

- on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Social media marketing or promoting through online social media is the hottest trend in marketing today, embraced by both solo entrepreneurs and major corporations alike. Even publishers today are using this medium for promotion of their books. Nowadays, every publisher seems to have a Facebook account and a fan page. And that's not all – LinkedIn, Twitter and VirtualReader Communities are extensively being used for promotion. Varsha Verma brings more on this growing trend.

Social media: it's all about interaction



We all know social networks are online communities where people with common interests virtually meet, develop relationships, communicate, and share. It's all about interaction – just what you need to promote anything – even books.

“Well the promotion of every product is the process of communicating about the features of that product to its desired consumers. What better medium today can you ask for than social media,” says Aman Arora, Marketing & PR, Dorling Kindersley (India).

In fact, a recent survey has shown that if Facebook was a physical nation, it would now be the third-most populous on earth, after China and India. Such is the attraction of social networking sites!

Social media marketing for books...

“Just like it is important for the promotion of any brand and product, likewise it is important for publishing as well,” told Aman. More and more publishers are now using social media networking sites to promote their brand, their new releases and the famous characters of the book.

While Divya Dubey of Gyaana Books, an upcoming publisher, said, “Well, everybody uses all avenues they can, for marketing. It's very important for us since it helps us reach out to maximum people at one go, showcase what we have, take polls/opinions/feedback, etc.”

Popular sites...

So, what are the popular sites used by these publishers? Well, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter top the lists. Publishers or author often create Facebook Fan pages to promote their books, sometimes even in the name of a character in their book. Last but not the least, Virtual Reader communities also help where readers and authors network and recommend books to each

other.

“For Rough Guides, DK and Penguin, there are different Facebook pages like <http://www.facebook.com/roughguides>, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Penguin-Books-India/29139940906> and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dorling-Kindersley/108698592487321>,” told Aman.

“We have used the usual popular ones like Facebook, LinkedIn, and to some extent Twitter and the response has been varied – sometime good and sometimes not upto the expectations,” added Divya as a matter of fact.

Targeting the right people...

Ofcourse, like any other marketing medium, targeting the right people is important. “What is important is to target the right people and present the information which looks enticing to the reader. By presentation we mean one can put up competitions, such as photography, etc. One can also run a feedback initiative about the brand and can fetch great reviews,” told Aman

The effectiveness...

On asking about the effectiveness of social media marketing Divya replied, “To some extent it helps since it helps us reach out to more people and gets our audience to interact with each other and see the responses of others on the single platform.”

Though the problem with online marketing is that not many people follow the developments after a point or check for updates and messages regularly. “In general they have a short attention span, so we need to come up with alternatives,” she added.

Is just social media marketing enough?

So, where does social media marketing fit into the marketing plan for books? “No doubt, it is good -- but it’s not enough by itself. Armchair marketing doesn’t go a very long way,” told Divya. “It is significant but we are also exploring other things like launches and readings, especially to reach out to such people who’re not so active online.”

On a concluding note...

Internet users who might be browsing certain sites at one point of time, may not browse them regularly – the interest factor keeps on changing due to change in priorities, etc. Thus, social media marketing, though popular and effective, is not sufficient in itself. The response rate keep on changing on this media and so alternate means of marketing are required to go hand in hand. Activities like book launches, reading, participation in exhibitions, advertising in print media – all go a long way in promoting books. But yes, the social networking sites are equally important and if you are still not a part of it – do so now!

