

E-Marketing to the Indians in Singapore

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1. Introduction

How can one market to the Indian people in Singapore? This is a hot question that was often in my mind. How do companies promote their products and services to the Indians living in Singapore? How do they sell to them? How do they ensure that their marketing strategies reach out to them? This is one big question I asked myself and others when I was thinking of marketing my magazine titled “Celebrity Jam” in Singapore. Marketing refers to the act of selling the company's or individual's products and services to clients. When one markets the products, the company is able to get the attention of the customers. The marketing tactics employed by the business can help in the organization getting more sales and offers. Marketing is likened to be an important process where all those who work need it no matter what happens. Without marketing one cannot survive in the business line. Marketing can also help to strengthen the client and company relationship further. There will be a fostering of good ties between the company and its clients. Marketing can give a lot of advantages for the business firm.

There are companies and individuals who have news and things to tell to the Indians in Singapore. How can they pass the marketing message to the targeted group? Such a question will be evident in the minds of marketing professionals who are targeting the Singapore Indians. I am sure there are many people out there who could be thinking of reaching out to the Indians in Singapore. Professionals could be thinking of contacting the Singaporean Indians for promoting products and services. They could become confused if there is no easy way for them to do their job. Let's look further into this issue.

2. The Indians in Singapore

Who are the Singapore Indians? Singapore Indians are Indians in Singapore who are of all religions found in Singapore such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. They are bound by the race of Indian.

Whether they are highly educated Indians or low educated Indians, they are still Indians. Whether they are working or not working, as long they are Indians they are considered under being Indian Singaporeans. There are also the expats who come from India to work here in Singapore. In the recent years many who arrive in Singapore are Indians from India and other countries.

3. My Experience in Marketing to Them

During my experience when I tried marketing I encountered some problems. I could not get any details on database marketing which aimed at Singapore Indians. At that time database marketing was very crucial for my work. I had no idea on how to reach out to the Singapore Indians. There were not many free sources I could use to reach out to the Indians in Singapore. In fact, I was looking for email ids to collect for direct marketing such as database marketing strategy; however there was no link to such essential information. I was wondering how others get their message across to the Indian Singaporeans. It looked like there were no direct marketing sources for agencies to use for their campaigns.

A few years ago, I came across the Singapore Indian Chambers of Commerce's directory listing. It had free business members' listing. Unfortunately one had to copy and type the emails and contact details of the businessmen as the webpages in the SICC website did not allow one to copy and paste easily with a click of a mouse. I think maybe the website designer had forgotten to make the contents of the website easily available for others. I felt that the website could have been more user-friendly. I also started wondering if there were others like me who could not copy and paste the contacts easily for their use. In 2012, they had a directory published which I bought from their office. It was not bad. Somehow, my problem of getting email ids was solved via this printed book directory. It was a useful guide for my marketing purpose of my website.

4. Emails of Singapore Indians

Other than the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce directory I could not find other websites listing Singapore Indians' email ids. Imagine there is no website listing any Indian emails of those in Singapore. This is the current state. Thus I was bewildered of what to do when it comes to collecting and maintaining database of Indians in Singapore. Usually, those who indulge in database marketing will need some resources to help them when they gather information to kick-start their marketing campaigns. Collecting emails of the targeted market will assist the marketing professionals. I think having a good database can help to pass around the message that the companies would like to notify to the target audience.

There were other sources which had email ids of Indians living in other countries. Such websites were friends' networking websites. I used the email ids which I found there to notify my potential groups of my marketing plans.

5. Problems Encountered in Database Marketing

When I used the emails of the Indians of other countries I found some problems. Most of them bounced back and were invalid. This could be due to the fact that the websites had not updated their contacts. It was very unfortunate that the email ids of the Indians could not be used for database marketing. I think it is the responsibility of websites to update and keep the emails of their members or visitors new.

6. Current Marketing Outlets for Targeting Indians

Listed below are the main sources which companies can use to reach out to Indians in Singapore.

Television Channels

Vasantham

When informing the Indians of any message of marketing content it is often via the television. The channel “Vasantham” is the popular one. Vasantham is the only popular local Indian channel available in Singapore. It can be said that Vasantham is very hot among the youngsters in Singapore. Through Vasantham, the producers of the channel are able to deliver marketing messages to the local Indians. Currently there are a mixture of many local dramas, and variety shows. The numerous advertisements appearing on the television channel communicate with the audience and are able to get their attention. The recent local dramas have managed to reach out widely to the local Indians as they have attended fan sessions where they get to meet with the crew of the drama serials and get their autographs. The events organized by the television channel have prompted many Indians in Singapore to get closer to the stars and be entertained by them. Through events, the channel has managed to market their programs to the audience. I think Vasantham is a good channel working hard to reach across the Indians in Singapore. I also believe that the local and expat Indians in Singapore watch the local channel to catch the latest Indian happenings in the city.

Vanathirai

Vanathirai is a popular television channel in Singapore. It conducts contests and gives away free television sets or cash money to poor families. Their advertisers seem to be consistent. The channel is widely known and has song dedication programs for the Indians. There is an upbeat sensation in this hip channel. I like the channel. It is good.

Radio Stations

Oli

Oli is the most popular Indian source in Singapore. Almost all Indians whether from Singapore or from other countries listen to Oli, 96.8 FM. It is stated to attract a lot of people to its airwaves. There are many companies that know about Oli and advertise in Oli. Oli has popular and faithful advertisers. These advertisers who promote their services and products on Oli are well-known & they reach out to their target audience.

Masti

This is a Hindi language radio station which is liked by a lot of Indians. This radio station has created a hit with those who speak Hindi. Those who love Bollywood songs may like tuning into this station. There are many North Indians who speak Hindi and listen to Hindi songs. Thus I think this radio station is popular among the Indians who are accustomed to Bollywood music.

Newspapers

Tamil Murasu

The main Indian newspaper is the “Tamil Murasu”. The daily is a famous one which most Tamils in Singapore read for the latest news of Singapore and India. This newspaper is available for seven days a week. Both the local and non-local Indians read about the latest happenings in India and Singapore via the newspaper. The paper is known to be a hit on Sundays as it carries a more detailed section on Tamil cinema entertainment news. There are a lot of people who use its classified ads service.

Tabla

The Tabla is a weekly free paper which comes out every Friday. This popular tabloid which appeals to both local and expat Indians in Singapore touches on the lifestyle and emerging trends found in Indians living in Singapore. It is short and crisp which makes it easy for all ages to read it. There are certain

interesting sections in the newspaper which makes it good for people to read.

Magazines

Pardesi Pulse

This free magazine seems to be aimed at expat Indians. Their articles focus more on India related stuff. It is given out free in restaurants every two months. It is a pity that this magazine is not a monthly one.

Indian Movie News

This is a long standing Indian entertainment magazine which has come a long way. They are celebrating their grand anniversaries by promoting it to every Indian in Singapore and Malaysia. This magazine is known to be a popular one among Indians. A lot of people like to read it. They carry advertisements which can reach out to the Indians.

Silver Screen

This popular magazine which is well known in Malaysia is a monthly magazine which also helps to feature newcomers who are keen on acting in the Tamil cinema. Just like other entertainment magazines it lines up gossips and interviews with celebrities.

Websites

www.Indiansinsingapore.net

This web site is one that states that all Indians in Singapore can connect. Somehow the number of posts in this web site seems to be less. There is not much attention given to this web site. There is no 'connected' feeling in this site. The headquarters for this site is in UK. There are not many sources in

this web site which lists emails of Indian Singaporeans. There are also not much activities listed in this web site. Although the website is said to be of Indians in Singapore there are not much information on selected personalities in Singapore who are Indians. I feel the web site does not stand up to its name. Maybe improvements can be made to the website to reach out to all.

www.Celebrityjam.net

This is my own magazine website which has been around for ten years. It carries the sensational Tamil cinema and Bollywood news updates. There are special videos of upcoming movies and interviews with celebrities. There is even a blog where visitors can comment on several hot topics relating to actors and actresses.

7. What is Needed?

A lifestyle portal for Indians is missing. A meeting place where Indians connect and share their thoughts and ideas is needed urgently. The portal can be used to link up all the Indians in Singapore. Such a networking portal can be very useful. It can help the local Indians to mingle with the expat Indians working in Singapore. The portal can also act as a source to relay messages from the locals to the expat Indians. Having an online media can be helpful for Indians in Singapore. The online website can help to create a closer tie-up among the Indians and various companies who want to reach out to them through ads in the portal. By advertising in the portal, companies can pass their marketing messages to the right audience.

A society linkage is badly needed in Singapore for the Indians to connect. There must be an outlet in Singapore that appeals to all Indians and give them a chance to know about companies that are looking out for them. I think that such a portal can help to alert the Indians in knowing more about the different and various companies in Singapore that could appeal to them. Some Indians in Singapore could be looking for Indian companies to reach out to and having a website which can provide information on

Indian related companies can be helpful.

8. Lisha – Can It Do More?

All in Singapore know about Lisha. Lisha is Little India Shopkeepers and Heritage Association. Lisha is known to address the concerns and needs of the communities in Little India. Although Lisha is doing its duties well I wonder has Lisha done enough to link up the Indian communities in Singapore. Maybe there could be more events organized by Lisha to help businesses target Indian clients. Lisha can also publish books or websites which can feature email ids of Singapore Indians. When there are more actions done by Lisha I think more Indians will take notice of its presence in Singapore.

9. Recommendations

I recommend creating a portal where local and expat Indians in Singapore can meet. It should be able to meet the needs of the Indians in Singapore where it can give the latest news updates and articles on popular Indians in Singapore.

It should be a lifestyle type of portal where people can read about daily happenings and trends. There should also be a section where they introduce on local companies that want to reach out to the Indians in Singapore. The portal should also help to create messages that the local Indians want to communicate to others. The recommended portal can act as a voice for all Indians in Singapore. It can collect all the comments, ideas, feedback from Indians living in Singapore to be heard.

If an Indian wishes to know more about Indian related companies or wants to contact them the portal can be helpful by listing the contact details of the Indian company in the website. The portal can also work in helping companies or organizations reach out to the Indians living in Singapore.

The portal must help to foster a strong bonding among the Indians. It should be easy to use and available for all to use as a connection tool for the Indian community. I hope to see such a website being developed for Indians in Singapore.

*****The End*****