


**FACEBOOK OFFICIAL PAGES AS SITES OF MARKET DEVELOPMENT: A
COMPARATIVE NETNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CANVA AND VISME**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 21 April 2023</p> <p>Accepted 18 July 2023</p>	<p>Purpose: The study examines the online brand image development and user engagement strategies adopted by Canva and Visme. Both of these companies provide graphics-based online design tools that can create impressive visual assets without needing graphic design experience. The study also investigates how these brands communicate with their subscribers, and their notable strengths and weaknesses.</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Canva; Visme; Netnography; Facebook; Facebook Page.</p>	<p>Theoretical Framework: The research The study utilises Netnography or virtual ethnography, a term given by Kozinets in 2015. It simply means the study of social interaction i.e. digital communication. Interactions between groups provide a ready data set for companies to analyse in order to establish a sound marketing strategy.</p> <p>Design/Methodology/Approach: The data was collected through observation and extraction of archival data from 2017 to 2022.</p> <p>Findings: The findings indicated that Canva has mastered the social media marketing campaign as its market reach has exceeded Visme. Both of these companies started around the same time, but Canva has managed to stay ahead of its main competitor in terms of user engagement and number of subscribers.</p> <p>Research, practical and social implications: The study offers a strong pedestal in the choice of marketing strategies to be adopted on social media. Understanding the target audience, its choices and cultural habits are pivotal to having a successful campaign.</p> <p>Originality/Value: This type of comparative research has yet to be done before where a netnographic study has been conducted on the Facebook pages of two companies offering the same services in the field of design.</p>
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PÁGINAS OFICIAIS DO FACEBOOK COMO SITES DE DESENVOLVIMENTO DE MERCADO: UM ESTUDO NETNOGRÁFICO COMPARATIVO DE CANVA E VISME

RESUMO

Objetivo: O estudo examina o desenvolvimento de imagens de marcas on-line e as estratégias de engajamento do usuário adotadas pela Canva e pela Visme. Ambas as empresas fornecem ferramentas de design on-line baseadas em gráficos que podem criar ativos visuais impressionantes sem a necessidade de experiência em design gráfico. O estudo também investiga como essas marcas se comunicam com seus assinantes, e seus notáveis pontos fortes e fracos.

Estrutura teórica: A pesquisa O estudo utiliza a Netnografia ou etnografia virtual, termo dado por Kozinets em 2015. Significa simplesmente o estudo da interação social, ou seja, comunicação digital. As interações entre grupos fornecem um conjunto de dados pronto para as empresas analisarem a fim de estabelecer uma estratégia de marketing sólida.

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Concepção/Methodologia/Abordagem: Os dados foram recolhidos através da observação e extração de dados de arquivo de 2017 a 2022.

Constatações: As constatações indicaram que Canva dominou a campanha de marketing de mídia social, já que seu alcance de mercado excedeu o Visme. Ambas as empresas começaram ao mesmo tempo, mas Canva conseguiu ficar à frente de seu principal concorrente em termos de engajamento de usuários e número de assinantes.

Pesquisa, Implicações Práticas e Sociais: O estudo oferece um forte pedestal na escolha de estratégias de marketing a serem adotadas nas mídias sociais. Entender o público-alvo, suas escolhas e hábitos culturais são fundamentais para uma campanha bem-sucedida.

Originalidade/Valor: Este tipo de pesquisa comparativa ainda não foi feito antes, quando um estudo netnográfico foi realizado nas páginas do Facebook de duas empresas que oferecem os mesmos serviços no campo do design.

Palavras-chave: Canva, Visme, Netnography, Facebook, Página do Facebook.

PÁGINAS OFICIALES DE FACEBOOK COMO SITIOS DE DESARROLLO DE MERCADO: UN ESTUDIO NETNOGRÁFICO COMPARATIVO DE CANVA Y VISME

RESUMEN

Propósito: El estudio examina el desarrollo de la imagen de marca en línea y las estrategias de participación de los usuarios adoptadas por Canva y Visme. Ambas compañías ofrecen herramientas de diseño en línea basadas en gráficos que pueden crear impresionantes activos visuales sin necesidad de experiencia en diseño gráfico. El estudio también investiga cómo estas marcas se comunican con sus suscriptores, y sus notables fortalezas y debilidades.

Marco teórico: La investigación El estudio utiliza la netnografía o etnografía virtual, término dado por Kozinets en 2015. Simplemente significa el estudio de la interacción social, es decir, la comunicación digital. Las interacciones entre grupos proporcionan un conjunto de datos listos para que las empresas los analicen con el fin de establecer una estrategia de marketing sólida.

Diseño/Methodología/Enfoque: Los datos se recopilieron mediante la observación y extracción de datos de archivo de 2017 a 2022.

Hallazgos: Los hallazgos indicaron que Canva ha dominado la campaña de marketing en redes sociales ya que su alcance en el mercado ha superado a Visme. Ambas compañías comenzaron más o menos al mismo tiempo, pero Canva ha logrado mantenerse por delante de su principal competidor en términos de participación de usuarios y número de suscriptores.

Investigación, implicaciones prácticas y sociales: El estudio ofrece un fuerte pedestal en la elección de estrategias de marketing a adoptar en las redes sociales. Entender al público objetivo, sus opciones y hábitos culturales son fundamentales para tener una campaña exitosa.

Originalidad/Valor: Este tipo de investigación comparativa aún no se ha hecho antes de que se haya realizado un estudio netnográfico en las páginas de Facebook de dos empresas que ofrecen los mismos servicios en el campo del diseño.

Palabras clave: Canva, Visme, Netnography, Facebook, Página de Facebook.

INTRODUCTION

The term Do It Yourself (DIY) is not a new term. It has been around since 1912 and has been primarily associated with the domain of home improvement and maintenance activities. It was seen as both a cost-saving and recreational activity where it simply meant building, modifying or repairing things alone without the direct aid of any certified expert (Wadsworth Y, 2011). But a change in human mindset has given rise to a unique mindset and the term DIY has taken a broader meaning that covers a wide range of new skill sets. With a slew of technological advancements, this "self-made culture" has grown to become a social concept with people sharing ideas, designs, techniques and even finished projects either online or in

person. Given this trend's popularity, a rise in DIY- friendly tools has flooded the internet and their users are increasing on a phenomenal scale. These may be identified as subscribers or fans of service providers (Mann, 2016). Leading Content business-to-consumer (B2C) brands have built business models that cater to customers' preferences for do-it-yourself models. One such market is online graphic design editing on Canva and Visme is the largest player in this space.

Canva is an Australian graphic design platform that enables its users to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content. The company was founded in Perth, Australia in the year 2013 with a mission of empowering everyone in the world to design anything and publish anywhere. Canva is available in over 190 countries and over 100 languages (Locker M, 2018). Visme on the other hand is a USA-based company started in the year 2010 that went by the name EasyWebContent before getting its modern avatar in 2013. Both provide templates that are free to use and are user-friendly. These templates are pre-designed professional templates that are high in quality. Both offer user-friendly presentations, photo and video creation and social media sharing. New users can simply log in to their websites and can create a free account. Once the design is uploaded, the user can simply drag and drop their own colours and contexts and get it downloaded. This drag-and-drop interface makes customising thousands of templates simple and easy. Their template categories include posters, presentations, flyers, cards, infographics, business cards, resumes, menus and letterheads. Both provide services that are free of cost however, offer paid advance subscriptions that are also available for users wanting additional functionality. Canva has almost 136 million users around the world (Statista, 2020) out of which 30 million are active and paid users whereas Visme has about 19 million users of which 5 million are active users. Despite both products offering the same services, Canva's success over its competition lies in the fact that Canva has managed to connect with its core audience. This paper is a study in this direction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive review of the literature was done and the following research was found to be touching upon the study directly. In communication, social media platforms have acquired a fundamental position (Ravi B et al, 2021). More than 75% of the global population has access to either a smartphone or a computer making them a potential market (Statista, 2023). Social media has given companies a strong pedestal to understand their market. Kozinets et al give Netnography as a method to study communication patterns in virtual groups (Kozinets, 2015)

whereas Gosling et al study the psychological push on the part of the users that incentivize the use of the platform for them. The study further states that users themselves provide guidelines to utilise the features of the medium (Gosling et al, 2015). Furthermore, the companies form groups of these users who interact with the brand within groups. Groups are generally moderated by an administrator (Lahav et al, 2018) and their members can be in the millions. These groups provide features like tagging, sharing and hashtags which have evolved social media on a phenomenal scale (Demirhan et al, 2017). Networking platforms allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). This social interaction generates trust and establishes loyalty toward the community (Chua, 2002). Facebook official pages of these service providers are one of the podiums utilised for the same purpose. They create a fan base which promotes interaction with the brand which could be numbered in the millions and can be joined by anyone (Dhal, 2018).

Aiello et al shortlist five factors which lead to social media marketing plans: entertainment, trendiness, interaction, word of mouth and customisation. His study on luxury brands concluded that social media marketing created a significant impact on the brand equities of luxury brands (Aiello et al, 2016). Although simply liking or following a particular page does not necessarily dictate sales as word of mouth should always supplement the "word of the web" (Emrich et al, 2017). This is why brands must engage in meaningful conversations in order to build a strong association with their users. Kapoulas et al used Netnography as a tool to study the Fashion industry in the South East which concluded that brands which follow a proper schedule of uploading their content online were more likely to generate sales (Kapoulas et al, 2020). Dwivedi et al recognise three types of Facebook groups: Associative, Aspirational and Advertising and concluded that associative groups have the most credible exchange of communication between the brand and the community (Dwivedi et al, 2019). Descriptive research on Canva and Visme has been done before discussing their social media presence but a comparative netnographic study is required to understand more nuanced points. Thus, to absolve this gap, the study in question was designed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilises a method called Netnography or Virtual Ethnography to study the communication patterns of Canva and Visme Facebook pages respectively. Netnography is a qualitative social media research tool and analysis of social interaction in contemporary digital communications (Kozinets, 2015). It investigates online consumer culture by analysing social

media trends in the form of likes, comments, shares and others. Starting in the year 2004, Facebook has more than 2.5 billion monthly active users (Statista 2023) which provides a ready market for companies whether they are looking for a niche or mass market. This is the reason why 74% of Fortune 500 companies have a Facebook page (Barnes et al, 2015). The page created by these companies is moderated by an administrator and the participants or subscribers of the group interact with the administrator. Reactions hence recorded are generally in the form of emoticons or comments. The analysis of interaction either via comments or emoticons provides a ready set of data for the companies to analyse. It also highlights social interaction through which a brand can get insight into the needs of its users (AlAwadhiS, 2019). This comes under the preview of Netnography.

Objectives:

1. To ascertain the audience engagement strategies adopted by Canva and Visme and if these strategies are consequential for one brand's success over the other.
2. To evaluate how its brand image is created and propagated on online social media platforms like Facebook.
3. To assess how the audience interacts with the brand which forms long-term relationships.

Sample: Two Facebook Pages, Canva and Visme which are fun officially were taken. Canva has 20k likes and 20k followers and Visme had 17k likes and 18k followers.

Timeline: For Canva Facebook Page posts from 19th June 2017 to 30th November 2022 were studied. For Visme page posts from 1st January 2017 to 30th November 2022 were studied.

Tool: Shadowing was used to collect data. The researchers liked and followed the official pages and studied the posts and meta-reactions on the same. The researchers downloaded the applications from the google play store and used an Excel sheet as a tool.

Method: Two approaches of the study were followed:

- a) Observations of Features

Both Applications were downloaded and studied on various aspects like features, costs, etc. The researchers used the application and made note of the analysis of the features.

- b) Extraction and Shadowing of Archival data

The next step involved carefully assessing the contents on the Facebook page like level of customisation, level of editing and level of personalisation and costs etc. Furthermore, the comments were studied to understand if the posts are striking any conversation, whether

between the followers or with the administrator. Overall reactions were recorded towards the post (Emoticons and likes etc). All these observations were recorded in an Excel sheet which helped in quantifying data. The data pertaining to the number of posts, reactions to them and their numbers and counter comments were collected by the method of manual extraction of archival data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data from observation and extractions, few findings emerged. Data extracted from Canva India's Facebook and Visme Facebook page in the form of user statistics, number of posts, comments and reactions have been discussed below.

For the purpose of understanding the success of Canva over Visme, the section has been divided into two parts. The first part will discuss the feature analysis of both and will provide insight into their user interface, costs and other features. The second part will deal with the Netnographic investigation of the same.

Feature Analysis

- Both Canva and Visme give templates that are pre-designed layouts that can be used for a variety of applications. Apart from that, there are 'elements' which are royalty-free photos, graphics, audio and videos that help in enhancing any project. A drag-and-drop is also available that lets you move visuals around the template.
- Basic plans of Canva and Visme are free of cost. However, Visme's free plan does not let you download your template. One can simply edit and then share online. There is no room for export. Canva's free plan lets you export your designs giving more options to its users. Further plans can be brought on monthly payments. Where Canva Pro is available at 12.99 \$ a month, Visme Personal plan is costlier at 29\$ a month.
- Canva gives access to 250000 templates to work with on its free plan and more than 600000 on its paid plan. Whereas Visme gives you around 10000. Comment analysis points out the bigger quantity of templates that Canva brings to the table.
- Both Canva and Visme have an impressive stock of photo libraries and colour overlaying options. However, Canva gives more cloud storage space than Visme. Its free plan gives a generous 5GB cloud storage space as compared to Visme's 250MB. This rises to 1TB on a paid plan.

- Both Canva and Visme provide additional functionality by providing integration with other popular services like YouTube, Dailymotion, Colourmix and Instagram. These integrations provide further special effects to images and one can incorporate content from these services into their designs. While Canva provides integration with almost 100 plus apps, Visme is limited to just 30.
- After the completion of a project, both platforms provide certain sharing options to choose from to let others see your work. To this end, one can export it in formats like JPG, PNG, PDF, GIF and others. However, Visme has an edge over Canva as it provides HTML5 format and lets you create web content that can be used offline as well.
- Another area where Canva wins over Visme is mobile applications. Where Canva is available on both iOS and Android platforms, Visme is available only on iOS. This is the main reason for such a contrast in the number of subscribers of both platforms.
- For Canva, the easiest and the best way to learn is by experimentation. The Facebook page of the company is intuitive and user-friendly and offers videos and tutorials on the page itself. The majority of its advertisement on its page motivates people to claim their free 30-day free trial of Canva Pro. The use of imagery is such that it is contextual for most of its users.
- Canva India's Facebook posts cover a wide range of concepts in great detail. The company has studied Indian culture tremendously and its posts reflect the same. For example, Canva India, in a series of posts has explained the purpose of celebrating Navratras. They did so by using one-liners showing which particular deity is to be worshipped on which day and its importance. In other posts, they have shown cultural facts of different states like culinary delights and monuments in an editable template. Whether it is a national occasion or a cultural occasion, there is a template for everyone.
- Almost all of their templates are available in local languages. One can use a different language using different fonts to create something totally new. The idea is to change the belief of its users about their design abilities and make them feel good and confident clicking around.
- The company has made sure that any questions, queries and doubts of its followers are duly followed. Any inquiry or post, whether technical or personal, has been resolved by the company swiftly. Its users can privately message the administrator of the page directly and ask for further paid subscriptions. Calling its users by their name

creates a strong relationship and gives a positive word of mouth. The company further empowers its users to create new content from existing ones with phrases like "happy designing" and "tag us in your post".

Netnographic Analysis

Keep this in mind, both Canva India's Facebook page and Visme's Facebook were taken into consideration. The number of likes, shares and comments have been stated in Tables number 1 and 2.

Table 1: Canva India Facebook page analysis over the years

Canva						
Elements of Study	Year of Study					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Posts	29	75	140	32	129	162
Likes	2578	498	673	34329	71794	2498
Love	32	35	50	783	823	147
Wow	6	2	10	60	19	1
Anger	1	0	0	22	4	0
Laugh	2	2	0	4	17	2
Care	0	0	0	20	72	12
Cry	0	0	0	14	0	0
Comments	28	44	36	194	435	165
Share	24	42	61	323	223	245

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Table 2: Visme India Facebook page analysis over the years

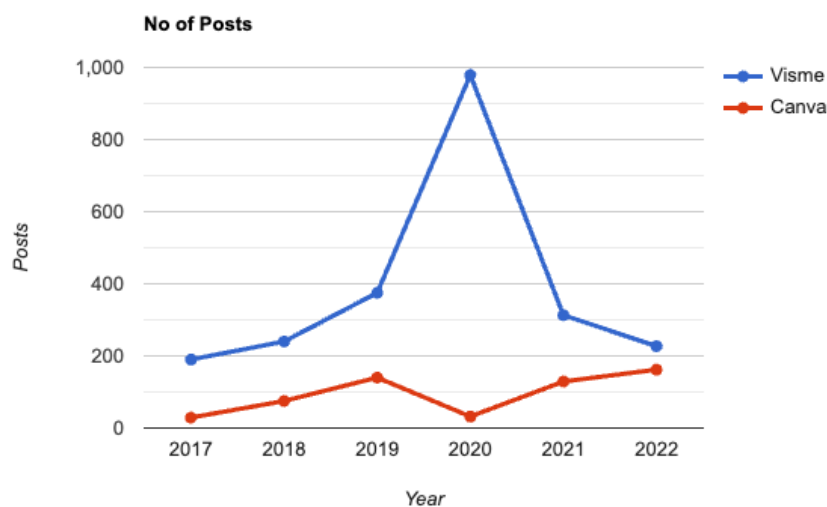
VISME						
Elements of Study	Year of Study					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Posts	190	240	375	979	313	227
Likes	2766	3091	1733	2611	921	809
Love	41	146	140	258	88	89
Wow	9	22	24	20	3	3
Anger	0	5	3	1	1	0
Laugh	7	35	25	5	8	4

Care	1	0	0	10	4	10
Cry	0	6	6	1	3	0
Comments	49	129	913	182	28	62
Share	287	763	429	557	83	68

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Both Canva and Visme have engaged their subscribers by actively posting on Facebook. However, when it comes to sheer numbers, Visme takes the lead. The year 2020 saw the company posting over 900 posts as compared to Canva's which is 32 only as seen in Graph 1. The company has posted regularly on its page to keep the conversation going with its subscribers. Most of the posts are related to the know-how of the software and expert lectures on visual design. Canva on the other hand has been posting templates on its page to garner likes and shares from its subscribers. The company has studied the culture and geography of its subscribers thoroughly as their posts celebrate occasions of cultural eminence as well. This creates a long-lasting relationship with its users.

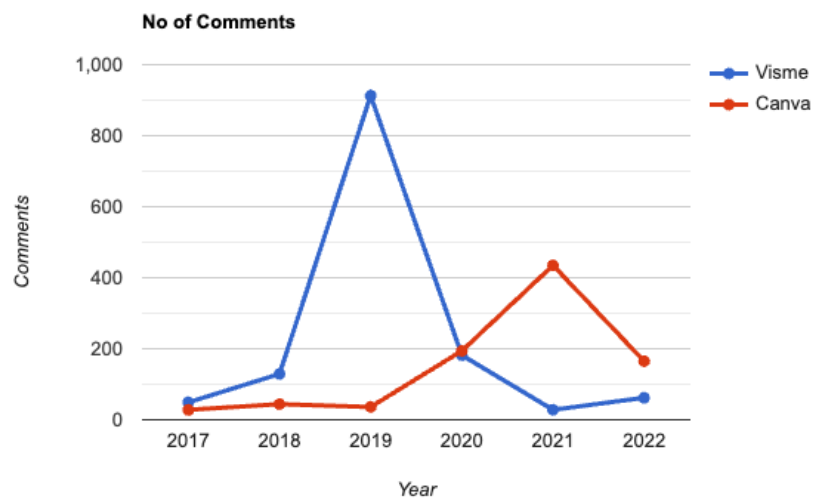
Graph 1: Number of Posts comparison with Canva and Visme



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The comment indicates meaningful conversations between the company and its users. Visme, from the year 2017 to 2020 had been actively involved in conversations with its users. They were quick to respond to doubts and queries. After the year 2020, conversations on their page saw a sharp fall despite posting over 900 posts (Graph no 2). Canva on the other hand registered the opposite. Its India page saw an increase in comments indicating the acceptance of the platform.

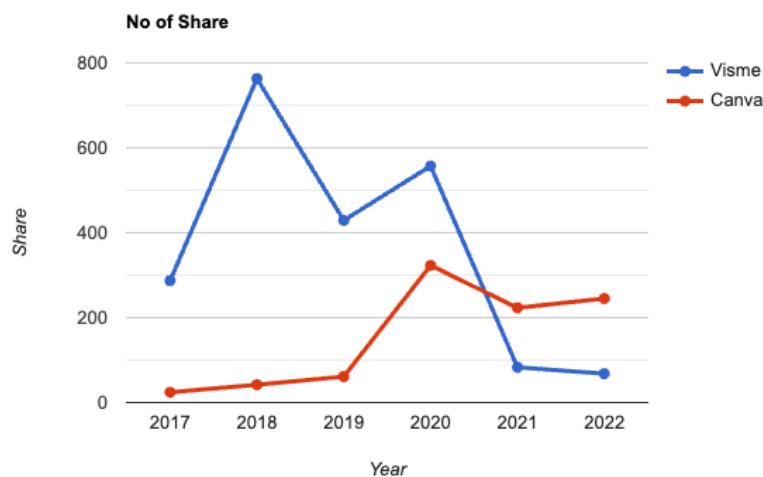
Graph 2: Number of Comments comparison with Canva and Visme



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Sharing on social marketing simply means positive word of mouth. It's a culmination of all the marketing efforts a company deploys on its social media page. The number of shares is similar to that of comments. Here too, Visme saw a steep decline in users sharing their content whereas Canva registered a growth in sharing patterns. (Graph no 3).

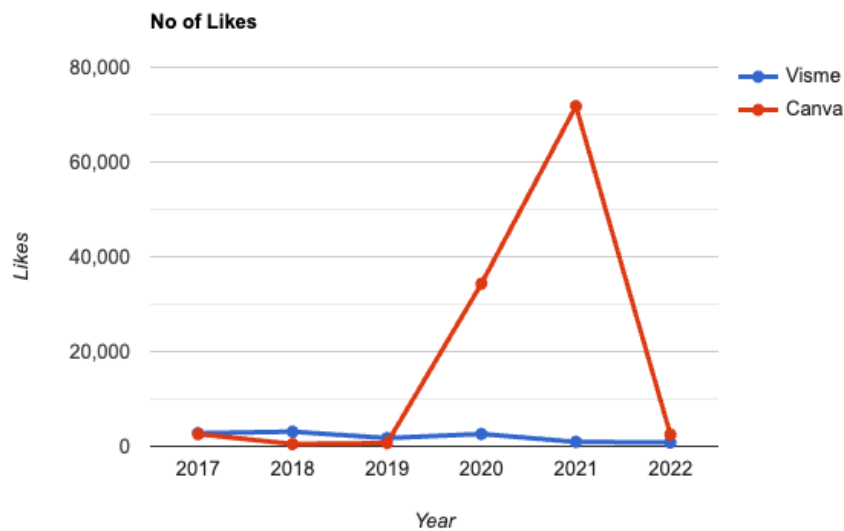
Graph 3: Number of Comments Comparison with Canva and Visme



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

Canva's understanding of the cultural factors of its user base is the major reason why it has garnered over 119000 likes as compared to Visme's 11957. Each of Canva's posts has been liked 207 times on average as compared to Visme's 44.

Figure 4: Number of Likes Comparison with Canva and Visme



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

After careful analysis of posts published by both companies, a few factors emerge organically. Each of the company's post has been scrutinised on the basis of aesthetics, content, personalisation and engagement.

Canva

Canva posted 567 posts in the period of 2017 to November 2022. The total number of likes is 1,12,370 times, wowed 98 times, angered 27 times, Laughed 27 times, Cared 104 times, Cried 14 times, Commented 902 times and shared posts 918 times.

Aesthetics: Each of Canva's posts is colour coordinated meaning images used by Canva have the same background colour. The use of bright colours with complimenting fonts looks quirky. Visme's posts on the other hand are more functional in nature. Illustrations given by Canva are easy to understand.

Content: The level of personalisation by Canva is exceptional. New designs created by its users on Canva platform are shared online by the company on its page encouraging other users to innovate and create. This sense of achievement binds the user to the company. The company also complements their users by tagging them and their work on its page. Visme posts are more tutorial and they rarely call out their users. Canva uses GIFs in their posts as well. It reduces the cognitive load on the user.

Personalisation: Their Facebook posts are a testimony to the fact that they have studied, in great detail, their market. Their Facebook India page is full of congratulatory messages on

important festivities. Be it Navratri, Diwali, Eid or a national holiday, there is a template for every occasion. The company lets its users pay in local currency. For example, in India, one can buy their paid plan using UPI in Indian currency. For Visme paid plans, one has to pay in dollars only. Posts on its Facebook page indicate that the company is targeting all sets of users. For example, there is a separate page titled 'Canva for Teachers' where teachers from the design field can share their experiences with the Canva platform. The company shares feedback given by its users openly on its page. This encourages transparency.

Engagement: Canva has managed to keep its users engaged. They give free templates, designs and font combinations to try and encourage users to post under hashtags like #MadewithCanva or #Canvalove. In India, Canva has partnered with the education platform Vedantu where an expert gives free lectures on design tools. Also for teachers, Canva has introduced "Creativity on Classroom" programs where school teachers are encouraged to participate. The company also conducts offline workshops to connect with the local community.

Visme

Visme posted 2324 posts in the period of 2017 to November 2022. The total number of likes is 11931 times, wowed 81 times, angered 10 times, Laughed 84 times, Cared 16 times, Cried 16 times, Commented 1363 times and shared posts 2187 times.

Aesthetics: Colour combinations in Visme's posts are very dull with little contrast. They are sedentary in nature which makes them less appealing and they don't match with contemporary colour languages. They don't share template ideas as frequently as Canva.

Content: Posts shared on the page are random. They don't follow any specific pattern as Canva does. Even so, posts shared are blogs and videos rather than templates. In videos, links to live events, expert lectures and interaction with Visme executives are common.

Personalisation: All enquiries and doubts are generally answered within 24 hours and the company calls its users by name too. However, Visme has failed to achieve the level of personalisation that Canva has achieved through Facebook. Visme lacks the cultural and geographical know-how of its user base.

Engagement: Posts encourage users to join webinars and lectures to make them understand more nuanced points of the platform. These posts do attract a lot of attention among its seasoned users.

CONCLUSION

Both Canva and Visme are empowering their users in the design field. They both had the same starting line and offered similar services. Even social marketing strategies are also the same. But where Canva has succeeded in converting its campaign into a formidable user base, Visme has failed. Canva's integration with Facebook has given the brand a long-lasting social media marketing strategy. Its content on Facebook has proven to be the most engaging one which is centred around educating the audience and announcing new features. Most of its content is audience-centric. Like any successful brand, the focus is always on perfecting products or services and Canva is no exception. The company has invested tremendously to educate its users on how to get the most out of their product. For Canva, knowing its audience, listening to them and acting on their feedback is paramount. They are always looking for ways to make their product better so that more value can be added to their customers. Canva has outperformed Visme in terms of followers, reach and engagement rates. Canva is slowly taking steps on the rungs of the ladder to reach its audacious goal and they are doing this by democratising design.

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