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MODERN ADVERTISING: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

СУЧАСНА РЕКЛАМА: РОЛЬ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖ

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This article examines the role of social media in the development of modern advertising. It is emphasized that in a highly competitive environment, businesses actively use social media, taking into consideration its advantages and effectiveness. A number of key characteristics of modern advertising on social media are highlighted, and the mechanism of brand community development via SMM communications has been identified. It is demonstrated that social media is becoming an important part of the modern marketing mix, and the main functions of social media in today's world are identified. Statistical data on social media usage are examined, along with a ranking of the social media platforms most frequently used by marketers both globally and in Ukraine. The existence of a number of challenges associated with conducting business on social media is highlighted, and the prospects for using social media as a tool for promoting modern business strategies are substantiated.

Keywords: advertising, marketing, SMM, brand, brand communities, social media.

Стаття присвячена вивченню ролі соціальних мереж у розвитку сучасної реклами. Методологічну основу дослідження становлять системний підхід, порівняльний аналіз, методи аналізу та синтезу для розгляду ролі соціальних мереж у сучасній рекламі та обґрунтування перспектив їх розвитку. Наголошено, що в умовах високої конкуренції бізнес активно використовує соціальні мережі, розуміючи їх переваги та ефективність, що забезпечує можливість швидко адаптувати маркетингові кампанії до змін ринку та поведінки споживачів. Виділено низку ключових характеристик сучасної реклами у соціальних мережах, зокрема цифровізацію, контекстну рекламу, таргетинг, співпрацю з інфлюенсерами, персоналізацію, нативність, сторітелінг, омніканальність, емоційність, цінність тощо. Визначено основні функції соціальних мереж у сучасному світі, які охоплюють спілкування, інформаційний обмін, бізнес, саморозвиток, електронну комерцію, громадський контроль, розвиток особистого бренду та кар'єри. Окремлено поняття бренд-спільноти як групи споживачів, які об'єднані спільними інтересами, цінностями та емоційною прив'язкою до певного продукту чи компанії.



Наголошено, що бренд-спільноти є стратегічним ресурсом компанії як чинник формування довгострокових відносин зі споживачами та підвищення конкурентоспроможності бізнесу. Окреслено механізм формування бренд-спільноти через SMM-комунікації. Доведено, що соціальні мережі стають важливою частиною сучасного маркетингового комплексу і потужним інструментом взаємодії з користувачами. Розглянуто статистичні дані користування соціальними мережами та рейтинг найбільш використовуваних маркетологами платформ соціальних мереж у світі, зокрема чисельність користувачів, активність, вікові групи, світові витрати на рекламу в соціальних мережах. Приділено увагу аналізу ключових характеристик використання найбільш популярних соціальних мереж в Україні. Наголошено на існуванні низки викликів, що пов'язані із веденням бізнесу у соціальних мережах, та обґрунтовано перспективи використання соціальних мереж як інструменту просування сучасних бізнес-стратегій.

Ключові слова: реклама, маркетинг, SMM, бренд, бренд-спільноти, соціальні мережі.

Statement of the problem. Research into the role of social media in the development of modern advertising is important, as social media platforms have become a key concept of communication between businesses and consumers. The growth in the number of social media users, the rise of digital technologies and the transformation of consumer behaviour patterns mean advertising campaigns are now carried out by using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and LinkedIn. This topic is particularly relevant in the context of the digital transformation of the economy, intense competition and changes in the marketing tools employed. For businesses, the effective use of social media in advertising is a means of building competitive advantages, strengthening brand recognition, engaging with consumers and attracting new customers, amongst other things. Social media is no longer merely an advertising medium, but also a strategic tool for business development in both domestic and international markets.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Kitchenko O. and Miroshnyk M. examine advertising activities from the perspective of their importance for creating a personalised experience within a brand's audience, which in turn helps to improve return on investment and inform strategic decision-making. Thus, implementing a marketing strategy based on social media enables companies to allocate advertising expenditure effectively and influence consumers in a targeted manner, at the same time the usage of the latest advertising technologies allows in strategic planning of brand promotion [1]. Havryliuk O. links social media to global trends, emphasizing on that virtual communities – within which users create individual profiles and interact with others on the basis of shared interests – can be regarded as a global consumer phenomenon characterised by exponential growth [2]. Chmil H., Novakivskyi K. and Demydova V. emphasise on the importance

of understanding and using social media, noting that social media connects businesses with their target audience, enables them to promote their products, shape changes in consumer tastes and develop their brand [3]. Foreign researchers convince that the effectiveness of social media in marketing is achieved through the use of various models, including video content, collaboration with influencers, the inclusion of stories, the integration of augmented and virtual reality technologies, content customisation, active engagement with the audience, the use of data and analytics, data management, as well as the ability to adapt to changing trends and user behaviour [4]. Consequently, modern marketing tools are actively used by businesses on social media, as these platforms are characterized by rapid growth and extensive audience reach.

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. It is entirely reasonable to say that social media plays a key role in modern advertising, providing companies with opportunities to engage with their target audience by personalising advertising messages, using various targeting criteria, and evaluating the effectiveness of advertising messages. Thanks to their interactivity, multimedia content and the rapid dissemination of content, social media has become a powerful tool in modern advertising. However, advertising on social media faces a number of challenges, including fierce competition for users' attention, changes to platform algorithms, information overload amongst the audience, and the need to create high-quality, personalised content. A clear understanding of these risks and challenges helps to maintain the effectiveness of advertising communications, increase brand awareness, build trust with consumers and foster long-term relationships with them. Thus, examining the role of social media in modern advertising against the backdrop of a range of threats and challenges allows for a deeper understanding of the directions and priorities for companies

in developing and promoting modern business strategies on social media.

Formation of the objectives of the article (task statement). The aim of this article is to examine the role of social media in the development of modern advertising and to justify the potential for their use as a tool for promoting contemporary business strategies.

Summary of the main research material. Social media offers opportunities for personalised targeting, interactive engagement with the audience, the rapid dissemination of advertising content, and the assessment of advertising campaign effectiveness in real time. Furthermore, they enable companies to build long-term relationships with consumers, increase brand awareness and boost sales at a relatively low cost. In practice, the key characteristics of modern advertising are digitalisation, with a significant proportion of budgets allocated to the internet; contextual advertising, social media targeting, SEO and collaboration with influencers; personalisation, where algorithms analyse users' interests, search queries and behaviour to suggest products that align with their current needs; native advertising and storytelling, which involve adapting advertising to informative or entertaining content; and interactivity and cutting-edge technologies using augmented and virtual reality. It is also worth noting omnichannel approaches, where companies use various touchpoints (social media, websites, email, mobile apps, and offline shops) to create a single, seamless experience for the customer. It is important to mention, all of this takes place against a backdrop of emotional engagement and value, where consumers are not merely purchasing a product but also deriving meaning from the experience. Modern brands focus on social responsibility, environmental sustainability, inclusivity and support for important social initiatives.

Businesses make active use of social media, recognising its benefits, which is important taking into consideration the need to attract new customers through targeted advertising and increase the reach of posts; developing a brand community and foster brand loyalty through promotions, competitions and engagement; and

to manage their reputation on social media to maintain a positive image in the eyes of users. In other words, a dialogue and connection with the audience take place, which help to improve the product or service. Developing brand communities is important for companies, as they help foster long-term relationships with consumers and enhance the business's competitiveness.

By 'brand community', we mean a group of consumers united by shared interests, values and an emotional connection to a particular product or company. Members of a brand community share common values, maintain long-term communication and voluntarily recommend the product. Domestic scholars emphasise on the value of brand communities, highlighting their ability to foster long-term relationships, build emotional connections and maintain loyalty to a particular brand [5, p. 587]. In our point of view, brand communities today are not only an effective marketing communications tool, but also a strategic resource for a company, ensuring sustainable relationships with consumers, promoting brand development, increasing its market value and laying the foundations for long-term business success (Fig. 1)

One of the key advantages of modern SMM advertising is the ability to communicate with potential and existing customers in a personalised way. By using a wide range of social media analytics tools, companies can effectively segment their audience by age, location, interests, behaviour and other characteristics, which significantly improves the effectiveness of advertising campaigns.

Another important aspect is building a positive brand image. Regularly publishing high-quality content, engaging with users, and responding promptly to enquiries and feedback all help to strengthen consumer trust and build a loyal brand community. In today's business environment, it is precisely this trust and emotional connection with the brand that often prove to be the decisive factors when making a purchasing. Consequently, social media platforms are becoming a powerful tool for engaging with users, thanks to the high demand on these platforms. SMM strategies have a long-term impact, as the wide choice

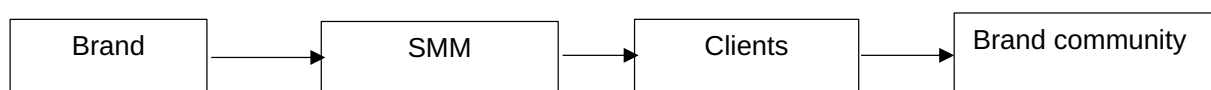


Figure 1. The mechanism for building a brand community through SMM communications

Source: compiled by the authors

of platforms and flexible configuration options make it possible to engage with the desired user segment and usage various types of content, while the opportunity to collaborate with bloggers and influencers increases the chances of attracting their audience to the product.

According to statistics, in 2025 more than 5.4 billion people worldwide used social media, of whom more than one billion were in China and more than 870 million were in India. There were 313 million social media users in the USA and 731 million in Europe, while the smallest audiences were in Central Africa and Central America.

Facebook remains the world's most popular social network, with over three billion monthly active users as of the end of 2025. Instagram reached three billion monthly active users in 2025, drawing level with WhatsApp and overtaking TikTok in terms of audience size. This app appeals to a young audience, with around a third of its users in the 18–24 age group. By the end of 2025, TikTok was closing the gap on its larger competitors, with nearly two billion monthly active users. The platform's largest user segment is currently the 25–34 age group; the platform allows users to create, edit and share short video clips enhanced with filters and music [6].

It is quite understandable that brands are turning their attention to social media platforms. Indeed, global expenditure on social media advertising reached almost \$276 billion in 2025.

As of early 2026, Facebook was the platform most frequently used by marketers [6]. Consequently, social media is becoming an important part of the modern marketing mix (Fig. 2).

It is crucial to notice that social media today fulfils a number of important functions, ranging from communication and the exchange of information to business and personal development. It can also be viewed as a multifunctional tool that serves as a platform for self-expression, a source of news, and a driving force behind business growth. The main functions of social media in the modern world cover several key areas: communication and connection, a primary source of information, business and e-commerce, public scrutiny and politics, and personal branding and career development. Advertising on social media enables businesses to quickly adapt their marketing campaigns to changes in the market and consumer behaviour. Unlike traditional advertising, the results of digital campaigns can be tracked in real time, key performance indicators analysed, and promotional strategies adjusted promptly.

In 2025, around 30 million Ukrainians were using social media. The largest share of users is made up of people aged between 18 and 35. However, the segment of users aged 45 and over is growing rapidly thanks to increased access to digital technologies. Social media is primarily used for learning, doing business, self-promotion or keeping up with the news [8].

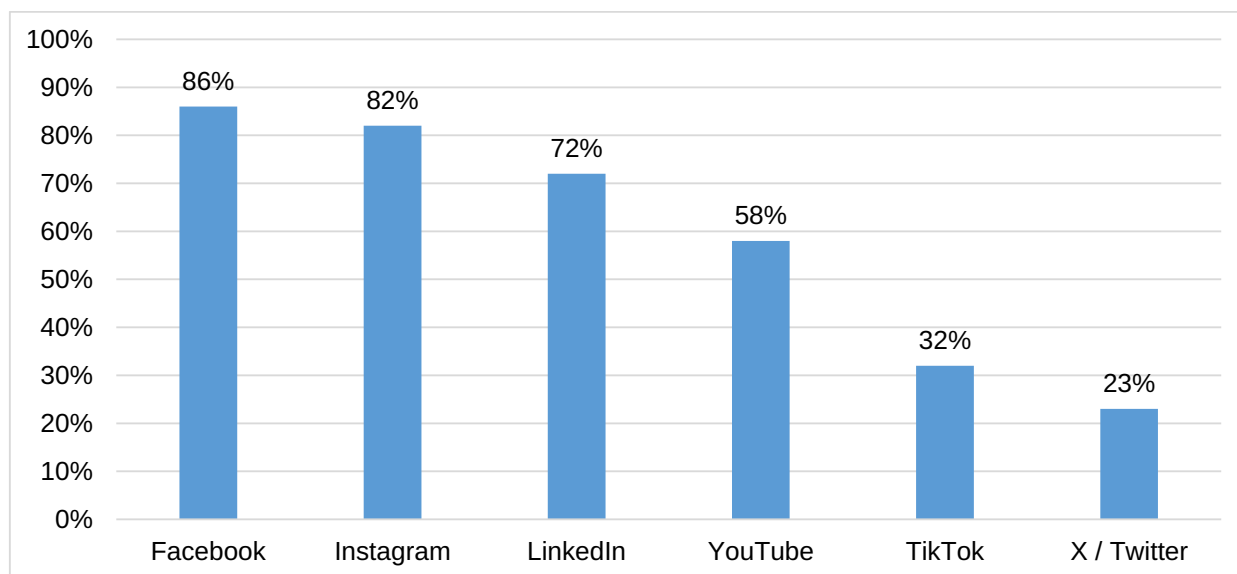


Figure 2. The most widely used social media platforms by marketers worldwide as of January 2026

Source: compiled by the authors based on [7]

Table 1

The most popular Social Networking sites in Ukraine

Social Media	Numbers of users	Key Features
YouTube	over 25 million	It is the leading video platform thanks to its wide range of content, from entertainment to education.
Facebook	around 17 million	Used for communication and managing business pages, communities and voluntary initiatives.
Instagram	over 16 million	Popular amongst young people thanks to its engaging and visually appealing content in the form of Stories and Reels. It is used for advertising and sales.
TikTok	over 11 million	Popular for its short videos, trends and viral content. It is used both as an entertainment platform and as a tool for brand promotion.
LinkedIn	over 3 million	Focused on professional development, job seeking and networking.
X (Twitter)	around 1,5 million	Popular amongst journalists, politicians and activists as a platform for exchanging news and point of views.
Telegram	over 20 million	It is used as a messaging app and a platform for news channels, blogs and business communications, and is ideal for providing timely updates.

Source: compiled by the authors based on [8]

Modern social media marketing is driven by authenticity, artificial intelligence and social commerce. Key trends include AI-generated content, the dominance of short-form videos and a significant preference for user-generated content over sleek corporate advertising.

Business success on social media comes with a number of challenges. Establishing social media presence requires both time and effort; consequently, businesspeople must constantly engage with their audience and create content. Effective social media marketing requires a deep understanding of the various platforms and the ability to create engaging content, analyse data and make data-driven decisions. Each platform is often specialised and requires its own specific understanding [9].

However, taking into consideration risks and challenges, social media advertising has nonetheless become a key tool for promoting modern business strategies, as it enables direct contact with the target audience. Experience shows that, thanks to its wide usage reach, precise targeting capabilities and interactive engagement, it enables businesses to effectively generate demand, increase brand awareness and increase sales.

Furthermore, social media platforms create the conditions for long-term communication between a company and its audience. Users not only receive advertising messages but also actively

engage with the brand through comments, content sharing, reviews and recommendations, which helps to spread information naturally and attract new customers.

Conclusions. Social media advertising is a modern strategic tool for business development, integrating advertising, communication and analytical capabilities. Its effective usage helps to strengthen a company's competitive position, increase customer loyalty, develop an active brand community and ensure long-term business growth. The key characteristics of modern social media advertising are digitalisation, personalisation, contextual and targeted advertising, collaboration with influencers, native advertising, storytelling and omnichannel marketing. Social media is a multifunctional tool that serves various purposes related to communication and interaction, the exchange of information, and the development of business, careers and personal brands. Social media usage figures and advertising volumes worldwide are showing an upward trend. The most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok, which are also actively used by marketers. There are a number of challenges and risks associated with social media advertising. Nevertheless, social media advertising remains an important tool for promoting modern business strategies and engaging with the target audience.

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