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Self-presentation in Instagram: promotion of a personal brand in social networks

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. The development of online marketing in social networks creates unique opportunities for personal selling. Especially these opportunities are manifested in online education when they buy a brand of an expert with experience in a particular field. That is why a competitive space is being formed in the Instagram social network, where a personal brand acts as a product or service.

Materials and methods. Studying the effectiveness of promoting a personal brand in social networks based on the Instagram platform was chosen to have great visual opportunities for self-presentation. As part of the collection of empirical material, two methods were used: a survey (N-200) and content analysis of three blogger accounts with high rates of activity and popularity.

Results and discussion. Content analysis of bloggers showed that an algorithmic feed on a social network allows bloggers to control the content. To help them, Instagram provides statistical data on user reach, thereby capturing trends in the movement of the blogger's audience. The main task of a blogger is to combine real and "virtual" images so as not to lose consumer confidence. A survey of social network users confirmed the importance of a personal brand for them. The survey also made it possible to identify the most popular audience requests that they expect from bloggers and their accounts: valuable reviews and recommendations, case studies and author's solutions, storytelling, blogger's reflections and motivating messages, live broadcasts, and stories are important.

Conclusions. The results obtained underline followers' high level of interest in the bloggers' personal brand on Instagram. The study results show that the most significant number of those involved (those who give feedback and are constantly involved in interaction with the account) is where the formation of a personal brand is built to a greater extent on the emotional level of perception of the individual.

FOR CITATION

INTRODUCTION

The modern world is highly differentiated thanks to the Internet and social networks. So, on the one hand, of course, the Internet unites various geographical spaces in one virtual space. On the other hand, the Internet forms many disparate groups within one space, and many are closed into communities of individual social networks. The market is integrating with social networks, and now the most popular of them can be found as large corporations, small shops, self-employed, individual entrepreneurs.

The Internet is a massive platform for communication in almost all spheres of human life. Until recently, the primary function of the Internet was the transmission, receipt, and storage of information. However, now, these Internet functions are shifting to the background. Today, with the help of the Internet, people can buy and sell, learn, develop, and most importantly, communicate [1; 2]. The rapid development of the Internet and the growing role of Internet communications lead to the following consequences. In the scientific community, the formation and maintenance of information need strategies for their satisfaction in social networks and other Internet sites are increasingly being raised with the legal aspect of information culture [3; 4].

In the early 1960s, practically simultaneously in Japan and the United States, the term "information society" was introduced, revealing society's objective process of awareness of the importance of information and its transformation into a real production force. E. Masuda, one of the authors of the ideology of the information society, said that, in contrast to the industrial society, where the primary value was the consumption of goods, the determining value is time [1]. That is, information is transmitted faster, and, consequently, many social processes also proceed at a different speed.

M. Castells pays attention to such an important problem of the information society as the problem of self-consciousness and self-identity [5]. Information technologies are changing the nature of social communications, the processes of socialization, representation, self-determination, and self-affirmation of the individual in creativity, professional and personal life. The modern world and market are highly differentiated, as large corporations, small shops, and individual entrepreneurs operate there. For each category, a personal brand has a different meaning, but at the same time, it has common features.

This article explores creating an individual personal brand in social networks as promoting yourself as an expert selling your own products and services. A personal brand focuses on how a person's skills, motivations, and interests are organized into a single image that can affect recognition loyalty, including career success and promoting one's expertise in any field [6].

The key advantage of social networks is the maximum opportunities for audience targeting, the focus of an advertising campaign on a specific segment of the target audience. At the same time, users have already registered on social networks themselves and reported as much information about themselves as possible: age, marital status, education, hobbies, and many

other facts. As a result, social networks collect much more information than other marketing tools, which makes it possible to work only with those users who best match the idea of the target audience.

For various types of advertising, most of the characteristics of social networks are an advantage in choosing these networks as a platform. For contextual and banner advertising, tens of millions of people every day must spend a significant amount of time communicating on social networks. Of course, for marketing, an important place is occupied by direct contact with a potential consumer.

We can formulate a specific classification of social networks:

- social networks of a general format. The Russian VKontakte network can be attributed to this group since users are not united based on specific joint activities or common interests. They are formed, as a rule, to ensure communication, communication of users with friends, colleagues, acquaintances, relatives. Users can upload photos from various events videos, listen to music, use applications, get news, etc. In connection with all this, people get the opportunity to be aware of the affairs of a friend relative, even if at a given time, for various reasons, they do not have the opportunity to meet and communicate with him in "real life." Another example of this category is Odnoklassniki, which allows people to search. Foreign social networks include, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and, of course, Instagram;

- professional social networks are created exclusively for communicating with people of specific professions. Thanks to them, a person can find his employee, establish a connection with a representative of a particular organization, post certain news or press releases related to the company, and take advantage of many other opportunities. That is, actions such as posting a personal video are inappropriate. Among professional social networks, one can note the Russian "My Circle," "Professionals," "RB.ru" and foreign networks "XING" and "LinkedIn."

- social networks by interests. People can unite for such interests as music, films, love for nature, sports, etc. "Members of social networks are given a wide range of opportunities to share information, namely: communication using private messages, sharing photos and videos, general chat, blogging services, communities, etc.". In this regard, common interests serve as the basis for forming specific social networks to communicate with like-minded people. The most common networks are MySpace and Last.fm. It is important to note "MyAnimeList," whose users are fans of Japanese animation.

Let us compare the social network Instagram with such popular networks as Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, and Twitter. Even though Facebook bought Instagram in April 2012 for $1 billion in cash and stock and supported and offered integration with Instagram, the two platforms still compete. Compared to Instagram, it is much easier to use user expectations. For example, Instagram users are happy to share pictures with minimal descriptions every day. At the same time, Facebook subscribers require more intensive participation in content creation (for example, more voluminous text). The only visually

superior social network compared to Instagram is YouTube. 52% of people are more confident about a product when watching a video about it. The probability of buying a product when watching a video increases by 74%. Pinterest is based on the same use of images as Instagram. However, the main difference is that Instagram allows editing the image directly in the application before using it, while Pinterest is a traditional website for sharing ready-made photos. Instagram and Twitter also have more similarities than differences. In terms of time and energy, while Instagram does not require communication after posting an image, Twitter users expect dialogue and participation, sharing, commenting, and replies to those comments.

Social network users are increasingly involved in active activities within social networks, and for many users, networks such as Facebook, Instagram, VKontakte have become an inseparable part of their lives. Moreover, this gives marketers ample opportunities to promote the company's products and form an appropriate image through direct contact with the target audience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A personal brand focuses on how a person's skills, motivations, and interests are organized into a single image that can affect recognition loyalty, including career success and promoting one's expertise in any field [6].

The concept of "personal brand" has not yet been formed, and this process continues. It is advisable to refer to the concepts of "brand" and " product " to highlight its key features.

F. Kotler defines a product as "everything that satisfies a need." A personal brand as a carrier of unique knowledge and professional skills can be identified as a product. The most common definition of a brand is provided by the American Marketing Association, which reads as follows: "A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of all of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and also to distinguish goods or services from goods or services of competitors" [7].

The above definitions are important for the authors of the book "Personal Brand" A. Ryabykh and the director of the PR agency "ZebraCompany" V. Danilova (Nika Zebra), who presented in their book the following definition of a personal brand: Images (promises, expectations) that appear in the minds of other people from a specific person [8]. In addition, when defining a personal brand, V. Danilova uses the definition of Self-branding, which is formulated as follows: "Transformation of personal individuality into a recognizable conceptually unified brand," [9] i.e., promotion of oneself as an already widely demanded specialist.

A. Kichaev also considers a personal brand from a similar point of view [8]. He defines a personal brand as "a set of your personal and business qualities that indicates your usefulness and interestingness. This is the image (idea or emotion) that has developed in other people's minds, in which their experience and expected benefits from interacting with you are expressed.

Peters T. believes that a personal brand is an image of a person, his personality, which other people see and perceive. So, in the definition of a personal brand, the emphasis shifts towards a person's individuality, qualities, and talents.

Thus, V. Danilova and A. Kichaev, speaking about a personal brand, to a greater extent shift the focus towards the individuality of people, their abilities and talents, which are reflected in a personal brand, and which allow a person achieving heights in the chosen field of activity. Other authors focus on the created image, which is shown to the consumer and society as a whole.

The authors of the book "Personal Brand: Creation and Promotion," A. Ryabykh and V. Danilova, also identify areas of activity for people who need to build a personal brand [10]. These are politicians, officials, entrepreneurs, representatives of show business, athletes, people of creative professions, top managers, and employees. Thus, the circle of people who should take their personal brand seriously is clearly outlined, while it cannot be said that people who are not representatives of these professions do not need to pay attention to their brand at all. Of course, the circle of those who should develop their personal brand is not limited to these categories of people. In this case, people can instead use the tools to create a personal brand but do not shift their focus to its constant maintenance.

V. Kovalev, Technical Director of the international payment system Paymentwall, quite accurately notes that "a personal brand is a concept intuitively understandable, but difficult to explain in words. It consists, first of all, of personality – of how it interacts with other people. The more people's personality can influence and inspire, and the faster and more effective personal brand will grow" [11].

Thus, a personal brand consists of two main components – reputetion and reach. Reputation is the foundation of any brand. Reputation is earned over the years and maintained throughout the entire period of the brand's existence, both the manufacturer and the individual as the bearer of a personal brand. The fame, that is, audience reach can be a negative indicator of a bad reputation and vice versa.

A brand is a set of information that distinguishes a company or individual from competitors. A personal brand is an image in which people see and perceive a person. It usually consists of behavior in real life, how it is presented in the media and what information people receive on the Internet. Recently, this factor has become the most significant, as people can get to know a person closer without distorting information by third-party news sources.

A brand should give a product or service identity and uniqueness, and it should strengthen the company's image and increase trust and usefulness for customers [11; 13; 14]. Only these qualities are projected onto one person, which is called a product in a broader context. Hence, a "person" is a product, and personal brand is everything others unconsciously think about pearson.

Reputation is a constant collective assessment and image imprinted in people's memory. All this is formed over a relatively long period, mainly if the strategy is aimed at increasing reputation. Not surprisingly, it can be spoiled much faster than improved.

A personal brand should not be a false image of a person, created only for marketing purposes [15; 16]. It is important to be real everywhere – online and in real meetings.

The further the path to the brand goes, the more people are convinced of a person's competence. The more substantial public recognition, the more customers will trust and happily buy something from this person. Thus, a personal brand is made up of interactions with other people. The more people a person can influence, the faster and more effectively a person's personal brand will grow.

Identity is originally a social formation. The individual sees (and therefore shapes) himself as others see him. The presence of an everyday symbolic basis (language, gestures, symbols) in the social experience of communication participants makes it possible to adapt the actions of various human individuals to each other within the framework of the social process. The American sociologist C. Cooley, developing this idea, also gave the concept of identification. Identification is a reflection of the properties of a person through which he is perceived in society, in a group of which he is a member [17].

Consider the elements of a person's personal brand from the point of view of Aaker's brand identity model [6]. According to D. Aaker, identity is based on the brand's essence. Therefore, a person's identity is related to the fundamental characteristics that make them who they are.

The perception of personality by other people is an important element in forming a personal brand. Understanding this topic is an auxiliary key to determining a strategy for promoting a personal brand. A. Piterova and A. Medvedeva, in their work, considered five levels of perception of the personality by people around them [18]:

1. Emotional level. Any person can count the emotions and mood of a particular person.

2. The level of uniqueness. Each person has unique traits: character, appearance, gait, communication style, clothing details, talents, speech, and abilities.

3. Personal level. This level includes the values, principles, and qualities of a person – the essence of personality.

4. Behavioral level. At this level, a person evaluates all the inherent details in a person. At this level, manners, movements, facial expressions, gestures, voice intonations, grooming are considered – these characteristics can form the first impression of a person in 30-60 seconds.

5. Personal identification. Characteristic image of a person: hair, jewelry, clothes, tattoos, lenses, and any other details that identify a person.

A. Morgan presented a set of several personal qualities that should be reflected on the page of a social media platform when developing a personal brand [19]:

1. Impression or charisma. A person with developed charisma can quickly win the loyalty of the audience.

2. Relationships in the team. How does a person manifest himself within the team, what kind of relationship does he have with the team.

3. Propensity to take risks and the ability to benefit from it.

4. Firmness of character, the ability to express one's own opinion, despite the public.

Morgan's set of personality traits helps to emphasize the formation of a personal brand.

Personal branding is how people present themselves to the audience as a brand [20]. Thus, personal branding is a competent step-by-step plan for development within a public society. In the case of professional development, the plan for building a personal brand may include marketing, expert development, promotion strategy, and public communication [21].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article presents an analysis of the attitude of Instagram users to self-presentation in this social network as a tool for promoting a personal brand. This task was carried out through a survey. The object of the survey was users of the social network Instagram, i.e., personal brand consumers. For the study, an online survey form was chosen, which can be explained by the chosen topic, which is related to social networks. A total of 200 respondents took part in the survey. The sample type is non-random selection. The sampling method is a snowball.

The results obtained with the help of the survey allow drawing a picture of consumers' attitudes toward a personal brand to the social network Instagram as a tool for promoting a personal brand.

In addition to conducting a survey, it was decided to turn to a research method as content analysis. The purpose of the content analysis was to determine whether personal brand elements can be traced in bloggers' accounts based on their posts on the social network Instagram.

According to the survey results, several people were identified whose personal brand was noted by the respondents as strong. However, it was decided to evaluate the reflection of elements of different levels of perception of the personality in those blogs that belong to those who consider themselves to be experts who create and subsequently sell social media promotion courses, the programs of which contain, among other things, sections on personal branding. Thus, three bloggers were selected for the analysis: Alexandra Mitroshina, Margarita Savchuk, and Polina Pushkareva. All of these bloggers have an audience of over 500,000 subscribers. Characteristics of bloggers:

- Alexandra Mitroshina – 2.5 million subscribers (May 29, 2021).
- Polina Pushkareva – 962 thousand subscribers (May 29, 2021).
- Margarita Savchuk – 609 thousand subscribers (May 29, 2021).

The following categories were taken: the presence of personal brand elements in the texts, personal brand elements in the photo, the number of "likes," the number of comments. The unit of content analysis was publications (text and visual component).

The personal brand elements in publications were analyzed according to the levels of perception of a person by others:

1. Emotional level: emotions and mood.
2. Level of uniqueness: personality strengths, personality weaknesses, character and temperament, appearance, clothing details, communication style, talents and abilities, education, speech.

3. Personal level: values, principles, qualities.
4. Behavioral level: manners, movements, facial expressions, gestures, voice intonations, grooming, accuracy.
5. Personal identification: attributes and characteristics of the image associated with a particular person (piercing, tattoos, colors in clothes, glasses, etc.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

If Instagram is chosen as a platform for promoting a personal brand, then, according to the respondents, the following types of content should be used first of all. In descending order from most important to least important:

1. Useful reviews recommendations. This answer is approved by 62.5% of respondents.
2. Cases and their author's solutions or comments on them. 56% of the respondents agreed with this.
3. Storytelling. 48% of respondents noted this type of content is important.
4. Reflections on topics close to the scope of the blogger. 21% of respondents agreed with the importance of this type of content.
5. Stories about what motivates, inspires, makes laugh, etc. 19.5% chose this option.
6. Broadcasts, live broadcasts, and stories from various events and events. 19% of respondents agreed with this choice.
7. "Backstage" – photos, videos, and stories about any process that "remained behind the scenes." 16.5% of respondents preferred this type of content.
8. Opinions about important events in the country, the world, the city. 15.5% of respondents said this type of content is vital for promoting a personal brand on Instagram.
9. Publications about family relatives. 12.5% of those surveyed agreed that this is important.
10. Video tutorials. The least effective, according to respondents, in promoting a personal brand (8.5% of respondents agree with their importance).

Interestingly, men were 20.6% more likely than women to choose "storytelling" (stories from personal life, facts from the past or present, memories) as the type of content that should be used when promoting a personal brand on Instagram. Women are closer to stories about what motivates, inspires, makes laugh, etc. (22.3% versus 13.1% for men), reflections on topics close to the blogger's field of activity (24.5% versus 13.1% for men), broadcasts, live broadcasts and stories from various events and events (23.7% versus 8.2% for men). Men are more inclined to think that, first of all, it is necessary to use cases and their author's solutions or comments on them (68.9% versus 50.4% for women).

Respondents with different financial statuses have a difference in opinion when choosing content to promote their brand on Instagram. Thus, valuable reviews and recommendations were most chosen by those with enough money for food, but buying clothes causes difficulties (86.4%). Respondents who do not experience difficulties with money are more likely to think

that it is worth using cases and their author's solutions or comments on them in the first place. This fact is because they can be highly paid experts in some field or have their own business. Therefore, they are interested in the experience of others, the study of cases, and the author's solutions, for example, competitors.

The survey results also showed that 64% of respondents consider it necessary to promote a personal brand both for the owner or head of the company and for the key employee of the company and an expert in any business. At the same time, men were three times more likely to say that they consider this activity necessary for the owner or head of the company (37.7% versus 11.5% for women).

We can expect various bonuses from promoting a personal brand on social networks. More than half of the respondents (57.5%) noted that they could expect all the bonuses listed in the question, including strengthening the company's brand, customer loyalty, and loyalty, increasing the value of services, the richness of professional connections self-confidence. One person expressed the opinion that no bonuses should be expected. There were no significant differences in responses by gender.

When studying the trust in the types of information when choosing a product or service, it is worth noting that most often, respondents rely on the recommendations of experts in this field (72.5% of respondents), recommendations of acquaintances (68.5%), information posted on behalf of the company (35.5%). Recommendations of famous personalities are trusted by 9.5% of respondents. One person trusts the reviews, and another is based only on his own experience.

It should be noted that only female respondents were inclined to trust the recommendations of famous personalities; this can be explained by the fact that women, in general, are more interested in representatives of show business.

There is a tendency with increasing age to give up trust in famous personalities' recommendations in favor of acquaintances' recommendations. A person often becomes closer to family friends, and his social circle narrows with age.

More than 60% of each occupational group trusts recommendations from acquaintances. However, employees still show the highest level of trust. 80% of the unemployed noted that they would trust the recommendations of famous personalities when choosing a product, and all the unemployed answered that they would trust the recommendations of experts in this field.

Respondents who do not experience financial problems in 50% of the answers indicated that they consider it necessary to promote a personal brand in social networks for the owner or head of the company. In comparison, this option was chosen by no more than 27.6% of representatives of other groups by financial situation. This fact may be because, those who can afford to buy a new car have a relatively high level of income and, consequently, a good job, or they are owners or managers.

The popularity of bloggers on Instagram in various sources is often attributed to their strong personal brand, with which 76.5% of respondents agreed.

More than half of respondents say that companies come to mind whose success is directly related to the personal brand of its leader or employee. So, they list more than forty personalities, but the following are most often mentioned:

1. Elon Musk and his Tesla car – 13 times.
2. Steve Jobs and his Apple company – 12 times.
3. Pavel Durov, creator of the social network Vkontakte and messenger Telegram – 6 times.
4. Anastasia Mironova, founder of the IRNBY sportswear brand, sports training courses – 5 times.
5. Alexandra Mitroshina, Instagram blogger, creator of the Instalogy course – 5 times.
6. Oleg Tinkov, Russian entrepreneur, founder, and chairman of the board of directors of Tinkoff Bank – 4 times.
7. Mark Zuckerberg, founder of the social network Facebook – 3 times.
8. Bill Gates, creator of Microsoft – 3 times.
9. Polina Pushkareva, Instagram blogger, creator of the Managerial course – 2 times.
10. Margarita Savchuk, Instagram blogger, creator of the Managerial course – 2 times.

A solid personal brand, an Instagram user, pushed 38% of respondents to buy a product service, 29.5% did not have this, 32.5% found it difficult to answer this question. 46.8% of female respondents purchased a product or service due to the influence of a personal brand, while only 18% of male respondents gave a similar answer.

Respondents named the names of those who, in their opinion, have a strong personal brand, and it is these that explain why they purchased their goods or services.

So, for example, the reason for buying goods from the IRNBY sportswear brand, owned by Anastasia Mironova, is that respondents say they read about her self-development and personal growth and believe that she achieved everything herself often saw the clothes of her brand in stories Anastasia. Buying a set of cosmetics from the same blogger is explained by the fact that she made a good advertisement and showed the stages of skincare by her example. The respondents note that it is competent in quality matters not only for its products but also for goods in general. Therefore, when buying cosmetic products, they are sure that Anastasia is selling them a quality product.

Buying a design course by Margarita Savchuk is explained by the respondents for such reasons as her presentation convinced them of the product's value. They describe her as an emotional girl who is sincerely proud of her product and says that the soul is first of all brought into it.

Respondents explain the purchase of courses and webinars from Alexandra Mitroshina because they like her as a person. They believe that Alexandra has achieved success. She shares her life path on Instagram, gives advice, recommendations makes sure that its products contain less water and more material of real value.

The fact that respondents purchased courses from blogger Polina Pushkareva is explained by the fact that she is very straightforward, does not stand on ceremony with problems, solves them, and tells her story of becoming one of the leading representatives of the information business in Russia. One of the respondents recommended referring to Polina's Wikipedia page.

Since all respondents are Instagram users, it was interesting to find out if they are promoting their brand through self-presentation on this social network. Approximately a quarter of respondents (25.5%) answered positively to this question, but more than half (58%) still avoid this topic. It is worth clarifying that among female respondents, in percentage terms, there are almost twice as many of those who are promoting their brand on Instagram (29.5% of women versus 16.4% of men). With the age of the respondents, the number of those who promote their brand on Instagram decreases; instead, this is due to a change in their interests, occupation, etc. In addition, according to the survey, it turned out that employees are the least engaged in promoting their brand on Instagram.

CONCLUSION

A personal brand helps to share ideas, thoughts, and opinions with a large audience and increases the loyalty of both existing customers and the trust of new ones. Thanks to the brand, the environment values a person higher. Promotion in social networks is an innovative marketing tool that significantly influences the target audience. Promotion in a social network is practically the only marketing tool that provides a unique opportunity to focus tens of thousands of potential consumers around one online community.

Users spend a considerable amount of time on social networks, getting to know each other, communicating, exchanging audio recordings, photos, and video files. Social networks contribute to people's rapprochement, providing an opportunity to overcome territorial and temporal barriers to stay in touch with friends, relatives, and relatives without being at a computer monitor, smartphone in home, office, or other convenient places a given time.

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