

Mobility CLM and the Facebook - Are Circle Marketers in India missing a Trick or Two?

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B&E | Mobility CLM and the Facebook – Are Circle Marketers in India missing a Trick or Two?

www.indrastra.com/2017/01/BE-Mobility-CLM-and-Facebook-003-01-2017-0053.html

By *Pramit Ghosh*



The game is all about revenue. Or so, the honchos at the top would have us believe. And yet, come the last two weeks of every month, the conversations revolve around GROSS acquisitions. How many customers did you get in? The acquisition, more than anything else, dominates circle discourse, ignoring innovation in Customer Lifecycle Management (CLM) that can enhance revenue.

The fact that keeping a customer from churning is cheaper than acquiring a new customer beset with fickle mindsets seem to escape the overall notice of everybody.

The irony is that when the revenue meetings come – as they do with sickening regularity – the poor CLM professional gets the wrong end of the stick. It is as if he, and he alone, is responsible for EBIDTA (Earnings Before Depreciation, Interest, Taxes, and Amortization) and PAT. It is his personal failure that Circles don't make more. He and he alone didn't cross-sell or upsell or save customers from churning.

The CLM professional is mostly a mystery. He is in a hocus-pocus world of segmentation

and categories that seem to come out of voodoo tricks. He/she has to be from Hoggworths, needs to have studied Tantra, and has to be able to fly off on a broomstick taking the revenue up with him.

Reality check folks – he is as good as you let him be. He is subject to every prejudice and pressure that comes from the top. His knowledge is limited to what the organization is pushing and his actions are commensurate with the empowerment he has. Innovation is surely not a part of his portfolio, and, processes and top-down policies put the fear of God in him. He needs your support, beyond empty words of encouragement. He needs to be kept abreast of trends that go beyond your narrow ivory tower worldview and, more than anything else, he needs to continuous encouragement to push the framework of what is deemed as possible.

There was a time when telecom was at the forefront of innovation and evolution. Evolution remains. Innovation – especially in marketing, I believe, needs to go through a catharsis. Centralization of portfolios needs to be reconsidered. Decentralization and empowerment at Circle Level need to make a comeback of sorts. Most of all, innovations and changes in the digital world need to be incorporated in the revenue enhancement methods employed at the circle level.

Take Facebook targeting as a case in point

Before we get there, let us analyze what the CLM guys are doing at present. The use of Statistical Analysis System (SAS) is very high. Categorizations based on usage and the Age-on-Network (AON) have reached a level of high sophistication. The organization has access to mobile numbers. This is a very very powerful tool enabling customized communication to the end customer through a series of methods that include, but are not limited to, SMS, emailers, flash messages, Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Pre-Call and Post Call notifications etc.

The questions to be asked, therefore –

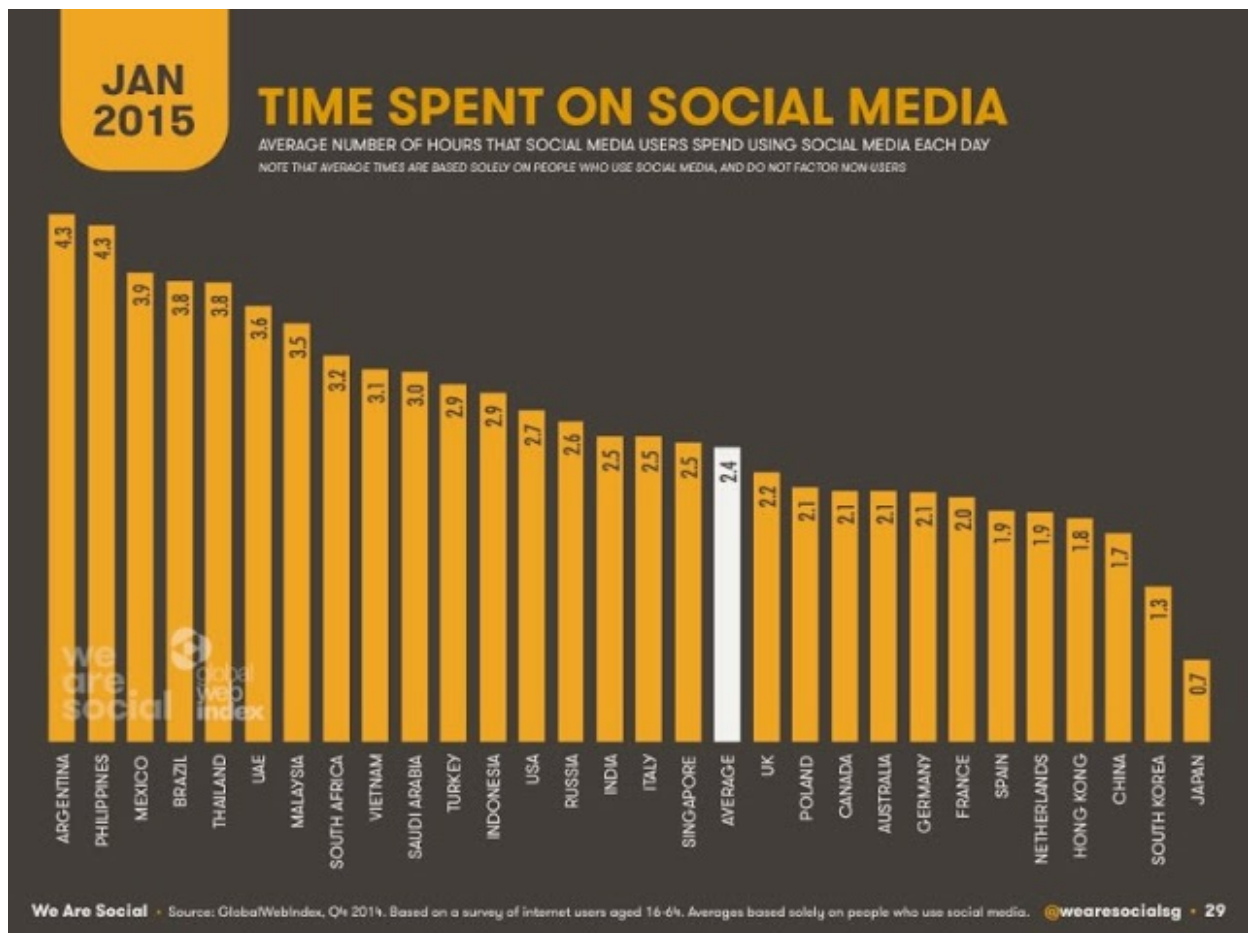
- Are your customers taking your communication seriously at all?
- Does he/she perceive a hidden agenda?
- Does he/she trust you?
- If he/she does, then why aren't as many biting the bait?

Attitudes change as do sources of information. In a world beset by change, it is important that we keep track of changing communication modes. Credibility gets re-established with newer communication – especially if that is what the world is following at present.

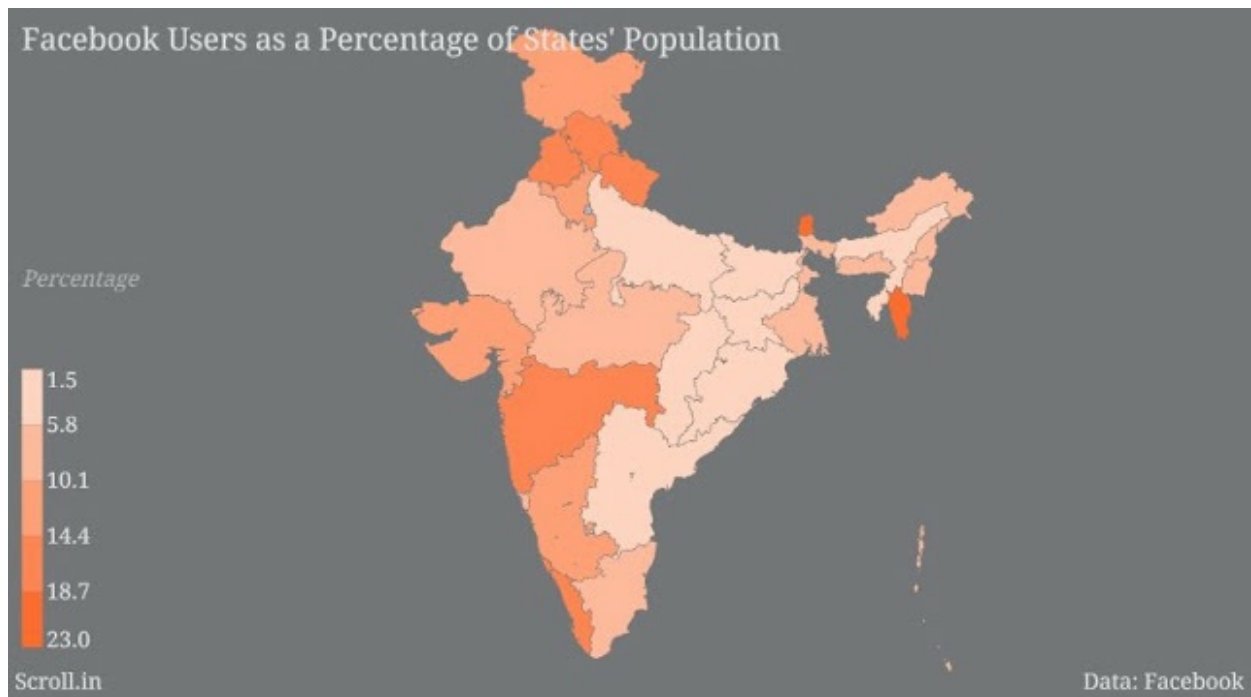
And the world right now – is following Facebook and Twitter and Instagram. How are we, as mobile marketers, making the most of these as CLM tools? I am afraid, we have some way to go.

Consider "India" as a case-study –

- As of March 2016, there were 142 mn MAUs for Facebook in India
- 90% of these users access FB through mobile devices
- More than 60 mn people form the DAU bank
- Those who spend time on Social Media, spend an average of 2.5 hours a day on it. It is safe to assume that much of this is on Facebook (Graph 1)
- As much as 23% of the population (of different circles) use Facebook (Graph 2)
- End of this year, as much as 30% of phone users will be using smartphones – the connection is obvious. It will grow to exponential levels by 2019



Graph 1



Graph 2

It is obvious that there is a sizeable chunk of mobile phone users at the circle level who access FB from their mobile on a monthly or even daily basis. Considering that they spend so much time on it, we can surmise that FB (and indeed other social media) are slowly replacing conventional information tools. Therefore, isn't it better to speak to them at their place of choice – Facebook.

The question that remains is – How?

How do we talk to our users in a way that feels that our communication is meant only for him/her? In his language. For his demographic and psychological mindset.

Analytics makes this possible

Today, Facebook (amongst the others), allows one to

- Reach customers in the areas where they or do business with you. Adverts can be targeted by city, area or postcode
- One can choose customers by age, gender, interests and languages they speak
- Interest can be defined as smaller micro-segments. Hundreds of categories such as music, films, sport, games, shopping and so much more help to find just the right people.
- One can not only reach ones defined segments, but one can target their friends and associates as well
- But the clinching argument has to be – Facebook allows marketers to target

customers by phone numbers. External data can be uploaded in endless number of campaigns with diversified creative, with call to action buttons, to reach exactly the person you want to reach

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The last point is critical to any CLM professional. This is what he/she dreams of. It is not hard to imagine the force multiplication abilities of such a tool in the hands of an imaginative CLM leadership at the circle level. He/she can actually talk to individual customers in a communication pattern that is customized for that individual.

What's more, the analytical tools available from Facebook and myriad other sources enable comprehensive insights into the success and failures of campaigns allowing for easy, online, modification and retargeting to further fine-tune segments and categories.

Further, it is really not rocket science. Anybody with a computer and an internet connection can run these campaigns – Yes, even circle based CLM managers can do them justice.

So the question remains – Why is this not taking off? Why are the Circles not using Facebook to target and retarget existing customers? I don't have the answers – But I dare say it is a mindset issue.

And yes, before I end, I have to say that CLM is not the only laggard in this respect. Acquisition too is trailing behind. But that itself is another story.

About the Author:

Pramit Ghosh (ORCID: 0000-0002-8062-2381) is the founder of Cognito Innovo, a tenured marketing professional with 16 years experience in telecom vertical specializing in Marketing Operations, Strategic Planning, Product Marketing, MARCOM / Brand Management, Base Management, Trade Marketing, GTM Plans & implementation, Team Management and Product Launch.

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