

Cooperative Education Report

Title: Reaching the needs of customers with convenience and quality

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Abstract

This internship has been conducted at Tudoholic Consumer Service, an online retail company in Nepal as a university requirement. The objective of this internship is to learn the functioning of an ecommerce startup with building a professional identity and clear career path. They are helping consumers in Nepal to get their desired products directly from suppliers overseas. Thus, solving the existing problem of in-efficient supply chain in the country. Being an e-commerce startup they have build an eminent marketplace with extensive website.

As a content intern, the job performed during the internship was related to digital marketing and content marketing, helping company build its brand image. The internship was fruitful as it helped to understand website software, consumer behavior and functioning an ecommerce business. It shows the wide scope that marketing and branding in Nepal.

Keywords: E-commerce, Strategic Management, Digital Marketing, Content Marketing and Consumer behavior

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this report. A special gratitude to Siam University faculty for organizing an CO-OP program as a part of course for the entire batch of the year 2014-2018 through which we were able to get an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to the activities of the corporation. This internship experience has enhanced our total university experience by forging a link between conceptual and applied knowledge of the major field of study.

Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation Tudoholic and their staff for providing me an opportunity to work with the organization. I would also like to thank the organization for helping and guiding in every task that was assigned to me. This experience will give me a competitive advantage when searching for a permanent position and clarify my career objectives.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Company profile



Figure 1: Company Logo

Tudoholic is an emerging online marketplace in Nepal. Tudoholic is an eminent marketplace with extensive website. They are giving a great platform for small businesses and entrepreneurs to get more exposure and gain more customers through selling their products online. They are helping consumers in Nepal to get their desired products directly from suppliers overseas. Thus, solving the existing problem of in-efficient supply chain in the country. It is also a great medium for advertising and offers safe and secure transactions where the customers can opt for the method, time and place of the delivery.

Internet users are on the high rise, Nepal is moving towards a digital revolution. Shoppers no longer have to wait in traffic, bargain for discount and spend hours looking for the products and services that they want. With this opportunity, Tudoholic has also guided themselves with certain principles. They are focused on customer obsession rather than winning their competitors. They have passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking.

Being a startup, The Company is facing a lot of obstacles from its competitors and other local retailers. Even with all these struggles Tudoholic aims at providing a hassle free and enjoyable shopping experience to shoppers across the country with the widest range of products on its portal. They don't charge any delivery chargers to its customers even the customers are from ordering from other states. The company is making a conscious effort to bring the power of fashion to shoppers with an array of the latest and trendiest products available in the country as well as internationally.

It's also promoting small and big sellers to sell their product on a big online shopping plaza. The site is widely known for its wide selection of traditional outfit and trending fashion apparels. Tudoholic also showcases products of international sellers. They have products from India, China and USA on their website. They also provide logistic service if their customer want any product which is not available in the country.

1.2 Organizational structure

Tudoholic follows a flat organizational hierarchy. However, They have divided the company into five departments and each department is assigned with one coordinator. The coordinator has to report each day's activities to the CEO. The diagram is below:

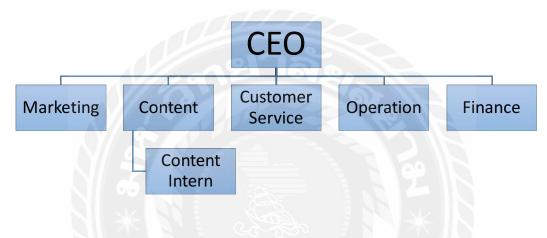


Figure 2: Organizational Structure

Marketing Department: They are responsible to conduct campaign for marketing initiatives. They plan and provide materials for social media promotions as well as monitoring and managing them. They create content providing search engine optimization for the website.

Content Department: Add and oversee the creation and accuracy of the web content on the website. Research about new and existing products and list them on website. They are also responsible to handle all the social media platforms.

Customer Service Department: They are responsible for communicating with the customers for any kind of assistance they need, whether it be creating order, installation, trouble shooting, maintenance and disposal of the product.

Operation Department: They are involved in overseeing the products available in the inventory and responsible to track the orders dispatched from the vendors. They forecast sales and manage all the day-to-day operational activity of the office.

Finance Department: They make all the financial decisions and make financial statements. They are responsible to collect receivables and distribute the payable amount to vendors and other parties.

1.3 Statement of the report

The Internship has been performed as a requirement of the course for the completion of the Undergraduate degree at SIAM University. This is a part of curriculum to complete a three months' internship for the better understanding of corporate industry and gain experience of working in an actual market before the completion of the undergraduate degree. This internship also provides an opportunity to seek, identify and further develop an appropriate level of professionalism among the students.

1.4 Objective of the Study

There are two main objectives of doing this internship or study. They are:

1. To know the functioning of an e-commerce business and a startup

As my future goal is to become an entrepreneur and start my own venture, I should learn the benefits as well as shortcoming and limitations of a startup business. The company I interned has just been three years since it started its journey. As I am also interested in Digital Marketing and e-commerce, I choose Tudoholic to gain knowledge regarding my interests.

2. To improve content writing skills

In my view, a skill that is useful in any field of work is your writing skills. I was offered the position of a content intern where I had to write blogs and develop website and social media content, I think this was an opportunity for me to improve my writing skills as well as to be updated my new changes happening in the global market.

3. To know demand and supply of different products in Nepalese Market

One cannot run a successful business without knowing the needs of its customers. Tudoholic is an online retail business, which sells almost everything online. Through this internship, I intend to know the consumer behavior in the Nepalese market and what kinds of products or services are highly demanded in Nepal. This will also help me when I start my own venture.

4. To develop professional identity and clear career path

Working in a corporate field, we will meet a lot of people and give a chance to build our professional identity. We can have a good relation and network with professionals of the industry. To be able to find potential mentors who can guide and provide support later at work. This is a chance to clear our mind about what we want to do. We can explore the job opportunities available in this field. Become familiar with occupational literature and professional organizations.

1.5 Expected outcomes

At the conclusion of the internship, every student should have satisfactorily completed an intensive period of work experience that effectively inducts them into the nature, structure and organization of corporate world and the work, roles and responsibilities of it. The expected outcomes from this internship is firstly to develop awareness, understanding and capacity in the specific given roles and responsibilities. Student should learn to apply the values and ethics of the profession and develop the capacity to tolerate and work constructively with the value dilemmas, conflicts, and ambiguities inherent in the practice of work. I expect to understand through an intensive experience the nature of E-commerce Company as workplaces and their associated values, routines and cultures. Student should be able to demonstrate the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate effective marketing strategies. Lastly, the student is expected to improve communication and interpersonal skills as well as content writing skills.

1.6 Limitations of the study

In undertaking this study, a number of problems were faced. Firstly, there was lack of time. Since the internship period was only 3 months, they were not able involve me into more number of tasks. If the time frame had been longer, there would have been an opportunity for better exposure to the organizations activities.

Secondly, I lacked knowledge in this field. I had no past work experience in an ecommerce business, so there was no prior knowledge that I could use at work place. Thirdly, there was lack of fulfillment. As an intern, you are not forced to give your 100%, which means you are given side works like assisting other employees. Some businesses lure an intern into the position with empty promises of bountiful learning opportunities and upward career movement.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Main theory and concept applied alongside with the given job descriptions

One of the most significant trends in the past decades is the growing use of the Internet and communication technologies (ICT). Internet and associated technologies have a major impact on the way organizations conduct business. Internet technologies and e-business provide new opportunities for companies to compete in the global market and play a major role in the world's economy. Despite the significant studies in the field of e-business, it requires more comprehensive analysis in exploring e-business competitiveness and indicators, which enable to measure e-business competitive capacities (Donelaicio, 2015).

Information systems literature covers a wide range of topics, including humancomputer interaction, information systems development and implementation, decision support systems, the impact of computing on organizations, end-user computing. (Ramiller & Swanson, 1993).

Some of the theory and concept applied to perform my internship job are explained below:

1. Strategic Management

One of the important theories that came in practice was Strategic Management. While creating and developing social media and marketing content, a lot of strategies had to be looked into. I was able to have understanding about these aspects of the company with strategic management theories.

Just by jumping headfirst into social media and creating an account on every platform might not bring a positive impression on your audience. If you really want to show your presence and gain more public attention then you're going to need to prepare a strategy to improve the effectiveness. With a social media strategy management, you'll know which network brings the best engagement, the type of content you need to generate and the result can be easily measured. (Carter, 2018).

2. Product Management

Essentially, the overall goal for the ecommerce product managing team is to provide convenient Omni channel experience. You can achieve that by firstly, understanding users & developing user personas. Then by drawing user journey maps for each personas. Lastly, Designing product features & continuous improvements in product and product category. In today's world of many ecommerce products, the product manager must deeply focus on user experience because all his/her work is of no use if the user doesn't like the experience (Jilukara, 2017).

3. Consumer behavior

Understanding consumer behavior is a essential aspect of marketing. Consumer behavior is the study of how people make their decisions about what they buy, want, need, or act in regards to a product, service, or company. It is critical to understand consumer behavior to know how potential customers will respond to a new product or service. It also helps companies grab opportunities that are not currently met (Schofield).

Social media is one of the things that help analyze consumer behavior. Millions of people reflect their lives on social media, so information that can enrich several strands of consumer behavior can be uncovered with the right tools. Another way to analyze consumer behavior is **Google trends**. It can help you to understand if a topic or product is currently popular or not. (Smith, 2016).

4. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is an umbrella term for all of your online marketing efforts. With the help of digital marketing, businesses leverage digital channels like Google search, social media, email, and their websites to connect with their current and potential customers (Alexander, 2018).

In simplistic terms, digital marketing is the promotion of products, services or brands through one or more forms of electronic media. Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing in that it involves the use of channels and methods that enable an organization to analyze marketing campaigns and understand what is working and what isn't in the current scenario. (Sas).

5. Content writing

It is all about delivering the right information to the right audience at the right time. It helps to grow your brand and foster relationships, adding the depth and visibility you need to be successful in today's marketplace. Customers are spending more time researching about the product and brand before they go to buy the product, and brands can provide the answers they need through content. Informative content like blog posts and info graphics do wonders for early-stage brand awareness (Brafton Fuel Brand).

It is not enough just by building an excellent website and sell items that are in demand, you also need to fill your ecommerce site with quality content. With the help of content, it will make your site easy for search engines and consumers to find. In order to find your good and services, potential customers must first find your site (Johnson, 2016).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Roles and responsibilities assigned by the company

1. Content Marketing:

Writing weekly blogs regarding new campaigns, changes on the website, trending things and news related to the company. Planning and creating weekly newsletters related to new product arrival or any other information to be sent out across the customer database.

2. Video Making:

Creating and editing videos for company's bestseller products. Research about trending and unique products that are currently doing well in the global market. Then to make that product bestselling in the Nepalese market, they advertise it through video marketing. So, every week about 6 videos had to be edited on an average.

3. Social Media Management:

Work along with the Social Media team for creating and scheduling content for company's different social media platforms. Planning social media post according to consumer behavior and new product arrival. Updating information on these social media pages and keeping it active by conducting different engagement activities for the viewers.

4. Developing Content for website:

Writing content for the company's website. There are many information that needs to be updated or added on the website. Also helping the content team list products on the website. Adding new segment on the menu bar of website named 'Go International' that helps people order from international websites.

5. Product research:

Collecting information about new, trending and unique product available in the global market and promote it through company's social media platforms. The ultimate aim is to be the first online store in the country to have these product listed on the website.

6. Product Management:

I worked with the team to analyze where the product is performing well and falling short. A successful product requires exceptional strategy, efficient execution and timely communication. The ultimate aim was to draw customers to company's website. This was related to consumer behavior. I kept records of the reasons regarding any product not performing well in the market.

7. Graphic Designing:

Work along with the designing team. Designing banners and posts for social media platforms as well as for websites.

3.2 Projects

1. Marketing for e-payment system of the company

In Nepal, there is a huge problem when it comes to pre-payment. The company doesn't accept cash on delivery for products whose price is above 2000NPR. So, the customers have pay by bank deposit, bank transfer, e-payment services or visit the office itself. Many customers get irritated and also a hassle for them if they are frequent buyers.

The company developed its own e-payment service called 'Tudoholic-Wallet' or 'T-Wallet' where customers can top up any amount they wish in their T-wallet and shop from it. Tudoholic Wallet is a cashless digital payment system, which is an in-house service provided by Tudoholic Team for our customers. You can purchase anything from our website and pay from your T-wallet account.

I assist the marketing team by writing blogs and related content for T-Wallet. In the blog I explained the steps of making T-Wallet and benefits the customers will have from it. I made posters and banners for its promotion to encourage customer for creating an account. New marketing strategies like giving free up were also developed to grab people's attention.



Figure 1: Banner for T-Wallet promotion

2. Marketing for CSR campaign

The company conducted a corporate social responsibility campaign during the month of March. They campaign was named "Exchange your old cloths & get new!" and was conducted to support people living in rural part of the country. There are thousands of people living in rural areas who don't have access to good cloths or books. The company aimed to support them by donating cloths and books. Customers could send their old cloths to the company and get new cloths at a very discounted price.

I played an important role while bringing that campaign into action. I structured the discount rate for each category. I wrote blogs and necessary content about the campaign. It explained process and benefits to the customers willing to contribute to this campaign. I made promotional banner everyday to grab attention of people on this matter.

Due to some reason this campaign was not completed and had to stop in the middle. As the organization is still at its growth phase, it was not the right time for the organization to start a CSR campaign, which was the reason for its unsuccessful result. They are planning to do the same campaign in near the near future.



Figure 2: Banner for CSR campaign

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Contributions made during the internship

1. Reached more people through digital marketing

They had a great team for all the departments but they lacked skills and expertise to market their business effectively on the web. The company was only active on Facebook, but didn't have good quality contents. I was responsible for developing, initiating, creating and overseeing the digital marketing for the company. I initiated the idea of making the company active on other social media platforms as well. This was the company will have a good SEO and will reach more people. Then I started developing contents for other social media platforms and now the company is active on seven other social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest and Linkedin. I use to plan and create contents for these social media platforms. Now, the company has more than 5,000 followers altogether in these new social media platforms.

Since the company was already active on facebook but was in a dire need of creativity and good quality contents. I use to design posters for facebook and write creative contents to make the entire post more appealing to the audience. To make the product more understandable and useful for customer, I started creating and editing videos for new products. The customer engagement had increased drastically after I started posting videos on facebook.

The company even took a new step towards email marketing. There are very few e-commerce companies in Nepal who sends newsletters to their customers. I was assigned to research and learn about the software and types of newsletter that the company can use. After that I started developing and designing weekly newsletters for the company. Therefore, through my new initiatives towards digital marketing, the company surely gained more customer acknowledgement and helped them to reach more people. This also resulted to more website traffic.

2. Building a brand through designing and content writing

Since it has just been three years that the company has started its operations, they were more inclined towards improving operations and very less concerned about branding. In an ecommerce firm, the Branding team would generally be responsible for both operational and strategic responsibilities.

Branding is all of the ways you establish an image of the company in your customers' eyes. This could be by building a website that describes what the company offers, designing ads that promote your goods and services, selecting

specific corporate colors that will be associated with your company, creating a logo, and featuring it across all your social media accounts. That is, you are shaping how and what people's perceptions of your business are (Shopify).

I was focused on building company's brand to gain customer loyalty and spread awareness about of works that the company does. I designed different kinds of gift vouchers, which was sent to customers with their package. The company did this for the first time and a lot of good responses from the customers were received. With every new occasion or celebration, I developed new banner to grab attention of the audience. I helped build content on the website and on social media platforms which helped company have a unique identity and build its brand. I wrote blogs mostly about the quires that used to come from the customers. The blogs helped customers understand and solved their problem.

The company even started sending newsletter to its customers for the first time. It was a step towards email marketing which is still not a popular form of marketing in Nepal but generates a lot of traffic on the website. I was assigned to create weekly newsletter regarding new products listed on the website and new sale offers that the company is giving.

This all gave a very good feedback from customer and other audience. This help the company take a step towards branding and making it more renowned to the general public.



Figure 1: Facebook cover banner



Figure 3: Front side of the Gift Voucher



Blogs that I wrote during the internship period:

- 5 Wardrobe essentials for winter
- Benefits of online shopping
- Top Indian websites to shop from
- How to shop from Amazon and other international websites in Nepal
- Why prices are high while shopping from international websites?
- Exchange your old cloths and get new!
- Tudoholic Wallet
- Top Websites of USA

3. Increase sales through selling new products

Basic goods like cloths, shoes, etc. was sold by many other online retailers. The only way that Tudoholic could be different from other company was by selling products that was new and was not available at other stores. I was assigned to search for product that are unique and trending in the global market. I researched and identified almost 50 of those products during my internship time frame. I showcased it to the general public by making their videos or designing creative post for them. Customers were more attracted towards the product through its videos and post designs.

The company was able to increase it's sales in these few months due to the unique and trending products which were not available at the local stores in Nepal. It seemed that there were more demands for these unique and trending products rather than that of basic products.

4. Assisted in developing new website

The company was trying to develop a new website which would be more user friendly and perfect for mobile view. I helped the IT team in this process. I was assisting them by writing content, designing new banners and editing pictures for the new website. They used coding and other IT stuff that was very difficult for me to understand, as I was never exposed to things like that. I learned new things related to technology and software which makes it easier to develop a new website for small business and startups.

As the company also delivers products from international vendors available in international websites, but it was not shown on the website. On my suggestion they agreed to make a new segment for it and I was given the responsibility to put that on the website and develop the entire content for it. Now, the website's menu bar consist of a segment called 'Go International' under which they all the website from which they customers can order goods. It also has the explanation for order and payment for those products.



4.2 Details of related learning process and new knowledge received

1. Proficiency in software; Shopify

Tudoholic uses an ecommerce software for its website operations known as Shopify. Shopify is a complete <u>ecommerce solution</u> that allows companies to set up an online store to sell goods. It lets the company organize products, customize storefront, accept credit card payments, track and respond to orders. As I was developing website content and listing new products, I had the chance to learn this software. I was introduced to its benefits and how useful it can be to firms who want to start their business online. This software had a lot of functions which made website management very easy.

2. Running advertisement on social media

I thought runner advertisement on social media is very simple, just pay them and they will boost your post. However, it is more than just that. A lot of things had to be kept in consideration while doing so. As a finance student I was not aware about how can an organization conduct effective marketing. I learned the essence of target marketing and inbound marketing.

3. Analyzing consumer behavior and their needs

The first thing I learned here was to play with consumer minds. Consumers won't really know if they want or need that product until they are shown the benefits of that product. As ecommerce retail company that aims to fulfill customer needs while maintaining quality is difficult. The company has to analyze and plan its sales strategy according to their consumer behavior.

The company mainly analyzes its people's buying behavior or their likes and dislikes through clicks, likes, reactions and comments on the social media post. All these elements can be viewed on a graphical representation, which makes it easier to analyze.

4. Functioning of an e-commerce business and a startup

As I aim to become an entrepreneur some day, it was very valuable for me to work in a startup and know all the limitations and struggles that startups are facing in Nepal. This is an era of technology and one needs to be alert about its benefits. Working in an E-commerce I was able to know the power of Internet and technology. This will help me when I plan to start my own business.

5. Improved writing and designing skills

I was mainly assigned to do all the writing works of the organization, I was very focused about it and wanted to bring new variations in my writing every new blog

and other posts. I improved my writing skills and learned the effective way of developing content.

I had very less knowledge about designing and was not very skilled at it. I learned new techniques for designing and Photoshop, slowly the quality of my design was improving and it was visible by the comments from followers on social media.



Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Self-assessment as future professional

The internship at Tudoholic has helped me grow my professionalism as well as grow personally. It has helped me learn the norms of market and understand the corporate workplace from a startup point of view. The internship has enabled me to work under pressure and perform multiple tasks during my work period. I was able to enhance my creativity and think of ideas that were out of the box. This will help me to perform better in any other corporate office I am engaged with in my further dates.

Though the time period was small, I was able gain much knowledge, regarding various personal and professional skills, including social media management, planning strategies and market analysis, which has opened up various doors for my further career. I was able understand the e-commerce culture in the country. As an intern I have improved my time management skills too, as the working environment not was very flexible, everyone respected the deadlines and importance of time which inspired me to value time as a professional as well.

Being a finance student I was unaware about the scope of marketing and branding. Now I am looking forward to building my career in that field. These skills will even help me when I plan to start something on my own. I got to observe the strength and weakness of startup in Nepal very closely.



5.2 Comparison of practical learning VS theory

Being a finance student, I had very less knowledge about marketing and branding. There was little learning from the classroom that has helped me through the work I did in the actual work environment and practiced in the internship. Many things thought in class were not so applicable to Nepalese market but they still gave a basic idea and helped me do the work.

As I worked mostly in the marketing and content department, I had very less chance to apply my classroom knowledge in this internship. I had very less connection to the operation and finance department, which means I didn't get any chance to put my actual theoretical knowledge into practice. But this has surely helped me think differently and innovatively.

Now with theoretical knowledge of finance and practical knowledge of marketing, I have got the best of both worlds.



Annex





To Whom it may concern,

Priyanka Chaudhary has worked for Tudoholic as a Content Associate + Instagram Manager for 3 Months from Feb 11th , 2018 to May 15, 2018 . In our evaluation, Priyanka would be a very positive contributor and a true asset for any organization. She has various traits that will allow her to succeed in a professional & corporate environment.

First and foremost, she is a very enthusiastic worker - she does not shirk from hard assignments and is at the same time, objective enough to seek guidance and work with other colleagues as need be. Second, she is an excellent team player - she brought a lot of positive energy to every task and proved capable at prioritization while maintaining the quality of work. Third, Priyanka has well rounded understanding of business processes.

These are the areas where Priyanka had a chance to work on -

- 1. Content Management (Website)
- 2. Instagram Management
- 3. Graphic Designing
- 4. Product Management (Apparel & Fashion)

Overall, Priyanka's work at Tudoholic has provided a lot of valuable business benefit to our organisation as a whole. We hope she continues with her excellent progress in the years to come.

Sincerely,

-lace

Sagun Goenka No Founder & CEO Tudoholic.com Kathmandu, Nepal



Bibliography



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Special interests: