The Effects of Social Media & Web Development on Product Promotion

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&

The Effects of Branding on Sales and Building a Startup

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the key components needed to make a startup. This included created making a landing page and also driving traffic to the page through Facebook. On the landing page section, there was a test to see what would provide the best user experience using Squarespace. This entailed looking into different layouts and using analytics to determine how effective the landing page was in converting customers. In terms of Facebook research, went into looking into creating a method into driving leads into the prospect pipeline. A campaign was run to gather all the data needed and to see how the audience would react to the campaign from beginning to the end of the pipeline. Facebook analytics helped get effective results especially coupled with the analytics found on Squarespace. The results of this study helped create a methodology in which a startup can use Facebook to drive traffic to a landing page. The results showed that when targeting using t-shirts, males ages 35-54 were the most receptive to that type of product. The end result was a 1.8% click-through rate, which was lower than ideal, but could be improved with more testing.

Chapter 1
Purpose of the Study

The graphic communication world has experienced an enormous uptick in the popularity of social media and web development. Naturally, this has affected the way product promotion is handled. This growing area is fueling the future of every consumer industry. Because this area of graphic communication is rapidly evolving and being explored there is no conclusive evidence this trend will continue.

Timing could not have been more perfect to break into the market of men's fashion. It is now acceptable for men to embrace fashion and actively pursue it. The issue for many men is there are not many places to go for fashion wear. This may indicate that the market is underserved at this point. You have the demand and no supply. You can see the trends starting to form with more social media targeting men's clothing. For example, on a popular site called, Reddit, there are sub-articles that are created by users of the site. One of the growing "sub-Reddits" is called Men's Fashion Advice. On here, you can see that there is a market; just one of the big problems is that there is not really a place to feed into the market.

In order to have a successful online business presence, consumers need to be able to access an optimized website on any platform. The consumer should be able to identify promotional material and advertisements without distracting from the final act of purchasing a product. The question that needs to be answered is how does social media and web development practices affect consumer perception of a product. This can be further broken down into consumer characteristics and markets to see what does and does not work for each category in order to explore key aspects of an online business presence.

This research focused on the creation of a clothing business and the branding that went behind it. This entails manufacturing, marketing and branding. One researcher, Galen, observed and oversaw the manufacturing process as well as the branding. While Galen also faced the issue of logo creation and how marketable it will be. We decided on the name Trade Secret. Prototypes were sent out to Asia and were used for further testing. The last thing that he will have to look into is the creation of a story. Stories sell a product, for example look into Apple and Lily Prints. People like background knowledge behind the company, and it helps make the company seem more human and personable.

When combining the art of story telling with the other marketing aspects of the business this represents the full circle of connecting with consumers. For this study, the product being sold was men's clothing targeted at the young professional looking to dress nicer both casually and for work. The products themselves will be of a higher quality but in order to sell, the website and social media campaign will need to be successful in reaching the consumer first. Testing effectiveness of social media using Facebook advertisement to reach young professionals is key to the study.

Significance of the Study

This research is important to all businesses that wish to stay up to date with current marketing trends. Businesses that connect with consumers through social media and can create sales on their website will have an enormous advantage over their competition. Often businesses can harm their standing with consumers when incorrectly or poorly marketing their brand. Business growth relies on reaching goals, so it is important to see how much social media marketing is enough and how much is too much for the consumer to accept.

Another aspect is being able to monitor marketing campaigns in real time to allow businesses to track effectiveness of promotional efforts. The exceedingly fast speeds at which consumers spread both positive and negative press can make or break a company that isn't constantly watching it's online presence. While recording data on consumer usage of social media and the product site is one thing, it is entirely different to know what it means as well. This is where the study intends to decipher results and explain what equals a good or bad result from a marketing campaign. The faster the traits and trends can be deduced, the faster a company can respond and make use of their efforts. In the case of the project, it allows the company to accurately target young professionals looking to purchase higher-end men's clothing. However, on a broader scale, this research can be applied to any market and consumer because it is an analysis of trends and how to best determine what marketing actions to take.

This research is important to the target market that the company is trying to fit into. More importantly, this research will make a good template for people who want to follow into creating a clothing line startup. From brainstorming to the creation of the brand, this paper will document the creation of Trade Secret. There are some people who want to go into fashion, one way or another, but do not know the amount of work that is involved in creating clothing. Not only, must you keep up with designs and colors, but there also needs to be a crew of people specialized to help promote and push the product. The last issue is figuring out how to brand to the demographic that we are trying to target. The research will go over how to reach a target audience and be able to sell to them.

Interest in the Study

This problem of marketing online to consumers is only going to grow larger and more complex over time. Whoever understands and solves this issue will be able to grow whatever business they enter. Researcher Scott is personally looking for a job in web development and product promotion when he graduates because this is a topic that most companies have prioritized. Businesses are dedicating many resources to these areas of their company, which means that it has yet to be solved and there is a growing need. He would like to understand why there is such a need and how it can be solved to further the industry and connect with consumers.

Researcher Galen loves male fashion. One of the biggest hobbies is to help people dress better. Quite often he will have people asking me right before an interview or a meeting on how to dress. He keeps up with the season's colors and also follows how clothes should fit for the year. His family already goes overseas to make clothes for personal and most of their clothes are custom and with the times. Because of their frequent visits to Asia, we have made a lot of connections with tailors. Galen understands that those connections are an odd thing to have at his age, and he has always wanted to start a clothing line.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Successful marketing and sales in the rapidly expanding digital world requires social media, web development and design. Many businesses have seen growth from moving their brick and mortar storefronts online ("PR Newswire, 2013). The overall impact of these related fields is continuously measured to understand the effects of product marketing and sales on consumers. Their impact varies from market to market. However, based on consumer reactions, campaigns can either quickly rise or fall (Ayanso, 2010).

History of Social Media, Web Development and Design on Product Promotion

The Internet is the fuel of this marketing shift. Starting in the 1990's the Internet became a viable option for social interaction and shopping. In 1996 there were 45 million people using the Internet in the entire world. By 2000 the number of users grew to 407 million and 218 countries were now online (Elon University School of Communications, n.d.). As evidenced by the sharp increase in only a few years, observers can see the use of the Internet, as a form of communication was swift.

One of the earliest online stores to crop up was Amazon.com, which sold books to consumers who couldn't find them in their local stores. This was a revelation for consumers, as it opened the door to buying anything imaginable (Webley, 2010). Despite never seeing the product before purchase, consumers have shown that strong pricing and convenience can overrule concerns about the look and feel of the product.

Social media has been in existence since the first email was sent in 1971, but what the world knows today as social media is relatively new (O'Dell, 2011). Facebook and Twitter are two of the major players in the social media realm, yet they only came into existence in 2004 and 2006 respectively (O'Dell, 2011). With the advancements in technology over the past decade, consumers purchase more products online than ever before. Realizing that this is a growing trend, companies have focused on moving their storefronts online utilizing web development, design, and social media for product promotion.

Effects of Social Media, Web Development and Design on Product Promotion

"Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (Tufts University Digital Communications, n.d.)". These interactions power consumer's purchasing decisions because of the way a product's brand is perceived. Social media is a key way that businesses create their brand and without a strong brand a company will fail (AllBusiness.com, as cited in The New York Times, 2009). The overall impact of social media on marketing is understood only in the sense that it has an impact. However, the measured impact differs from business to business.

The other half of online product promotion is web development and design. These two areas are constantly evolving as the technology and tools available change every few months. The World Wide Web Consortium is an international community that develops open standards for web development and design. The W3C has a continuous flow of updates on new standards and practices developers and designers can use for their websites ("The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), n.d.). This ever-evolving world changes the way developers and designers present websites to

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consumers. From desktop to mobile, websites must present products to consumers else sales will decline.

Implementations of Social Media, Web Development and Design campaigns

Companies must be careful when promoting products with social media and their websites because the online consumer community carefully watches each move. Lowes is multi-million dollar business that has years of experience marketing products to consumers that entered the social media realm. The company found that it had to change its traditional marketing tactics to entice consumers (Ingram, 2013).

Monitoring analytics of website usage can tell web developers much about how the design affects consumer purchasing decisions (Budd, 2012). Design of a website can help or harm business owners based on how the consumer navigates the site and perceives the brand.

These implementation plans show that while research has been conducted to test consumer reactions to product promotion, there is not a single method that has worked for every specific demographic. Entry into popular social media and web development standards allows companies to excel, but certain areas of product promotion are more sensitive than others.

Use of Analytics

There are a few central techniques to monitor user activity on social media and product websites. These services provide valuable information to business owners because there is no face-to-face interaction to gauge customer interest. Since the entire transaction is online, the testing methods

focus on tracking user clicks, the duration of time spent in certain locations of a website, how often the site is visited and where the traffic is coming from.

One of the most popular and convenient tracking tools is Google Analytics (GA). Some of the areas that GA focuses on are, audience characteristics and behavior, advertising and campaign performance and site and app performance (Google, 2013). GA uses JavaScript embedded in the product website to screen consumer usage and then provide reports back to the website owner. The reports allow website owners to track their marketing campaigns and see what is successful and what is not (Mashable, 2011).

Another popular method of gauging consumer participation on a website is the use of Crazy Egg software. This software is again installed on a website using JavaScript and tracks areas that Google Analytics does not. Crazy Egg provides four tools to track user statistics on websites. The tools are heatmap, scrollmap, overlay and confetti which when combined together provide website owners with data on where customers are clicking and how long of a duration the mouse stays in one place (Crazy Egg, 2013).

Another common method of tracking consumer interactions with both social media and product websites is the use of the tool bitly. Bitly provides marketers with data on how people save, share and discover their links. It is available through numerous channels including, websites, browser extensions and third party tools (bitly, 2013). Bitly acts as a funnel where users click a custom version of a website URL called a bitmark and the site records the click information. This information is then compiled and stored for the marketer to view later.

The usage of all of the tracking methods at once allows marketers to get a solid overview of what the consumer reaction is to the marketing campaign. By tracking trends, marketers can grow their social media and website traffic and stay away from tactics that produce negative results.

Marketing in the Clothing Industry

The clothing industry is an unpredictable industry because of how often styles change. The lack of a constant product makes marketing particularly difficult in this industry. Retailers monitor the responses of consumers on sites such as Twitter.com to measure the effectiveness of new advertising campaigns. In some cases this can alert companies to important negative press the company is receiving (Windels, 2013). Companies have to carefully monitor statistics on their social media presence because within days a company's reputation depends on consumer perceptions.

In order to sell to the consumer the website also has to be able to convert visits into profits. This is where strong web design skills become vital to a company's success. A website needs to look current and be true to the branding of the company, otherwise customers will not feel confident in the website (Putnam, 2011). Having a clutter-free, easy-to-navigate website is another important element to the overall presentation. It helps customers to find products and make purchases with minimal trouble. In the clothing market this is especially important because of how often products and their locations will change on the website (Bronkowski, 2013). The overall web design process for marketing proves to be especially vital to the success of sale conversion.

The Market

Selling clothing to men encompasses more than just how a website is run. It also entails how the market is right now. Fashion has been on people's minds since there was money in people's hands. A decade ago, male shoppers were different than they are now. Men nowadays are changing with the times, Ogden Barnes states that men are now marrying older and have a stable income. Not only that, but they are marrying women with jobs as well, so there is money. Regardless, the new generation is used to spending time shopping, but also want to get deals (Ogden-Barnes 2012). Men's fashion appears to be on the rise. Using Canada and the US as an example, Shea describes,

Here in Canada, the $7.4-billion men's apparel industry grew by 4% between July 2011 and July 2012 (the women's side of things slumped by 1% over the same time period), and on both sides of the border, men's accessories is the fastest-growing retail market out there.

This shows that men are really starting to care about their looks. The paradigm is changing and that is pushing men towards buying clothes. Women, on the other side, seem to be going in the opposite direction (Shea, 2012).

A couple years ago, men did not look for deals as much as women did. Men before also would be more into shopping all in one go. This means that after one visit, a man would buy a whole new wardrobe if needed, rather than getting certain parts as they came up (Sims, 2009). According to Rostoks, men need to be lead in a direction to make a purchase and to be asked if they needed assistance (Rostoks, 2002). So when it comes to buying, men are more likely to use sales and coupons in order to get a deal when they buy. When people think of fashion, most people would

think of women, but times are changing and men are starting to get in on being well dressed too (Ogden-Barnes, 2012).

There are also some differences between men and women when it comes to shopping. Men are trying to shorten the experience in which they are shopping, while women try to make the shopping process more efficient (Ogden-Barnes, 2012, pg. 2). Ogden-Barnes continues the point by saying, "Men shop to win." (2012, pg. 3)

When regarding men shopping, men want to get the job done quickly and get what they need. Time is of the essence, so in order to cater towards men, the market channel must be open with people or ways to help the male shopper find what they are looking for (Rostoks, 2002). When selling to men, there needs to be enough staff working because men are more likely to ask for assistance when in regards to finding a certain item (More Males, 2013).

Background into Fashion

According to Shea, Men are more closely tied to the economy when it comes to fashion. Men will dress up if the economy is doing well, and reversely, will dress down for the economic downturns. For men, fashion is a sign of wealth and ultimately, a status symbol for them. Shea continued quoting the New York Times "Men step out of the recession, bag on hip, bracelet on wrist." (Shea, 2012)

According to Ogden-Barnes, men were found to respond positively to marketing that showed goals and inspiration to get work done. He furthers the idea that men are less worried about size and fashionability than women. Men are also more willing to try out new products, which is

good for any start-up, but that also means that men are also more willing to switch brands often. (Ogden-Barnes, 2012, pg. 5) According to Binkley,

> Men's cosmetics and hair-care items have become well-accepted products. Men have also adapted to the fast-changing fashion trends that have been the norm in womenswear, accepting slim-cut styles and ankle-revealing pant lengths.

Men are getting more into the idea of fashion. While women are more likely to check online stores daily, men are not the same. For this reason, male fashion sites will change content weekly. Men are learning how to use the web to find clothes (Binkley, 2013). This could mean that men can be enticed to go for more weekly deals rather than on a daily basis.

In 2013, trends in men's fashion are diverse. However, there are some universal pieces that span most of male fashion. Slim-fitted clothes, chinos, and camouflage are some key items for 2013. Burgundy is like the new black of this year, also denim jackets are really trending this year (Holloway, 2013).

Background into Branding

When targeting certain markets, something to keep in mind is that men want to be a feel like they stand out or want to be able to feel like they are center stage. Women do not respond to the same marketing technique (Ogden-Barnes, 2012, pg. 5).

> Males may be more materialistic and have a stronger orientation towards external validation through visually portraying prestige and accomplishment. Males also may be more active in processing advertising cues, which emphasize the conspicuousness of brands. Alternatively, females may be rejecting messages to 'be noticed' or 'stand

out' and/or they may not be accurately processing these cues as males do (Ogden-Barnes, 2012, pg. 5).

Targeting the right markets really pertains heavily on men because they are more willing to try out new products. Men also want to stay in the spotlight, so the product must also follow. The brand needs to be able to stay in males' minds so that they will turn to that product. In this case, brand identity plays a big role when luring men to buy from that brand (Rowley, 2009).

There is an obstacle for marketers to get over when it comes to marketing towards men. For a long time, there has been a stigma that followed male shoppers. That stigma is starting to go away and men are interested in grooming products, much like women (Binkley, 2013).

Starting Up

Starting up a company requires thought and resources to be successful. One of the main points to look over would be the importance of personal relationships with not only the customer, but also with any forms of partnership. Companies that are just starting up will find that personal relationships will really push the company forward (Mills, 2013). According to Mills,

In creative industries, like the designer fashion industry (DFI), turning this individual activity into a business requires the creative person to diversify their focus so they can exploit their creativity for commercial gain. In other words, they must couple creativity with innovation (Mills, 2013).

Design and creativity can be used to help promote a fashion brand. To the same effect, the layout of the website and handling of social media should be taken into consideration when starting up a brand. A combination of all of these promotional outlets can help to push a stronger brand.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The graphic communication industry is an integral part of product promotion and recently this has expanded to include the digital world. The growing popularity of marketing through social media and specialized e-commerce websites is contributing to the varied results seen from marketing campaigns. No longer are marketing campaigns slow, static one-way communication platforms. There is constant feedback from consumers that needs to be analyzed in order for businesses to successfully sell products. Branding of products is influenced heavily by the results of social media usage and web development. The first objective of this study is to:

- Determine the effects of social media use and web development of an e-commerce website specifically for marketing of men's clothing for young professionals.

As men's fashion is becoming more widely accepted, this means that the market is ready to have more channels for men to buy at. In order for men to find these channels, effective branding needs to be implemented to marry the consumer with the channel. The second objective of this study is to:

- Determine the correlation between branding and building a startup, with the intention at driving traffic to make sales.

Data Collection Plan

The collection plan for the first half of the study would involve capturing data of social media use. Furthermore, the research would investigate how users navigate and view the product website using multiple viewing platforms such as on an Android tablet or an iPhone. There have been many marketing campaigns done for product promotion but the analysis of each campaign is kept private.

For a long time, there has been a stigma that has loomed over men when it comes to grooming and dressing well. Now that the stigma is being lifted, more men are seeking not only advice, but looking for ways to dress better.

Collecting data would be used via Facebook Advertisement analytics. In Facebook Ads, specific demographics could be targeted and in depth analysis could be extracted. The advertisements would be catered towards men and the ideal target that would be tested are from ages 20-35. The perfect candidate for the clothing line will be a male age 25 and have an occupation. That effectiveness would be based on click-through and conversion rates of the ads to the e-commerce site total sales. The data collection process would take a week and in which the click-through rate and effective demographic could be observed.

In addition, there would be interviews with people in the industry such as storeowners and industry experts to see what ideas are available for startup businesses. This can be used to get a good grasp of what is needed to make a company. In addition it can provide good methods for branding and outreach campaigns to customers.

Data Analysis Plan

The results from the analytics were recorded. The names of the participants of the data collection phase were kept anonymous, besides any information that was relevant to researching the

market. The data collected was used to help understand more into the consumer and what kinds of branding would be effective. The data collected was in the form of a graphical style for the analytics. Any extra comments from the analytics were also noted. These results were based on gender, income, social media usage etc. The data was used to determine the correlation between social media and a specially developed e-commerce to the effectiveness of its usage for product promotion of men's clothing. In order for this to be a relevant study data collection will need to take about a week to accurately target the demographic and to achieve a reliable confidence interval.

Chapter 4

Results

The overall approach to collecting data on user engagement was done through three methods. The first of which was the creation of the website using Squarespace, a business that provides creative tools for online publishing. The website creation was conducted through this service because it was found to be one of the leading online publisher providers. It was used to monitor traffic to the site when conducting the advertising campaigns. These metrics were given to understand visitor activity on the website. Below are images (Fig. 1), (Fig. 2) of the overview of website traffic and mobile versus desktop usage.

Figure 1: Overview of website traffic

As shown above, there were limited amounts of traffic directly to the website. There were 12 page views and four visits on average. This was a small sample size that does indicate a large interest in the website or products that the Trade Secret Clothing business sold. However, because it was a small sample size conclusive evidence in either direction cannot be drawn.
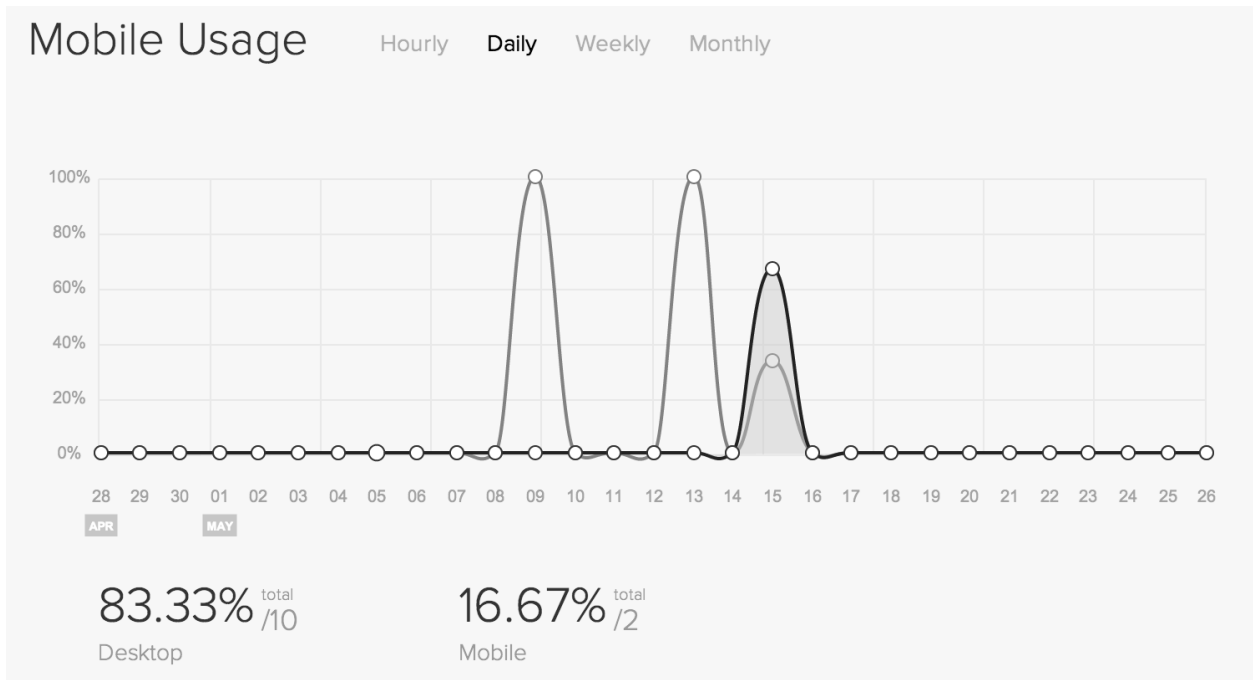

Figure 2: Mobile usage on the website

There was a split of device usage for the website traffic. 83.33% of users accessed the website through a desktop web browser while 16.67% of users accessed the website through a mobile browser. This shows that the website, while optimized to be shown on a mobile device, was more likely to be accessed through a desktop platform such as Windows 7 or Mac OSX. As stated previously however, the small sample size does not indicate whether or not desktop viewing is the preferred method for consumers to view the website.

Layout was chosen based on pre-tested, successful templates chosen by Squarespace. These templates have been researched and created in order for the website to accrue higher traffic results and conversion rates. In the image (Fig. 3) below, the basic layout of the website is featured. The reason for using Squarespace over competitors such as Shopify was due to the limited use of built-in visitor tracking. Items were sold using the business Teespring. Teespring allows customers to design and sell custom apparel online. Our team designed and sold the product while the proceeds went to the production of the shirt. Teespring does not require upfront capital which helped create a viable business model to pair with the Squarespace services. This service was chosen to collect information on t-shirt sales and monitor campaigns. In figure 4 an example of the t-shirt campaign is shown. Visitors to the sales page could purchase and share the t-shirt through social media, all while our team tracked the sales and visits of the t-shirt pages. T-shirt sales were not productive as there were no sales recorded. This can be linked back to the limited amount of traffic that the Trade Secret clothing website received from the advertising campaigns. Without traffic there was not enough interested consumers that would then convert into customers.
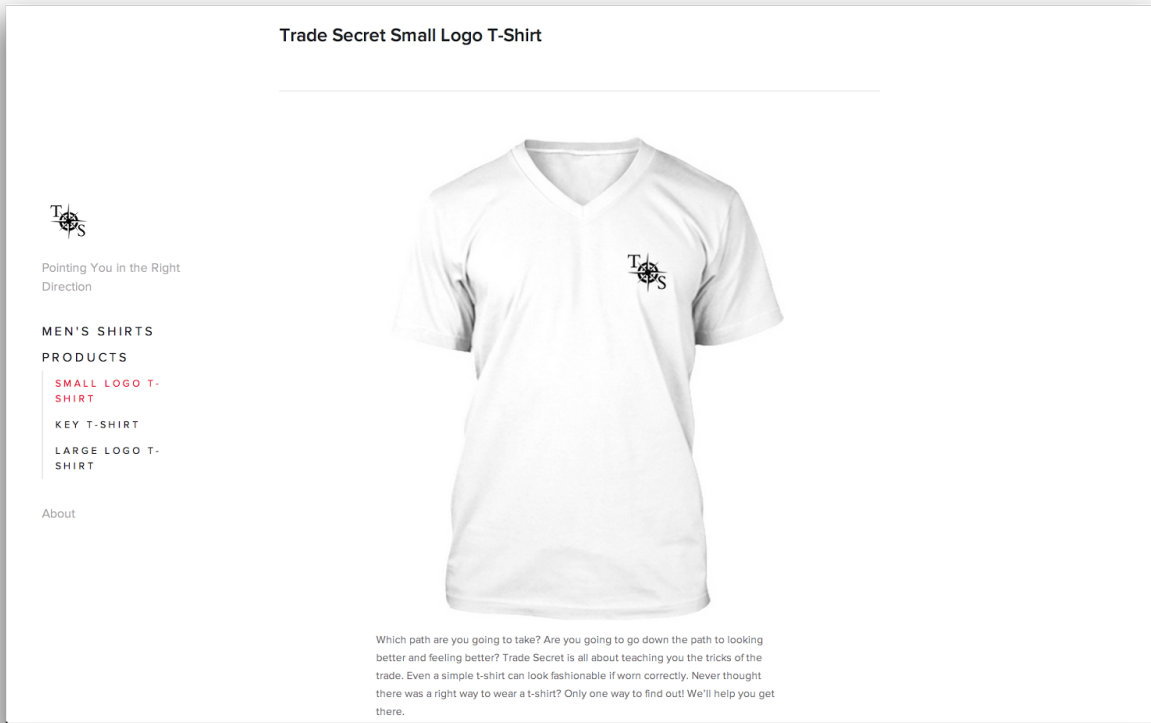
Figure 3: Basic layout of the website.

Figure 4: Example of the Trade Secret t-shirt sales page

The data was collected over a day of sending an advertisement campaign through Facebook (see Figure 5 for advertisement). The advertisement was sent out via timeline posts. The target that was chosen was something pertaining to the audience that would most likely to buy a t-shirt about guns. The advertisement was also catered towards a guns rights advocate to best appeal to making a conversion.

Figure 5: Design of the Facebook Advertisement

The target that was used for the target sample was people that liked "Guns & Ammo". This target was used to because the target audience is a supporter of gun rights. The Guns & Ammo page has 725,854 followers and 38,102 people talking about the page. This means that it is still an active page and the audience will be reached when the advertisement is distributed. Upon research of the audience, the people that liked the Guns & Ammo page also liked country music, hunting, fishing, survival gear, and gun brands.
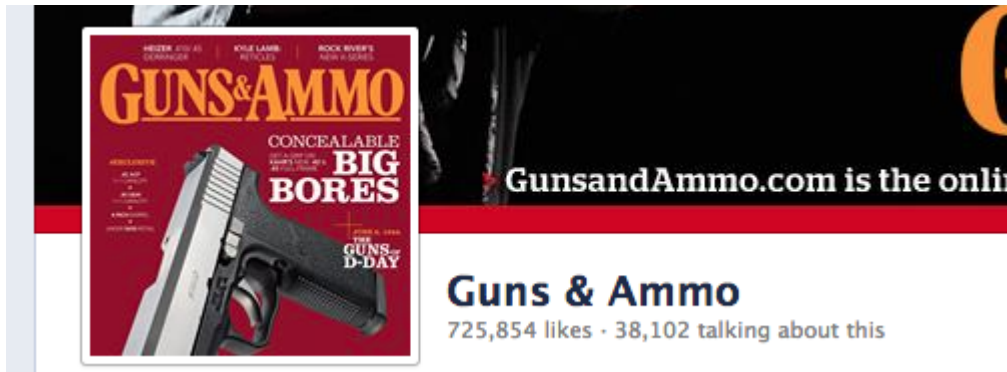

Figure 6: Guns & Ammo Page

During the day of data collection, the advertisement was able to reach 1,370 people. The end result in a day of testing was 26 clicks. Of the people that the advertisement reached, there was 1.883% that clicked through to the landing page. A total of $9.78 was spent on the day of campaigning, at about $0.47 per click. The advertisement by itself gained 21 clicks. It gained 4 likes and 2 shares, which resulted in the other 5 clicks that were not from the actual delivery of the campaign.

Figure 7: Facebook Metrics for 5-15-2014

The last thing that was observed was the age breakdown of the demographic. The ages

observed were 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64. Of the 18-24 age group, 151 were reached

and 2 clicked through. Of the 25-34 age group, 133 were reached, but no one clicked through. Of

the 35-44 age group, 650 were reached and 12 clicked through. Of the 45-54 age group, 423 were

reached and 13 clicked through. Of the 55-64 age group, 13 were reached, but 0 clicked through.

The 25-34 and the 55-64 did not result in any clicks, while the most active age group was 45-54.

The 18-24 age group had a 1.307% click-through rate, being the lowest of the age groups that took

action, while the 45-54 age group had the highest at 3.059% even as high as 7-8% earlier in the day.

Gender ⓘ	Age ⓘ	Reach ⓘ	Frequency ⓘ	Impressions ⓘ	Cost Per 1,000 Iı	Cost Per 1,000 F	Spend ⓘ	Clicks ⓘ	Unique Clicks ⓘ	Click-Through R:
male	18-24	151	1.01	153	$4.05	$4.11	$0.62	2	2	1.307%
male	25-34	133	1.00	133	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	0	0.000%
male	35-44	650	1.01	657	$6.54	$6.62	$4.30	12	12	1.826%
male	45-54	423	1.00	425	$11.41	$11.47	$4.85	13	11	3.059%
male	55-64	13	1.00	13	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	0	0	0.000%

Figure 8: Age Breakdown of Demographic

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of social media and web development of a landing page to specifically target men. The hope was to eventually be able to gain enough marketing material to launch a brand with a very specific niche in men's clothing. Being that there was a lack of capital to go full scale, social media marketing was used to test certain products in the market. The test that was conducted was to test the effectiveness of selling t-shirts. Teespring was the best way to go about pushing a product without any upfront costs.

Teespring's business model is that a campaign is needed and a price is required. The larger the campaign goal is the cheaper the shirts are each, but the harder it is to reach the goal. Teespring will not actually charge or deliver any of the shirts if the campaign goal is not reached, so there is a fine balance between how large a goal is desirable. The campaign goal that was chosen for the experiment was 50 shirts. Teespring served as just the mock supplier, while Squarespace was used to create a storefront.

Teespring acts as a middle-man to the consumer and our business, Trade Secret Clothing. The heavy lifting work of shirt creation and delivery could then be automated using their software and development services. By ensuring that Teespring handles all t-shirt design and delivery our company was not left with unsold shirts or contacting customers for refunds. This also allowed the company to create campaigns of varying lengths without the threat of losing capital. In our case study the t-shirt campaign was setup to run for 25 days. This length of time was chosen because it is the longest sale period offered and consumers could return back multiple times to check up on the t-shirt sales progress.

The decision to create the t-shirt campaign website through Squarespace was due to the large amount of merchant example websites to work off of. Squarespace provides detailed examples of potential online storefronts to choose from that have been tested and modified to suit specific niche markets. In our testing we chose to use a site dedicated to high-quality clothing items. This template provided a strong base to work from due to the pre-generated website components. The easy to navigate template offered the convenience of being mobile-friendly so that our targeted consumers could easily browse and purchase the t-shirts. This was important to the success of the campaign because many buyers in the target category have shown increased usage of mobile devices to make purchasing decisions (Legge, 2013). This rapid growth in the mobile market clearly shows that online sales are no longer limited to the desktop view.

The t-shirt design was found by finding a trending t-shirt that was found online and delivering a similar message. The Facebook page used was a page that was already established that supported gun rights as a sample demographic to see if Facebook ads could work to target a specific audience. Ideally, there would be a page built out for Trade Secret, but since that was not available, nor the time allotted to create one. Because of this, the design of the t-shirt and the target audience was catered to a Facebook page that was already ready for testing.

The target audience was that of gun right advocates to match the Facebook page. Upon research, Guns & Ammo magazine was the closest to the ideal prospect. Looking at the demographics on Facebook, people who liked Guns & Ammo also liked, country music, survival gear, hunting, the second amendment and various gun brands. Using this knowledge, the t-shirt with a Glock reference was created. Using this test market is relevant because it is a predominantly male market and they are more avid about their cause. So using such a market would see results

faster than that of using a male fashion niche. The male fashion niche is a bit slower and harder to target. The last reason Guns & Ammo was targeted was because there was a built out Facebook page ready for use to back the advertisement campaign. A built out Facebook page is important because it shows on the advertisement, which most users will click to see if it is a legitimate page. Because of the preceding reasons and the time restraint the best course of action was to obtain data to test the method of using Facebook as a medium to send prospects down the pipeline.

When the advertisement campaign went live, the campaign ran for one day. The advertisement was sent out to 1,370 people and showed up in their newsfeed. The results overall started out positive where there was over a 4% clickthrough rate. This means that of all the people that it reached there were over 4% of them reaching the landing page. The more people the end on the landing page, the more opportunities there are to convert to sales. Unfortunately, there were no conversions during the campaign. At the end of the campaign, the results dropped to 1.883% clickthrough rate. This amount of people reaching the landing page is not enough to make conversions. The ideal clickthrough rate is anything over 5%. In order to reach this, there would need to be more testing of the demographic.

In regards to the age breakdown, there was a strong clickthrough rate from males, so the demographics were reworked to just target men 18-64 years old. From there, the rest of the campaign was used to target just males. The data showed that the 25-34 age group and the 55-64 age group showed no activity, which was as expected. The 25-34 age group is the ideal target market for Trade Secret, and it makes sense as to why they were one of the least active groups. This is because they are in a job and will have access to money after college. They are a younger group and will most likely be more interested in suits and dress shirts than graphic t-shirts. On the other end,

the 55-64 age group is on the older end and not as savvy with technology and social media and would be reached less than the other age groups.

The age groups that really were active were the 18-24, 35-44, and 45-54 age groups. The 18-24 age group was the least active having the lowest clickthrough rate of the people that actually had activity. This could be attributed to the age group being younger and not having as much money as the older age groups. The other two age groups having a lot of activity makes sense because the demographic of the Guns & Ammo crowd and the gun right activists are white, middle-aged men. This means that the targeting was in the right place, it just needed to be honed in to really hit the niche. The age group of 45-54 had the most activity so if the next campaign targeted that age group specifically it could lead to better results.

In conclusion, the marketing and sales campaign of Trade Secret Clothing yielded important insight into the future of clothing sales utilizing methods restricted to online marketing. Though the campaign conducted focused on a demographic separate from the target market of Trade Secret Clothing the methodology was the same. Overall results provided data that can be used to understand which areas of marketing and sales are important to the success of an online business. The amount of data collected utilizing limited resources further proves that online marketing and sales campaigns can be fruitful, provided particular attention is paid to the analytics of the target markets. Using less than $10, the study was able to pull enough market data to open more doors for further research and possible sales. Further attention to the Facebook marketing efforts would have allowed the company to analyze characteristics of target demographics. Expanding upon the information from the data collected shows that an online, responsive storefront paired with a clear

marketing campaign can yield favorable results provided that upfront research on target demographics was conducted.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

Additional time for the study would have yielded greater results leading to more conclusive evidence that consumers prefer to browse and purchase clothing online. Providing additional website examples would have allowed for greater testing of preferences of consumers. The additional websites and time would have also allowed for in-depth discussion with consumers to understand preferences of the target demographics.

As stated before, time was of the essence. With more time, a larger variety of advertisement campaigns could be explored. With the different campaigns there could be a larger pool of data in which various markets can be further researched. This test helped build a methodology in using the internet and social media to help create a cheap and efficient marketing campaign for those who are thinking of creating an online startup.

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