

THE SOCIAL MEDIA ATM

By **Nidhi Mittal Bansal**

THE INTERNET has today provided individuals and businesses with a powerful tool to create an online marketplace. Online marketing is one of the fastest growing industries in the world with ecommerce taking precedence over offline shopping experience, especially in India where we have the third largest online consumer base after China and the U.S. India is seeing an average annual rise of 22 per cent in the number of internet subscribers with a strong base of around 137 million internet users at present.

And who out of this sprawling number doesn't use the social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter which have 70 million and 36 million users respectively? Cashing in on these growing numbers are the online marketers, via social media marketing. "The Internet has made it convenient for consumers to communicate with the corporate world. It has broken barriers between the two allowing a more liberal form of feedback," says Abhishek Goyal, CEO, Fashion&You.com.

Business organisations have discovered social media as the new platform to promote their products and services. It has become essential for even offline businesses to have an online marketing team to keep a track of all social media platforms. "People frequent these websites and by maintaining active accounts on these channels, you can make sure that the updates relating to new products are more likely to be noticed by the public," says Anupama Beri, HR Head, Snapdeal.

Social media has evolved from being just a tool used to stay in touch with friends to a massive marketing platform, capable of delivering ultra-targeted ads to people across the world. Social media marketing generates web traffic, increases conversions and sales, and aids in branding and market research. The growth in this industry has created several different career choices.

From being a social media marketing manager to reputation man-

ager (one who keeps negative information on the internet at bay), from copy writer to link builder, job profiles are interesting. According to the HR firm Ma Foi, the industry will see more than 10,000 new jobs opening up this new year. Other careers that people can choose from are digital marketing, social media management, web design, search engine optimisation (SEO), digital copywriting and blogging.

However, the biggest challenge that the companies face today is hiring experienced professionals in this field. "There is a great

Brands are increasingly employing Facebook and Twitter to ensure customer stickiness in a world of fickle loyalties, opening up new career avenues for social media marketing students

FB SUCCESS STORIES

Top five Facebook pages in India with number of fans. These are the best examples of social media marketing

- Dove: **75 lakh**
- Tata DoCoMo: **73.8 lakh**
- MTV Roadies: **4.27 lakh**
- Kingfisher: **3.75 lakh**
- Fastrack: **3.7 lakh**

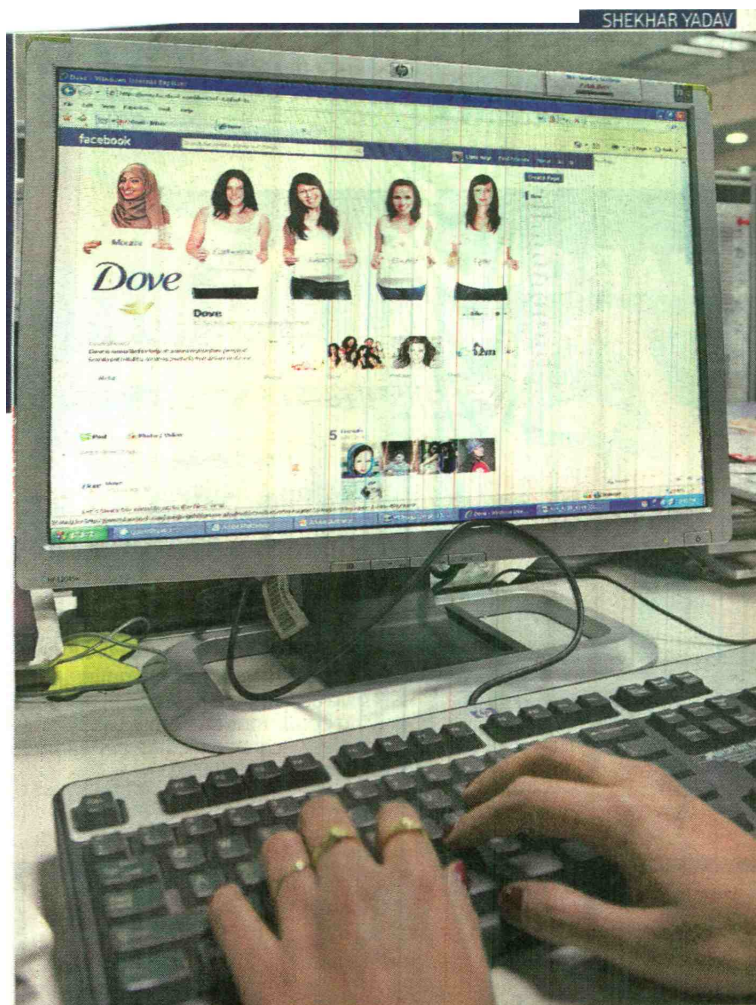
demand for people with the technical knowledge involved in marketing products online, and truth be told India still has a dearth of such talent as compared to other countries," says Goyal.

But, now the awareness is growing and institutes like NIIT are coming up with specific programmes to train professionals in online marketing. With the launch of its new Advanced Programme in Social Media Marketing, certified by the Internet and Mobile Association of India, NIIT Imperia aims at training professionals with a blend of instructor-led classes with case studies and assignments. Interestingly, the educational qual-

The salary in online marketing ranges from ₹15,000 to ₹2,00,000 per month

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Publication: Mail Today, Edition: New Delhi, Reporter: Nidhi Mittal Bansal, Published Dt.: 01 Jan 2013, Page No.: 23



BECOME AN ACE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETEEER

Your first step is to find the right course. Here are five options that you could choose from:

NIIT Imperia

Advanced Programme in Social Media Marketing certified by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

<http://www.niitimperia.com/program-in-social-media-marketing>

Duration: 10 weeks (classes at designated NIIT centres)

Fee: ₹35,000

EduKart

Online digital marketing course certified by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

<http://www.edukart.com/courses/digital-marketing>

Duration: 30 hours over six months (online classes)

Fee: ₹3,699

WSM Education

Social / Digital Media Marketing

<http://wsmeducation.in/social-media-marketing/>

Duration: Six months (online classes). **Fee:**

₹3,499

Web Marketing Academy

Digital Media Marketing

<http://www.webmarketingacademy.in/courses/web-marketing-management/>

Duration: Around six months (classes at designated centres) **Fee:**

₹35,000

9.9 School of Convergence

Post Graduate Diploma in Digital Media Communication

<http://www.schoolof-convergence.com/dmc-curriculum.html/>

Duration: One year **Fee:** ₹2.15 lakh

25%

Percentage growth in the number of internet users in the country over last one year

59%

Internet users in India who access the world wide web through their mobile phones

2L

The number of people in India who use the internet every day for their personal use

ification and the skills required for this field are elementary — a graduate with strong communication and analytical skills is eligible.

For students considering a job in the digital media industry, there are many post-graduate courses available to choose from. "Our aim is to provide students the opportunity to enhance their skills in this field on a global level," says Aman Kapoor, founder, WSM Education, which provides potential students with

the option of studying the subjects as online certificate courses. "The remuneration that can be expected in this field starts from ₹15,000 and can go up to ₹2,00,000 per month", he adds.

With the whole web world open to the professionals today, the job opportunities too are widespread. Online marketing, with the popularity of social media gaining momentum, is definitely a lucrative and creative career to look up to.