Social Media as a Strategic Tool for Communication in Corporates: A Case of Crestwood Marketing and Communications, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media has become a critical asset for organizations seeking to enhance communication strategies and connect to diverse audiences. Social media has transformed the communication landscape globally proving to be an extremely persuasive tool that heavily influences decision-making organs in organizations. Social media has transformed communication with organizations adopting social media as a strategic communication tool. However, few studies exist on how social media has been embraced in the Kenyan market as a strategic communication tool. Therefore, the objective of this research was to look at Crestwood's marketing and communications company utilization of social media platforms. This study was guided by the social network theory which asserts that relationships are based on the social networks that coexist. The study utilized a case study design. Performance was measured using fundamental principles of reciprocity, exchange and similarity. Social relationships play an integral role in transmitting information, and channeling personal or media influence. Social media platforms propel an organization's online visibility, amplifying its brand and public relations and other strategic communication activities. The research employed a purposive sampling method because the study falls under a case study and seeks to identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood. The target population were a total of 30 respondents who are employee of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in various levels of management which included marketing manager, social media specialists, customer service representative, digital marketing consultant and pubic relation officer. Further, the study employed census method to sample all the 30 key informants to take part in the study. Data was collected using key informant interview scheduled. While data was analyzed using thematic analysis and presented using quotes and emerging themes. Results revealed that Crestwood employs a proactive and strategic approach to social media engagement, emphasizing responsiveness, platform-specific tactics, and resource management, also Targeted Advertising emerged as a significant tactic, with paid campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram enabling Crestwood to reach niche segments effectively. The findings reveal that Crestwood Marketing and Communications' social media strategies have positively influenced brand perception and customer loyalty for their clients. and lastly, the key challenges identifies that affect reported include delays in response times, misalignment with brand identity, unclear campaign goals, and a need for better resource preparedness to handle increased customer inquiries. The study recommended that there is need Tailor social media strategies to each client's unique brand voice and objectives to improve campaign results and avoid misalignment, also maintain frequent reviews to ensure alignment with evolving client needs and foster collaboration. Lastly, enhance adaptability in response times and establish clear escalation channels for urgent queries to improve client support. The study concluded that Crestwood Marketing and Communications' should focus on consistent brand messaging has significantly enhanced client brand visibility and recognition, creating a unified brand identity that resonates with target audiences.

Keywords: Corona Virus Disease, Social Media, Social Network Sites, Television, Twitter

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I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology and social media continues to shape the communication landscape with social media changing and impacting the dynamics of strategic communication (Agarwal, & Puppala, 2024). Technology has made the process of communication people-centred by making it an interactive, real-time process that is more diversified. Social media has greatly impacted theoretical applications and practice of public relations, advertising and marketing practitioners as tools for communicating with strategic publics.

Organizations have redirected communication and advertising on the Internet shadowing all other forms of traditional media. Public relations professionals embrace social media positively concerning strategic communication. Holtzhausen and Hallahan (2007), define strategic communications as the "purposeful use of communications by an organization to fulfil its mission. Technology has evolved enhancing Social media's worldwide reach. Social media platforms enable instantaneous communication across borders. It has become a pivotal tool in various domains,

including marketing, public relations, political campaigns, crisis management, and social activism. Different branches of information and communication technologies have undergone significant advancements recently, with notable progress in networking techniques involving the introduction of satellites, the internet, and smartphone technology. Such developments have been greatly influenced by the widespread adoption of social networks (Thapliyal, et al., 2024). Consequently, the social media landscape has ushered in a new phase, where internet users have emerged as key elements in the communication and media processes.

Globally, Social media platforms have changed from simple networking sites to key channels for communication and influence. With over 4.8 billion users globally as of 2023, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok are important in personal, organizational, and governmental communication strategies. Globally, social media enables rapid information dissemination through its digital platforms shaping public perception of strategic communication processes. The last decade has seen a huge transformation in the social media landscape (Kawiana, 2023).

In the African context, Fayoyin (2016), analyses how social media has been embraced by different institutions in Africa. He examines how the use of social media is transforming health communication in Africa. He demonstrates a surge in options for interventions using different mobile devices and mobilization approaches in addressing multiple health issues. He looks at how Advancements in digital media and communications technology have provided confidence in the role of social media in achieving developmental and public health outcomes globally.

In the Kenyan context, Chemosit, (2023), argued that the evolution of new digital technologies and social media has experienced a rapid impact on communication. She refers to social media as the new buzzword in the communications and marketing industry. Social media offers a wide range of platforms and some popular sites include Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Linked, Flickr, and Foursquare. Other sites offer different services related to communication depending on a user's needs. Such sites include Digg, Delicious and Mixx, online platform sites. Some social media platforms even allow users to create their accounts for various tasks like video sharing websites, such as YouTube contributing to the larger social media landscape.

Crestwood Marketing and Communications

Crestwood Marketing and Communications is a dynamic marketing agency based in Kenya, specializing in providing strategic social media management and communication solutions to businesses across various sectors. The company focuses on delivering tailored marketing strategies that align with each client's brand voice, objectives, and market needs. By emphasizing creativity, authenticity, and social impact, Crestwood helps clients build brand loyalty and engage effectively with their target audience. The agency leverages advanced tools and insights to craft impactful campaigns, aiming to enhance client visibility and reputation, particularly in digital spaces.

The company places a strong emphasis on building long-term, collaborative relationships with clients. This approach is achieved through regular strategy sessions and check-ins, ensuring that marketing campaigns evolve in response to changing client needs and market conditions. Crestwood is also committed to improving customer engagement through scalable solutions, such as self-service tools and automated responses, while maintaining a personal touch for significant client interactions. The agency continues to innovate by creating creative content and exploring new ways to support its clients, aiming to remain a leader in social media management and strategic communications within the Kenyan market.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The contemporary world of technology has transformed how social media is utilized globally. Social media has changed from just being used as a tool for personal interaction to a powerful tool for strategic communication. Businesses, governments, non-profits, and individual users are adopting to usage of social media to shape public perception, drive marketing campaigns, engage with audiences, and influence social and political outcomes (Chemosit, 2023).

Crestwood Marketing and Communications, Kenya, is currently focused on enhancing its social media strategies by prioritizing flexibility, customization, and improved communication flow to better serve its clients. According to Thapliyal, et al., (2024), a company with ana objective of succeeding need to adapt to evolving client needs through regular strategy sessions and check-ins while developing scalable approaches to manage increased customer engagement, especially during high-traffic campaigns. Crestwood is also emphasizing creativity and authenticity in its content to strengthen client brand loyalty and maintain its position as a leader in strategic social media management.

Past studies have focused on the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies for businesses. For instance, However, Rosário, and Dias, (2023) in the study focused on the strategies used in marketing to enhance brand awareness. However. many of these studies are limited in scope, often focusing only on large corporations or specific industries, leaving a gap in understanding how SMEs, particularly in local contexts like Kenya, can leverage

social media effectively. Research could further explore how tailored social media strategies impact small businesses in emerging markets. Moreover, a study by Budianto and Dewi, (2024), examined the relationship between marketing agencies and their clients, emphasizing trust, communication, and service customization. However, there is limited research on the specific challenges faced by clients in industries with fluctuating engagement demands or during crisis situations which could offer valuable insights into best practices for responsive, adaptable client-agency relationships.

Despite the growing popularity of social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and X among others, there is a persistent gap in understanding the factors contributing to effective communication using social media platforms, user perception, and brand loyalty (Gakahu, 2024). Lack of engagement affects communication and reduces the overall effectiveness and impact of social media for communication. This research looks at brand perception and customer loyalty, challenges in using social media, and strategies for engaging on social media platforms. The study highlights some of the challenges that may need Further analysis on the benefits of social media as a strategic communication tool including the challenge of changes in algorithms as technology transforms, and authenticity in the information being shared, However, maintaining a balance between authenticity and professionalism is important. Organizations must approach these issues carefully to build trust without compromising their brand's integrity or messaging consistency. The current study therefore seeks to establish the usage of social media as a strategic communication tool for Crestwood Marketing and Communications, Kenya.

1.2 Research Objectives
   i.   To establish the effectiveness of social media strategies in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya
   ii.   To identify the specific social media strategies implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya
   iii. To assess the impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya.
   iv.   To explore the challenges encountered by Crestwood Marketing and Communications in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market.

1.3 Research Questions
   i.   How effective are social media strategies in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya?
   ii.   What specific social media strategies are implemented by Crestwood Marketing and Communications to engage with its target audience in Kenya?
   iii. How does social media engagement impact the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya?
   iv.   What challenges does Crestwood Marketing and Communications encounter in using social media as a strategic communication tool in the Kenyan market?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review
The theoretical framework describes existing theories of social networks and communication relevant to this study. The models provide a framework for identifying the reason for successful strategic communication in organizations. This study reviews the social network theory to guide the study; looking into the relationships between the variables so that the reader can understand the theorized relationships between them.

2.1.1 Social Network Theory
This framework describes the structure and dynamics of social media relationships among individuals, groups and organizations. It is a concept in sociology that looks at how relationships between people form and how they operate. The theory views social network structures as networks between individuals and organizations and is based on factors like friendship, communication skills or even professional relationships. This theory centres on the role of social relationships in transmitting information, conveying personal or media influence, and enabling attitudinal or behavioural change. The social network theory has significantly expanded the horizon of media effects research, with increasing application of network analytic methods in various empirical contexts. It is anchored on the principle of reciprocity, exchange and similarity.

According to Yates et al. (2023), the social networking theory is an emerging research approach, and people are slowly embracing and applying it in different fields for example, the theory of social networking can be applied in disciplines that have overlapping interests with sports management including such fields as organizational behaviour

and sports sociology. Although other researchers on sport management have investigated network-related concepts, to date no sport management studies have fully utilized the analytical tools that social network theory and analysis have to offer.

2.2 Empirical Review

According to Troise, and Camilleri, (2021) on the study on the effectiveness of social media strategies in enhancing the strategic communication. Results revealed that Social media has transformed the way organizations communicate, engage with stakeholders and deliver on their strategies. The dynamic capabilities approach gives a framework to understand how organizations can effectively utilize social media platforms as strategic communication tools on behalf of the organization. It emphasizes the ability organizations have to build and consolidate internal and external competencies to address the changing work environment (Tagscherer, & Carbon, 2023). The authors outline conditions that enable organizational learning, the linkages between types of learning and functions of dynamic capabilities, and the feedback from dynamic capabilities to organizational learning that allows firms in transition economies to regain their footing and build long-term competitive advantage.

A study by Kawiana, (2023), found that internet used interactive platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn which offer interactive features like live streams, reels question-and-answer sessions which provide direct engagement with users. An organization may leverage such platforms to engage their audiences and communicate effectively. Also, community empowerment involves the engagement of the surrounding communities to maintain and build loyalty to the brand (Kawiana, 2023). Through Market research and consumer insights; Social media platforms have analytic tools used to monitor and track user engagements on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other platforms. This helps to analyze audience demographics and content consumption. There are other platforms used for social listening that an organization can use to monitor conversations on the internet about their brand and competitors in the market.

Social media's versatility and reach make it an indispensable tool for strategic communication. It can enhance brand reputation, drive engagement, and contribute to overall business success when used effectively (Jack, et al., 2024). Social media has changed the communication landscape offering unique speeds, reach, and engagement opportunities. Its coherence as a communication tool is evident in its ability to target specific audiences, provide real-time interconnection, and deliver cost-effective solutions. a study by Jeswani, (2023) found that though social media solves millions of connection and communication issues, challenges such as information overload, privacy concerns, and algorithmic biases must be addressed and maximize its benefits. For individuals, businesses, and organizations, leveraging the strengths of social media while addressing its limitations is critical to effective communication in the digital era. The findings identify future directions in strategic communication that advocate for the interests of organizations and online communities.

Hisseine, Chen, and Yang, (2022) on the study one the impact of social media in in communication found out that Social media plays a critical role in communication as it engages with the audiences directly; frequent engagement with the audience helps build trust and stronger relationships, thus increasing customer loyalty. Social media helps with content creation and marketing through its platforms including blogs, websites, videos and infographics. Organizations can partner with influencers or communication firms that have expertise in handling this type of content to ensure quality stories are told about an organization. It can also be used to communicate a crisis that involves the organization where public relations managers must control and manage communication during or after a crisis to mitigate the negative effects on the company's reputation. Lastly, mobilize any resources and manpower to act on these opportunities and transform the opportunities into actual results. To identify opportunities and threats that exist in the market, organizations may adopt the use of social media platforms as their strategic communication tool to reach out to the masses and mobilize resources. Social media plays a critical role in communication as it engages with the audiences directly; frequent engagement with the audience helps build trust and stronger relationships

Chen, and Kuo, (2017), on the study on innovation resistance and strategic implications of enterprise social media websites found that there was resistance in adapting strategies and coping strategies of social media innovation strategies. Moreover, utilization of social media platforms presents different challenges, especially with the adoption and innovation of new technology. several challenges are associated with usage of social media platforms, such as misinformation, lack of effective content moderation, digital piracy, data breaches, identity fraud, and fake news, rapid change in algorithms, content overload on some platforms leading to delays in processing data, diversity in platforms resulting in challenges of integration, changes in consumer behaviours, and challenges of security and privacy for different internet users.

III. METHODOLOGY

The current study applied a qualitative method to research because it falls under a case study design. The study seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the use of social media for communication and outline real-world scenarios to understand the cultural shifts in the adoption of social media as a strategic communication tool. According Habu, and Henderson, (2023), research methodology is a methodical and structured strategy that researchers apply when conducting a study in a structured manner. The methodology chapter is a structured plan that outlines the systematic strategy and techniques you used to conduct your research. The study's goals, the features of the research subject, and the available resources all influence the choice of research methodology.

3.1 Research Design

This study applied a case study design because the study fits under a qualitative methodology using in-depth interviews and focus groups with employees and management of Crestwood to collect qualitative data. This study used a case study design to investigate and break down the use of social media as a strategic communication tool at Crestwood Marketing and Communications Company.

3.2 Target population

The target population were a total of 30 respondents who are employee of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in various levels of management six from each category. These respondents included marketing managers, social media specialists, customer service representatives, digital marketing consultants and pubic relation officers.

3.3 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The participants was deliberately selected due to the linear structure of the organizations. The study used focus groups and open ended questionnaires to collect the necessary data for the study. A purposive sampling strategy is considered appropriate to capture the scope of perspectives and views of the workforce and general consumers of their services. This technique is suitable and widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases using minimal resources.

3.3.1 Sampling Technique

A purposive qualitative sampling technique was employed in this study. Sampling is a fundamental technique in statistics and research, it entails selecting a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population to estimate characteristics or make an assumption about the entire population. The goal here is to collect data that represents your population without having to study the whole population. However, this is often impractical due to time, cost, or logistical constraints. Sampling involves various techniques. Given the small number of the respondents, the study used census method to sample of the 25 key informants poured into 5.

According to Bairagi and Munot, (2019), research methodology'- generates a sense of complexity and is regarded as a difficult subject to understand in its principles and percepts. He argues that the selection of the sampling technique must be accurate and precise to avoid sampling errors. Once the data is collected, it should be classified arranged and analyzed. This helps in the interpretation and conclusion along with suggestions

3.3.2 Sample Size

A sample size of 30 people is sufficient to achieve data saturation and give a significant statistical capacity for the test was used. Out of the total of 5 key informants were selected while the other 20 respondents were grouped into four groups to form part of the focused group discussion questions. The key informant include marketing manager (KII, 001), social media specialists (KII, 002), customer service representative (KII, 003), digital marketing consultant (KII, 004) and pubic relation officer (KII, 005). Qualitative focus groups were conducted with a total of 20 respondent grouped into four groups of five participants each. These helped to assess perceptions and attitudes towards social media as a strategic tool for communication. It included only those respondents who meet the inclusion standard and are sampled properly from the mentioned categories. This sample was drawn from the employees and general population of other companies using or using their services.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection involved the use of guided questions specifically for the participants of the key informant interview guide. The qualitative data was collected through key informant interview with key employees and management at

Crestwood involved in social media strategy and implementation. This approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness, specific strategies, and challenges associated with social media as a tool for strategic communication. Data from both sources will be analyzed to identify patterns, assess impact, and provide insights into the organization's social media efforts in the Kenyan market.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The qualitative method was used to analyze the data collected. The data provided as comments, transcription/coding and contextualization of these statements was done before verification for accuracy. This information was then presented in tables for further subjective analysis. The first step entailed coding to organize the data into meaningful categories or concepts (Ishtiaq, 2019). Subsequently, patterns and recurring phrases was identified to develop a list of emerging themes before inductively discovering the key variables for presentation.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

Transparency where all internet users must be able to disclose any information that is ether sponsored or is in partnership with other persons or organizations. For instance, if an influencer has been contracted to market for a particular organization, then there should be disclosure clause that clearly state that the content is sponsored. Also, an introduction letter was obtained from ethical review committee of Mount Kenya University and the research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). These permits allowed the researcher to access the respondents in line with the national requirements for all research works involving human participants.

Privacy is paramount when it comes to sharing information particularly about others. Organizations must adhere to the set frameworks that govern sharing of content online. For example, in Kenya, internet users must work within the data protection rights frameworks that outline how content is distributed to third parties. Users and creators must always seek permission before using someone else's work.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

The table presents the response rate for the study, with a total of 30 participants invited to respond. Out of these, 25 participants completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 83.3%, while 5 participants did not respond, accounting for 16.7% of the total. This high response rate suggests a strong level of engagement from the target population, providing a reliable dataset for analyzing the effectiveness of social media as a strategic communication tool at Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya

Table 1
Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Respondent	25	83.3%
Non-respondent	5	16.7%
Total	30	100

4.2 Demographic Descriptions

This subsection present the demographic descriptions of the respondents included in the study. The subsection presents the age bracket of the respondents, level of education, period they have been in the sector and

4.2.1 Highest level of Academic Qualification

The Highest level of academic qualification is also another significant factor which determined the respondent level of understanding to the concept of social media as Strategic Tool for Communication in Corporates. The table 2 below presents the results and their distribution regarding educational qualifications among the respondents in the study.

Table 2
Highest Level of Academic Qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Certificate	4	16
Diploma level	7	28
Degree level	8	32
Postgraduate	6	24
Total	**25**	**100**

The table illustrates the distribution of educational qualifications among the 25 respondents in the study. The largest group comprises individuals with a Degree level qualification, accounting for 32% of the participants, followed by those with a Diploma level at 28%. Respondents with a Postgraduate qualification make up 24% of the sample, while those with a Certificate constitute the smallest group at 16%. This distribution indicates a majority of respondents with higher education levels (Degree and Postgraduate), providing a well-educated sample base for the study.

4.2.2 Whether you have come Across Crestwood Marketing and Communication On any Social Media Platform?

The respondent were also asked to indicate whether they have come across Crestwood marketing and communication on any social media platform. The distributions are as follows.

Table 3
Have Come Across Crestwood Marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	92.45%
No	2	7.55%
Total	**25**	**100%**

The table shows that the majority of respondents, 92.45%, answered yes they have come across the advert, with only 7.55% responding that they have not come across one. This high percentage of Yes responses suggests a strong consensus or agreement among the respondents on that they have they have come across Crestwood marketing and communication on any social media platform.

4.2.3 Period of Time the Respondent has known the Crestwood Marketing and Communications.

The study sought to establish the period in years that the respondent had been in the sector. The distributions are as follows in the table below;

Table 4
Period in Years in the Sector

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-5 years	36	27.5
6-10 years	47	35.9
11-15 years	30	22.9
Above 15 years	18	13.7
Totals	**131**	**100**

Based on these distributions, the table reveals that a majority of respondents, 40%, have been in the sector for 0-5 years, suggesting a significant proportion of relatively new professionals. This is followed by 28% of respondents with 6-10 years of experience. Those with 11-15 years in the sector make up 20% of the sample, while only 12% have over 15 years of experience, indicating a smaller group of highly seasoned professionals. This spread provides a varied perspective on experience levels within the sector.

4.2.4 Utilization of any Service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication?

Respondents were asked to indicate whether, they have ever utilized any service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication**.** Result indicate that 22 (89.2%) agreed that they have while 3 (10.8%) indicated they have not utilized the service**.**

Table 5
Utilization of any service from Crestwood Marketing and Communication

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	89.2%
No	3	10.8%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Further those who responded yes were asked if yes, which platforms you used to contact the organization for engagement.

Table 6
Type of Social Media Utilized

Platform Used for Engagement	Frequency	Percentage of Yes Responses (%)
Facebook	8	36.4%
Instagram	5	22.7%
Youtube	6	27.3%
Twitter/X	3	13.6%
Total	**22**	**100%**

The table shows that among the 22 respondent who indicated that they have engaged with the organization, Facebook was the most commonly used platform with frequency of 8(36.4%), followed by YouTube with frequency of 6 (27.3%), Instagram was third with 5(22.7%), and the least was Twitter/X with frequency of 3(13.6%). This distribution highlights the popularity of various social media platforms for customer engagement with Crestwood.

4.2.5 Findings Based on the Research Objectives
The first objective was to establish the effectiveness is social media in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya. The results indicated that indicated that Crestwood employs a proactive and strategic approach to social media engagement, emphasizing responsiveness, platform-specific tactics, and resource management. Key themes include Responsiveness, with Crestwood generally providing prompt replies that strengthen customer relations, though limited resources occasionally hinder response times. Platform-Specific Engagement was also notable, as Crestwood shows stronger activity on Instagram and Facebook compared to LinkedIn. Challenges in Resource and Analytics Limitations suggest room for improvement in allocating resources and enhancing analytical tools to optimize engagement. In terms of achieving communication goals, Crestwood focuses on Brand Visibility through targeted campaigns and diverse content, Building Trust by sharing educational and client-centered content, and Customer Support through direct interactions that address customer needs. Effective strategies include Targeted Paid Campaigns on major platforms, Credible Content that establishes industry authority, and Interactive Content for real-time audience engagement, which fosters deeper connections with their audience. These findings resonates with those by Plowman, and Wilson, (2018) who found that Strategy and tactics in strategic communication included on Instagram and Facebook compared to LinkedIn.

The second objective was to examine the specific strategies used by the company on various social media platforms. The study identified several key strategies Crestwood uses to engage its target audience across social media platforms, focusing on four main themes. Targeted Advertising emerged as a significant tactic, with paid campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram enabling Crestwood to reach niche segments effectively. Value-Driven Content is another cornerstone, where branded posts, client success stories, and behind-the-scenes content help build brand authenticity. Additionally, User-Generated Content (UGC) plays a critical role, as Crestwood encourages clients to share experiences and tags, enhancing brand presence and fostering community. Interactive Engagement through polls, live Q&A sessions, and real-time customer support also helps drive meaningful connections and direct engagement. These findings are in line with those by Li, et al., (2021) who found that YouTube and TikTok has remained to be the best alternative channels of advertisement.

The third objective was to establish the impact of social media engagement on the brand perception and customer loyalty of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya. The findings reveal that Crestwood Marketing and Communications' social media strategies have positively influenced brand perception and customer loyalty for their clients. Key impacts include enhanced brand visibility and recognition through consistent, high-quality content, which has strengthened brand identity and customer trust. Targeted advertising has improved customer engagement and sales leads, while real-time interaction has fostered direct customer connections, increasing satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, Crestwood's focus on storytelling, community engagement, and social impact initiatives has positioned clients as industry leaders with authentic brand images, driving customer loyalty and a more

favorable brand perception. These findings are supported by those by Zephaniah, et al., (2020) who indicated that customers' perception of bank marketing communication on customer loyalty.

The fourth objective was to examine the challenges and potential benefits the company faces when using social media for strategic communication purposes in Kenya. Several questions were sued in to achieve this objective. The findings indicate that while Crestwood Marketing and Communications faces some initial challenges in aligning with client expectations, their strategies ultimately contribute positively to brand visibility, audience engagement, and client satisfaction. Key challenges reported include delays in response times, misalignment with brand identity, unclear campaign goals, and a need for better resource preparedness to handle increased customer inquiries. Clients overcame these issues through open communication, brand alignment sessions, and proactive content adjustments. Clients widely recommend Crestwood, praising their creativity, professional consistency, and innovative social media strategies that enhance brand reach and engagement. High satisfaction with responsiveness and proactive client engagement has strengthened loyalty, as clients feel confident in Crestwood's reliability, attentive support, and commitment to adapting to their specific needs, fostering a strong sense of partnership. These findings are supported by those by Lovari, Bowen, (2020) who found that the main challenges affecting advertisement include aligning with client expectations, their strategies ultimately contribute positively to brand visibility, audience engagement, and client satisfaction.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Crestwood Marketing and Communications has demonstrated a clear impact on client branding, marketing, and sales through their social media services. The findings of this study reveal that social media strategies play a significant role in enhancing the strategic communication objectives of Crestwood Marketing and Communications in Kenya. The analysis shows that targeted social media engagement effectively reaches Crestwood's intended audience, fostering brand awareness and aligning with the company's strategic goals. Moreover, Crestwood's strategies around targeted advertising and data-driven content creation have effectively supported clients' sales goals by reaching potential customers and increasing sales leads. Clients have also appreciated Crestwood's emphasis on credibility-building, as social media content that shares industry insights and success stories has positioned them as thought leaders, positively influencing brand perception.

Crestwood's social media engagement tactics have notably improved brand perception and fostered customer loyalty. By implementing visually appealing and consistent content, Crestwood has elevated clients' professional brand image, making them appear more trustworthy and credible. Furthermore, Crestwood's use of interactive posts and real-time responses has built a stronger connection between brands and their customers, enhancing customer satisfaction and retention. Their storytelling and community-focused content have effectively created a sense of authenticity around the brands they manage, strengthening customer loyalty as clients perceive the brands as both socially responsible and reliable.

Clients encountered challenges in adapting to Crestwood's social media strategies, particularly in areas such as response time, brand alignment, and managing increased customer inquiries. Initial response delays were mitigated through alternative communication channels, while brand alignment issues were addressed through strategy sessions that helped clarify brand voice and objectives. Regular check-ins and performance metrics further facilitated goal alignment, while the influx of customer inquiries led to the development of FAQ content, improving customer interaction efficiency. These adaptations underscored the importance of collaborative problem-solving, which ultimately strengthened the relationship between Crestwood and their clients and optimized the effectiveness of their social media campaigns.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study made the following recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of social media strategies.
The major recommendations from the study are:

Tailor social media strategies to each client's unique brand voice and objectives to improve campaign results and avoid misalignment. Maintain frequent reviews to ensure alignment with evolving client needs and foster collaboration. Enhance adaptability in response times and establish clear escalation channels for urgent queries to improve client support. Prepare additional resources like FAQ documents and self-service tools for managing increased customer engagement, particularly during high-traffic campaigns.

Use automation for repetitive tasks while maintaining personal engagement on critical issues. Continue creating authentic, socially impactful content to build brand loyalty and strengthen Crestwood's reputation in social media management.

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