Social Media integration on College Website for improving website traffic and brand recall

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Abstract: Higher education institutions have a big role for social media. Your visitors can interact with your content more readily thanks to social media integration. Integrating social media into your website will help improve your SEO, as search engines will see your content as more valuable and relevant to users. They let customers share educational services that they want to earmark for the future or recommend to their contacts. Thus, the present study deals with the importance of the integration of social media into websites for improving web traffic and brand recall.

Keywords: Social media, Higher educational institutions, website, website traffic

Introduction
Social media helps people in communicating, interacting, sharing content and also provides collaboration.
The importance of social media has been increasing day by day. To keep up with everything that is happening on social media, one must keep a finger on the social media pulse as its involvement and integration techniques are constantly evolving.

The ability to interact and engage with the major brand is made possible by social media. They are more likely to spread your content and advertise your goods. You can integrate social media with your email, website, and pages on different platforms with the aid of a few key tools.

Websites are the virtual front door of the campus. The website must be designed in such a way so that it attracts all the stakeholders. A User-friendly website only creates value for the customer.

Website traffic is the volume of users visiting a particular website. It is a measurement of the number of visitors to a website. Web traffic is one of the key performance indicators when building a website because it quantifies your readership or following as well as your potential client base, sales, and business leads (depending on the nature of your website).

When a product, service, or any other type of brand association is mentioned, brand recall measures how likely a consumer is to recall the name of the brand right away.

The purpose of this study is to determine the value of social media integration on college websites. It also focuses on the methods to be used to incorporate social media into college websites in order to increase website traffic and brand recognition.

Literature Review
The literature review is described as under:
(Gulzar et al., 2022) claimed that if the website is properly designed then can allow the users to connect with the site through the content of the site and profile of the user. Comments can be posted and groups can also be created. (Kaplan, 2015) found from the study that it is difficult to use social media effectively in universities all over the world to support teaching, promote learning, and engage students (Gonzalez, 2010) gave much emphasis to Communication in Social Media engagement. (Cohen, 2011) claimed that Social media helps an interactive web by engaging users to participate. (Mantymaki and Riemer, 2016 found in their study that Social media is used for various reasons including communication, collaboration, and even the exchange of ideas.

Objectives of the Study
1.   To find out the importance of why social media integration is important for websites.
2.   To identify different social media platforms used by colleges offering traditional courses in tier-II cities of India.

3. To evaluate the overall metrics of different social media platforms used by S.B. city
4. To suggest different strategies to integrate social media into websites.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data are gathered. A personal interview serves as the primary data source. A personal interview is conducted with the Digital and social media Marketing Professional Mr. Govind Chandak, Business Head & Product Growth - GrowthAcad. The sources of secondary data include e-books, research articles, research papers, etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Among the first businesses to create websites were educational institutions. The objective in their early years was to merely exist online. Currently, many colleges and universities are making an effort to include a solid content along with details about the institution and its educational resources.

According to Lynch and Horton, the process of planning a website consists of two steps:

1) Identify the objectives and resources

2) Indicate the target market, site details, required technology, and an evaluation of the outcomes.

Therefore, developers must first ascertain what the organisation hopes to achieve online. There are two groups that make up the college audience. Academics, general staff, and students make up the bulk of the audience. The general public and other academic institutions make up the secondary audience.

The data has been collected and presented under 4 heads:

1. Importance of Integrating Social Media on College Websites
2. Different Ways of integration of Social Media into website
3. What an Institute can do if the website be integrated with Social Media?
4. Social Media platforms used by colleges offering traditional courses in tier-II cities of India

1. Importance of Integrating Social Media on College Websites

a. Engaging students on and off-campus

Connecting students on one platform becomes easier. Students can be engaged very easily on the campus and off the campus.

b. Connectivity: Social media networks are created to foster connections within communities. Any institution can consistently use a website that is social media integrated for better connectivity.

c Connecting with alumni and boosting fundraising efforts

Alumni can contribute funds in institute. For this Social media platform if integrated on website can help in strengthening the relations with Alumni. Social media helps in giving a complete digital presence and connects with the alumni.

d. Direct communication is simple to carry out with the aid of social media. As online learning and remote work become more common, social media can aid in preparing students for these types of jobs.

e. Parental involvement: Social media networks show to be a useful tool for educational institutions when it comes to involving parents and motivating them to get involved.

f. Community building: A great way to connect with prospective professionals and students. Social media can increase industry exposure and give the opportunity to network with different industry experts and academics from various institutions.

g. Visibility Advantage: Institutions with an online presence benefit from having a higher level of visibility. Additionally, a positive attitude towards the institute can frequently be attributed to having a presence online.

h. Stimulate Knowledge and Discussion: Information is constantly shared and content is exchanged on social media at breakneck speeds. Social media offers a platform for evaluating, analysing, retaining, and disseminating information on a broad scale.

2. Various approaches to social media integration for websites

1. Design unique social media buttons
2. Add a Twitter feed to your homepage

3.   Add social media sharing buttons to your blog posts
4.   Include social sharing buttons in your blog posts.
5.   Include social media posts on your site
6.   Add a social login feature.
7.   Add social media sharing buttons to your footer.
8.   Social Media Review Widget
9.   YouTube Video Testimonials
10.   Live Social Media Feed
11.   Customize Your Social Media Wall
12.   Display Your Social Media Wall
13.   Social Media Feed Slideshows

3.   What an Institute can do if the website be integrated with Social Media?
1.   Any educational institute to increase its brand image can make use of Social media. Streaming Facebook Live lectures, questions of discussion, and class announcements can be done on FB.
2.   College can make use of post reminders for assignments and due dates. Twitter can be further used as a discussion board.
3.   You tube sync with the college website will let know the stakeholders about college events, updates, etc.
4.   With the help of Instagram, digital Storytelling can be featured. Instagram helps in connecting the audience at large.

4   Social Media platforms used by college as a representative offering traditional courses in tier-II cities of India
1.   YouTube
2.   Facebook
3.   WhatsApp
4.   Instagram

Binzani College Social Media Metrics

Engagement	Youtube	Facebook	Instagram
Followers		400	259
Posts		4	83
Videos		2	-
Recently	93		
Uploaded			
Live	83		
Streamed			
Comments		5	-
Likes	405	45	-
Share		2	-
Profile		553	-
Views			
Following	-	-	5
Views	31175		
Subscribers	1.19K		
EngagementRate	*Moderate*	*Less*	*Less*

Table1 : Social Media Metrics of Shri Binzani City College

Findings of the study

1.   From the above data, it is found that college do not make much use of Social Media Platforms for increasing its brand image. Youtube platform has been used by the college during the Covid -19 Pandemic for live-streaming Guest Lectures, Workshops Seminars, etc. Whereas, other Social Media Platforms are not utilized by the colleges.

2.   It is also found from the study that the College has a digital presence in the form of a College website where almost all the necessary details about Academic and Non-Academic is given.

3.   College uses its official website for the dissemination of Academic information to all stakeholdersbut does not cover any updates and alerts on Social Media regularly.

4.   The college has a simple website and it has no text content. It consists of only images and pdfs which may hamper the online visibility.

5.   It is also found that the college website is poor as it is not much of social friendly and user friendly.

6.   No notification about services, events, or other aspects are given on the website so there is a need to redesign the website.

Conclusion

In the current situation, the use and adoption of social media platforms has an effect on the college's brand image. All social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, etc., must be integrated by colleges. All stakeholders are impacted by increased use of these platforms. All students applying for admission to the college are also shown the college's online presence. As a result, it is determined that colleges must incorporate social media to increase brand recognition.

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