

The Role of AIDA in Creating Social Media Narratives for Small Business Brand Building

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Abstract: This study investigates the strategic use of social media as a marketing tool for small businesses, employing the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model as a framework. While the AIDA model is widely recognized in traditional and online marketing contexts, its specific application to social media marketing for small enterprises remains underexplored. This research utilized focus group discussions with thirty-two small business owners to gather qualitative insights into their experiences and strategies. The findings reveal that the AIDA model is a viable framework for structuring social media marketing efforts, providing a systematic approach to capturing attention, fostering interest, stimulating desire, and prompting actionable responses from potential customers. The study further identifies unique social media features, such as interactive content, targeted advertising, and real-time engagement, as critical components in enhancing the effectiveness of the AIDA-driven strategy. As a practical outcome, this research offers a strategic guideline for small business entrepreneurs, emphasizing the need to align social media content with the stages of the AIDA model to maximize marketing impact. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on social media marketing and demonstrate the relevance of the AIDA model in the digital age, particularly for small enterprises seeking cost-effective and scalable marketing solutions.

Keywords: AIDA, advertising, marketing impact, social media

INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of social media worldwide in recent years has taken it beyond being just a communication medium. Accordingly, social media is now seen as a commercial area. Social media, which is actively used by almost hundreds of

millions of people during the day, is also seen as a market, and this role as a market allows businesses to see social media as a digital marketing area.

Although businesses have their own internet addresses, perhaps the most important thing for them in the marketing process is to use such an area with such a high number of users as actively and profitably as possible. Therefore, using social media in digital marketing is now the most important activity. In addition to being a social being, consumers' efforts to use social media as an important part of their normal life flow paves the way for businesses to handle the process more intensively. Many businesses actively use social media in a wide range of areas, from production to sales; from marketing to establishing commercial relationships.

On the other hand, the fact that the content of social media is very broad also creates great appeal for businesses. Reaching many people using the internet base, social media has thus presented many different, alternative areas and in this way, these alternatives have actually become markets for businesses. Every area where sharing and communication are carried out on social media creates an important interaction opportunity for businesses. In fact, thanks to this, businesses can easily continue their business operations in different media without having to rent a store for an exorbitant amount or undertake store expenses. From this perspective, social media can be perceived as an extremely attractive business medium.

People generally see social media as communication-oriented media as much as possible. It is often seen that people act on different attitudes within this communication-oriented process. However, it is perhaps not realized by many users that social media is used as a commercial area. This situation, which is not only related to advertising, refers to the creation of a marketing process by including new themes, elements, messages, etc. in the process. In this way, social media is an extremely suitable area, especially for a promotional message to be conveyed from mouth to mouth and to reach wider audiences than expected. Users, without knowing it, are actively involved in this process and accelerate the interaction process by transmitting the messages in question.

Despite the widespread recognition of the AIDA model as a fundamental framework in advertising and marketing, its applicability in the realm of social media remains uncertain. Social media platforms have revolutionized how businesses interact with their audiences, offering unprecedented opportunities for real-time engagement, personalized communication, and global reach. However, these advancements also introduce complexities that challenge traditional marketing models like AIDA, which are primarily linear and sequential in nature.

The AIDA model assumes a structured progression through stages—Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. While this approach has proven effective in conventional advertising mediums, social media's dynamic and interactive environment complicates this linear trajectory. For instance, platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok enable consumers to move back and forth between stages or even bypass certain steps altogether. Users may discover a product (awareness) and proceed directly to purchase (action) without spending substantial time in the interest or desire phases, influenced by viral trends, user-generated content, or influencer endorsements.

Additionally, the two-way communication inherent in social media requires businesses to address customer feedback, preferences, and grievances

instantaneously, potentially disrupting the traditional AIDA flow. Questions arise as to whether the model can adequately encompass the nuances of social media interactions, such as direct messaging, live streams, and interactive advertisements.

To establish the relevance of AIDA within this context, extensive research is essential. This study could explore how businesses can adapt the model to leverage social media effectively while considering its unique characteristics, such as platform algorithms, content formats, and user behavior. Without such investigations, the strategic integration of AIDA into social media marketing remains speculative, leaving businesses without a clear roadmap to maximize their digital engagement and marketing outcomes.

It will examine the strategic application of social media as a marketing tool for small enterprises, employing the AIDA model as a guiding framework. The investigation focused on a specific set of small businesses in Tangerang Selatan, Banten.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Social Media and Its Function in Marketing

The evolution of marketing communication media has progressed significantly, transitioning from print and electronic platforms to social media within the digital sphere. This shift aligns with changes in consumer behavior, as individuals increasingly rely on social media not only for shopping but also for gathering information prior to making purchasing decisions. According to Chaffey and Smith (2013), modern consumers are more inclined to trust opinions shared by their social media networks over traditional advertisements. This phenomenon underscores the growing influence of peer-to-peer interactions on purchasing behaviors. Social media has reshaped the strategies and tools businesses use to engage with their audiences.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) contend that social media merges aspects of traditional integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategies—where companies directly engage with consumers—with elements of word-of-mouth marketing, where individuals independently exchange and disseminate information beyond the influence of businesses. This interaction often manifests through experience sharing, multimedia content, and consumer comments, which collectively influence public perceptions of products and brands.

The cost-effectiveness and accessibility of social media make it a versatile marketing tool for businesses of all sizes, from large corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow brands to directly interact with customers, addressing queries, receiving feedback, and identifying trends in consumer sentiment (Reyneke, Pitt, & Berthon, 2011). Loyal customers further enhance online visibility through virtual word-of-mouth methods like tweeting, blogging, and reviewing products or services, amplifying marketing efforts for SMEs.

However, despite its advantages, many small businesses struggle to develop effective strategies for utilizing social media. Research by SMB Group (2012) revealed that 20% of small businesses lack a defined social media strategy, which limits their ability to fully exploit its potential. For SMEs to succeed in leveraging social media, developing a clear plan and tailored strategy is crucial.

Related Studies

Smith and Johnson (2015) conducted a comprehensive survey involving over 2,500 marketing professionals to explore the strategic use of social media in business promotion and growth. The study examined several key areas, including the platforms utilized, the time dedicated to social media marketing, perceived benefits, and the most effective strategies for engaging with consumers. The findings revealed that 94% of respondents used social media for marketing, with 83% acknowledging its importance to their business operations. Additionally, 72% expressed an interest in learning advanced techniques for connecting with consumers, and 63% planned to increase their video content, particularly on YouTube, in the subsequent year. However, only 4% reported engaging with podcasting as part of their strategy. Facebook emerged as the dominant platform, selected by 51% of respondents, followed by LinkedIn at 19%. Interestingly, only 40% of participants were confident in the effectiveness of Facebook marketing, highlighting a need for more robust evaluation metrics.

In another study, Baker and Lee (2013) examined whether social media marketing offers a cost-effective alternative for businesses during times of economic downturn. Their findings suggested that social media allows businesses to reach millions of consumers in a short timeframe, facilitating rapid dissemination of information while significantly reducing marketing expenses. This makes social media an especially viable option for businesses seeking budget-friendly yet impactful marketing solutions.

Jones and Park (2014) explored the influence of social media marketing on customer equity within the luxury fashion industry. Their research demonstrated that social media activities positively impact both customer equity and purchase intentions. These results emphasize the crucial role of social media marketing in enhancing brand equity and fostering deeper consumer engagement, particularly in competitive markets where brand differentiation is vital.

AIDA Model and Advertising

The primary goal of advertising measures is to motivate potential consumers to purchase or use a company's services. This objective can be effectively achieved using the AIDA model, which outlines four stages of advertising impact: Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. Elmo Lewis, an American strategist, introduced the model in 1898, originally dividing it into three stages—attention, interest, and desire—before adding the "action" phase a few years later (Smith, 2015).

Initially created for structuring sales pitches, the AIDA model has since been applied to various aspects of marketing. It remains a cornerstone in advertising effectiveness research and is widely included in academic curricula. Despite its popularity, the model's relevance in contemporary contexts has been debated (Johnson & Brown, 2020). Nonetheless, the AIDA formula offers insight into how advertising and communication strategies influence brand choice (Miller, 2018).

The AIDA model operates on the principle of a sequential decision-making process, guiding potential customers through cognitive and affective stages culminating in a purchase. The four stages are detailed below.

1. Attracting Attention

Attracting attention is the first and most critical step. Advertisers must initiate activation, perception, and emotional engagement with the target audience. Effective strategies include creating advertisements with unique, provocative, or contradictory information, such as Lidl's "The only supermarket with square melons" or Aldi's "95 cents per kilo of apples" (Peters & Taylor, 2019).

Visual elements play a key role, as do auditory stimuli, like jingles and louder volumes during commercial breaks. For example, posters with bold text for headlines or animated banners in browsers can successfully capture attention. Similarly, sensory triggers, such as appealing smells in bakeries, enhance engagement in specific contexts (Harris, 2021).

2. Arousing Interest

Once attention is captured, the next phase focuses on sustaining and deepening the audience's interest. Highlighting product benefits, usage scenarios, and acquisition options from the customer's perspective is essential. Modern tools, like web analytics, allow advertisers to customize their approach based on customer browsing habits. For instance, a customer researching battery life for headphones on an online store signals interest in specific product features (Taylor, 2022).

3. Generating Desire

In this stage, advertisers aim to transform general interest into a concrete purchase intention. For example, emphasizing a product's unique selling points—such as better features, lower costs, or superior design—positions it favorably against competitors (Jones, 2023). Successful advertising appeals positively influence the target audience's attitudes toward the brand, increasing their likelihood of purchase.

4. Making Them Act

The final phase involves prompting the customer to take action, typically by including a clear call-to-action (CTA). Examples include "Bluetooth headphones – order now!" or "Limited edition – limited-time offer." Additional motivators, like time-sensitive discounts or special offers (e.g., "Buy 1, get 1 free"), create urgency and encourage immediate purchases (Clark & Davis, 2019).

METHODS

This research utilized a qualitative approach to examine how small businesses strategically use social media for marketing. A qualitative method is particularly effective for delving deeply into complex phenomena that cannot be adequately addressed through quantitative techniques (Creswell, 2009). The study aimed to uncover ways small businesses can maximize social media's potential, requiring a methodology capable of providing detailed, descriptive insights into the perspectives and experiences of business owners and their customers (Merriam, 2009). To collect data, the researchers employed focus group discussions, which are well-suited for exploring participants' views and experiences in an interactive and collaborative environment (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This approach was chosen to encourage dynamic discussions and gather a wide range of perspectives on social media marketing within the context of small businesses. The study involved 17 participants, including small business owners and entrepreneurs actively using social media as a marketing tool. Focus groups are recognized for their ability to collect diverse opinions and insights effectively in a collective setting (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The

choice of focus groups was also influenced by practical factors, as this method is more cost- and time-efficient than individual interviews, making it a practical solution for research of this scale (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the 17 focus group participants, presented in Table 1. Demographic Information of the Focus Group Participants, reveal important factors that align with the study’s goal of investigating how small businesses strategically utilize social media. A notable portion of the participants are in their 30s, an age group typically linked to high digital fluency and frequent engagement with social media platforms. This suggests that the participants are well-versed in digital tools and likely incorporate social media into their business practices. Additionally, a significant number of participants occupy key leadership positions, such as business owners, managing directors, and other decision-makers within their organizations. These roles are vital, as the individuals in these positions are directly responsible for shaping the marketing strategies and decisions, particularly those involving social media marketing.

Age Range	Type of Business	Position/Designation	Length of Social Media Use	Type of Company
25-40	Online retail, fashion boutique, beauty services, food and beverage, event planning, fitness, real estate, photography, education	Business owners, Entrepreneurs, Managing directors, Marketing managers, Content creators	3-7 years	Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Service providers

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Focus Group Participants

The participants represent a diverse range of industries, including hospitality, retail, beauty, event management, and other service-based sectors. This variety ensures that the study captures a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives on the use of social media in different business contexts. For instance, a business owner in the hospitality industry might use social media to showcase services and engage with potential customers differently from an entrepreneur in the fashion retail sector, who might focus on influencer marketing and visual content. The inclusion of businesses from various sectors allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how social media is utilized across different types of small businesses.

The participants in the study were carefully chosen for their experience with social media marketing. Each had been utilizing social media as a marketing tool for at least three years, ensuring they had the necessary expertise to provide valuable insights into the dynamic field of social media marketing. This selection criterion was crucial for gathering practical knowledge from individuals who had dealt with the challenges and opportunities that come with using social media as a marketing strategy in small businesses.

The focus group discussions revealed several effective strategies for attracting both existing and potential customers, blending traditional and modern marketing techniques. Participants emphasized the continued significance of traditional media

outlets, such as television, radio, and print, while also acknowledging the increasing importance of digital platforms like emails, websites, and social media. As one participant noted, "By using social media wisely, we can build brand awareness and trust, which will ultimately lead to increased sales." Another participant shared a similar view, saying, "If we leverage social media properly, it can significantly enhance our brand awareness."

A major point discussed was the importance of clear and engaging communication on social media. Participants agreed that providing detailed information about products or services, along with insights into the business itself, is essential for capturing consumer interest. One participant remarked, "Sharing information about companies helps consumers assess their credibility," emphasizing the role of trust in online marketing. Several participants also highlighted the need for promoting new products or services on social media immediately to generate initial customer interest.

Once consumers are engaged, participants discussed various strategies to foster desire for the products or services. Social media practitioners can enhance consumer interest by offering promotions, such as special discounts, contests, and giveaways. Additionally, prompt responses to inquiries or feedback, along with excellent pre-sale customer service, were recommended. One participant, who sells home-baked cupcakes on Facebook, emphasized the importance of regularly updating the social media page with catchy phrases, engaging posts, and appealing visuals.

To ensure conversions, participants emphasized the need for clear, accessible, and secure information regarding the ordering process. This includes providing details about payment methods and delivery options, with several participants suggesting that offering multiple payment methods could help increase sales. As one participant noted, "If they notice their favorite payment option is unavailable, they will run away," underscoring the critical role of convenience and trust in driving online sales.

Criticism to AIDA Model

The Evolution of the AIDA Model

Since its inception over a century ago, the AIDA model has been a cornerstone of marketing communication and advertising. Despite the profound changes brought about by the digital revolution, AIDA remains a staple in marketing literature, cited for its enduring relevance (Smith & Taylor, 2004). The simplicity of the model is the key to its longevity, making it adaptable across various marketing applications, from single-step approaches like print advertisements to complex multi-step processes in dialogue-driven media (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

However, critics have pointed out that the model's stimulus-response framework oversimplifies the intricacies of purchasing behavior. The linear nature of AIDA does not fully account for modern, multifaceted sales processes. Factors such as product availability, pricing, customer service, satisfaction, and recommendations often influence purchasing decisions more significantly than the model allows (Dahlen et al., 2010). Moreover, the model underestimates the role of emotional drivers in shaping brand awareness and loyalty.

Since the 1990s, advancements in affective science and neuromarketing have further illuminated the complexities of consumer behavior. These insights have underscored the need to refine traditional frameworks like AIDA, providing marketers with tools for deeper analysis and optimization of advertising strategies (Plassmann et al., 2012). Consequently, the AIDA model should be regarded as a foundational yet simplified approach to understanding purchasing decisions. It serves as the first systematic analysis of consumer behavior initiated by Lewis, which has since been expanded and adapted to align with contemporary realities.

Extensions of the AIDA Model

One notable limitation of the AIDA model is its disregard for post-purchase dynamics, such as customer satisfaction, evaluations, and recommendations. These "post-purchase effects" play a critical role in shaping long-term consumer relationships and brand loyalty (Oliver, 2014). Recognizing these gaps, several modified frameworks have been developed to address these shortcomings.

Among the most influential extensions are the Hierarchy of Effects model, the DAGMAR model, the AIDAS model, and the AISDALSLove model. These updated approaches integrate additional steps to capture the complexity of modern consumer behavior, particularly in dialogue-oriented media like social networks and virtual communities (Belch & Belch, 2015).

The Hierarchy of Effects Model

Research details of theories similar to the Hierarchy of Effects Model by Lavidge and Steiner are:

1. Evolutionary Framework of Hierarchy of Effects Models:

Concurring Rishi Chakravarty and Nripendra Narayan Sarma (2022) says This theory explores how traditional hierarchy of effects models can be applied in the context of digitalization. With the advent of the internet and social media, the customer journey has changed significantly. This theory emphasizes that while basic stages such as awareness, interest, and action remain relevant, the way consumers move through these stages has changed due to faster access to information and more dynamic interactions with brands.

2. Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (Keller)

Developed by Kevin Lane Keller and widely (2001) used in marketing and brand management research. Describe that this model focuses on how brands can build strong brand equity through various stages. These stages include brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand resonance. The model integrates cognitive elements (such as knowledge and understanding of the brand) and emotional elements (such as feelings and attitudes towards the brand) in the process of building brand equity.

3. Relationship Investment Model

Concurring Palmatier, R. W., Dant, R. P., Grewal, D., & Evans, K. R. (2006) describe that this model emphasizes the importance of investing in the relationship between brands and consumers. It combines theories of interpersonal attraction and social exchange to classify brand relationships based on functional and emotional connections. Investments in these

relationships can include activities such as loyalty programs, personal interactions, and consistent and relevant communication.

This model has been adopted in various marketing studies to understand how strong brand-consumer relationships can enhance loyalty and customer lifetime value.

Proposed by Lavidge and Steiner (via Chen & Yang, 2008), *the Hierarchy of Effects* model provides a more nuanced understanding of the advertising process by dividing it into six stages:

1. **Awareness:** This initial phase seeks to ensure that potential customers become aware of the product's existence.
2. **Knowledge:** Following awareness, the focus shifts to providing detailed information about the product's features.
3. **Liking:** In this phase, advertisers aim to foster a positive attitude toward the product.
4. **Preference:** Building on liking, this stage involves cultivating a preference for the product over competitors' offerings.
5. **Conviction:** Here, the customer becomes convinced of the product's value and develops a strong intention to purchase it.
6. **Purchase:** The final phase sees the customer taking action and completing the purchase, fulfilling the objective set at the outset.

CONCLUSIONS

This research highlights the growing importance of social media and the Internet for small business owners. As these businesses face the constant challenge of staying competitive and innovative, leveraging social media for marketing purposes has been shown to positively affect both business performance and broader economic growth. The study also demonstrates that social media provides an affordable marketing solution, making it especially beneficial for small enterprises. These results are consistent with prior studies by Kirtis and Karahan (2011) and Birkner (2011), which emphasize the cost-effectiveness of using social media in small business marketing.

Moreover, the study confirms that social media is an influential advertising medium, capable of quickly reaching a large audience and shaping consumer purchasing behavior. This reinforces findings from Hoek and Gendall (2003), who also recognized the effectiveness of social media in advertising. The research further reveals that social media is essential in relationship marketing, helping business owners maintain ongoing communication with their customers, resolve post-sale inquiries, and promote new products or services. These conclusions support the ideas put forth by Reyneke et al. (2011).

The research also makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the use of the AIDA model within the realm of social media marketing for small businesses. The findings indicate that the AIDA model can effectively guide social media marketing strategies, in line with the work of Lagrosen (2005), who highlighted the model's relevance in social media settings, particularly with respect to the "IDA" elements. Additionally, the study aligns with the perspectives of Ashcroft and Hoey (2001), Hoek and Gendall (2003), and Woodcock and Green (2010), who argue that digital tools have great potential as marketing assets for businesses.

While the findings provide valuable insights, there are limitations to this study. First, the proposed strategies need to be tested in practical settings to verify their effectiveness. Second, the research was conducted within the Tangerang Selatan online landscape, indicating a need for further studies in different geographical or cultural contexts to confirm the results. Lastly, the study relied solely on the AIDA model. Future research could explore other marketing communication models, such as the Hierarchy of Effects, to provide a broader understanding and strengthen the applicability of social media marketing for small businesses.

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