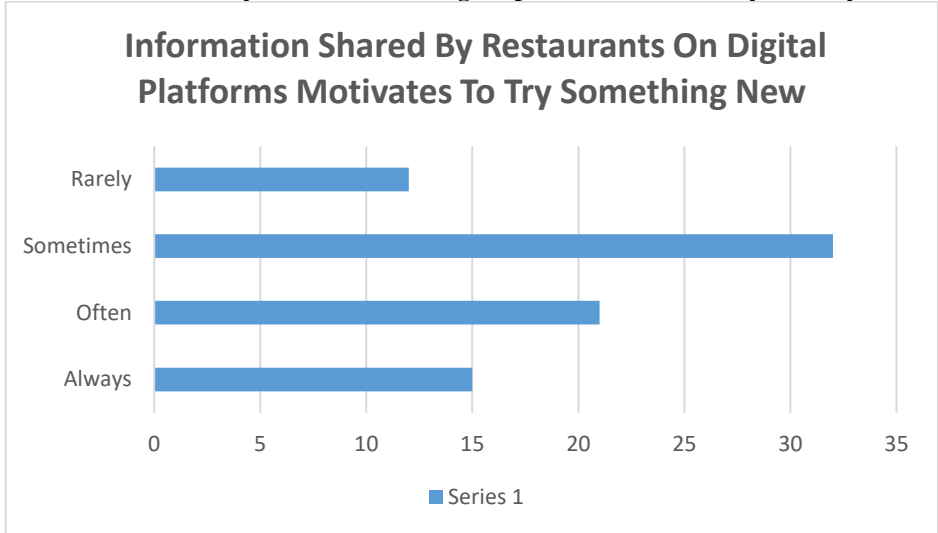
Interpretation: Majority of consumers agreed that not always but often opinion of friends and their feedback do influence while selecting for a restaurant.

Q7. How frequently do you use internet platforms to look for pertinent information before going to a restaurant?



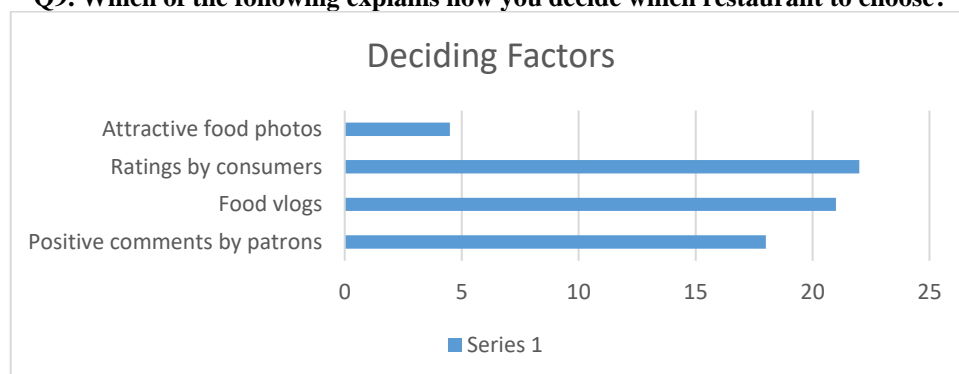
Interpretation: Surprisingly, the majority of respondents in the chart's data always utilise social media to research restaurants before going there.

Q8. Does information shared by restaurants on digital platforms motivates you to try something new?



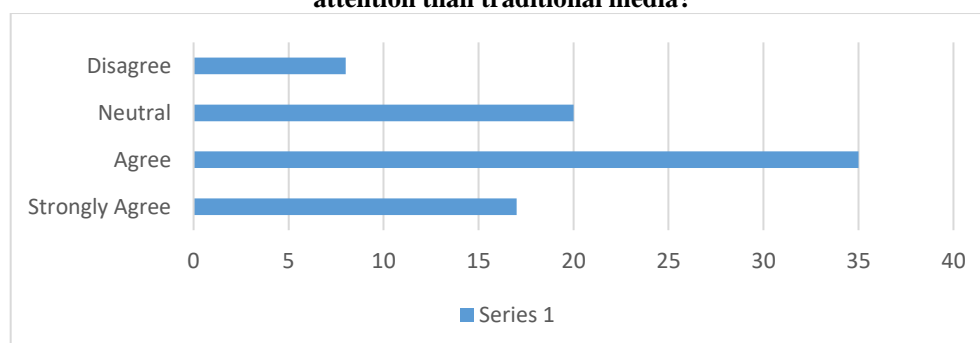
Interpretation: Majority respondents have tried new things based on posts by restaurants on various digital platforms.

Q9. Which of the following explains how you decide which restaurant to choose?



Interpretation: Data collected from respondents suggests that majority of consumers look for ratings by other consumers before making a choice.

Q10. Do you also think that digital platforms has given new restaurants a more effective way to get consumers' attention than traditional media?



Interpretation: 35 respondents approve that digital media is an effective way for attracting customers for new restaurants than traditional media.

Conclusion

The study looked at how customers of Bhilwara restaurants are being affected by digital marketing at an exponential rate. Social media has changed the way that various social groups see companies, which has surely led to a rise in sales volume and exposure. As companies have come to realise how important it is to have an online presence, brand interpretation and loyalty have moved from being considered niche to mainstream. For restaurant marketers in Bhilwara to promote their offerings to consumers, digital media is an essential tool. Today's empowered consumers want companies to engage with them whenever and wherever they choose, or else they will just look for another provider. Restaurant marketers should utilise social media carefully and strategically to increase the marketability of their institution. They need to adjust their marketing strategies to account for time restrictions and changing consumer buying habits. Facebook and Instagram are the two most widely used social media sites by users; both should be used carefully.

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