



Research on Apple's Social Media Marketing Strategies: Focus on the Improvement of the iPhone 15 Launch

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Abstract

The present research identifies and explores how Apple Inc. made efficient use of social media marketing tactics in creating a buzz around the release of the new iPhone 15 using leading social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. These platforms were examined as ways of improving the brand, keeping the users engaged, and creating product visibility. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study analyzes Apple's marketing strategy using case study analysis and social media data analysis by collecting data on sentiment analysis, brand performance, and consumer surveys. The results indicate that Apple's overall social media channels addressed the needs of consumers and were able to build brand loyalty. However, the research highlights that some platforms, specifically TikTok, missed opportunities to capitalize on the new social trends and establish their content in line with them, as well as the improper use of tools to promote the content. This study ends by putting forward smart and useful recommendations that could be adopted by Apple Inc., which could enhance their current messaging and improve the cross-platform marketing approach for the iPhone Application.

Subject Areas

Marketing, Social Media, Digital Branding, Consumer Behavior, Business Strategy

Keywords

Apple, Social Media Marketing, iPhone 15, Brand Identity, Consumer Engagement, Digital Strategy

1. Introduction

In this age of extreme technological advancement and rapid digital expansion like never before, it is almost impossible for any company to stay relevant in today's market without the active use of social media [1]. This is, beyond any doubt, the instrument with which consumers interact with their products as well as the brand as a whole, the trust, and the authority of the entity concerned.

As far as major multinational corporations go, none have been as good as Apple Inc. over the years [2]. The company, which is famous for the world's best technology and innovation, has resolved to redefine modern communication by creating awesome products with innovative designs and smart advertising campaigns to ensure its products hit the targeted markets and attract the intended clientele [3]. This highly acclamation campaign for Apple's iPhone 15 is one of the proofs of the organization's deftness in crafting tight and engaging campaigns that utilize all marketing platforms and channels effectively [4].

Apple is a definitive brand in the marketing industry because of its unique and distinctive marketing strategy of creating a premium perception while ensuring mass accessibility [5]. The brand communication is creative while directing and performing selectively with a keen sense of the cared-for middle ground and excelling at it. Through these effectively executed channels of communication, Apple successfully builds interaction and support among its customers on social media on different levels across the world through particular platforms like Instagram, Twitter (now X), TikTok, and YouTube [6] [7]. Apple uses the most important methods of communication through marketing, *i.e.*, passing across information about the products, enhancing its iconic visual identity, showing concern for the all-inclusive masses of the diverse target markets, and keeping the level of excitement with the help of entertaining, participative forces of social media [8].

The launch of the iPhone 15 was not just an ordinary marketing event but a combination of visual appeal and subtle craft, which Apple has been known for since the beginning of the inception of the company and which is its trademark until today [9] [10]. To ensure that it was able to create a curated, immersive digital experience and a true social media event that would draw the attention of the world based on the multimedia experience, behind-the-scenes content, enticing pictures, stimulating promotion from the influencers, and live product unveils. The campaign caused millions of users worldwide to jump into the pack over the days before the actual unveiling of the product itself, and the estimated figures of sales figures made in advance boosted the anticipation for the new iPhone 15 [11] [12]. Extensive use of visual consistency, engaging posts created with creativity, and the overall Apple-inspired narration the brand developed stirred excitement within the virtual space and generated a buzz within the social media platform for the things to come [13].

This research examines the different strategies utilized by Apple in its social media marketing during the iPhone 15 launch to assess the effect that these strategies produce on consumer engagement, brand framing, as well as sales perfor-

mance. The study aims to offer an exhaustive assessment of Apple's approach, questioning the extent to which the different messages are in unison among the multiple platforms, how well the content has been adapted to different groups, and what areas Apple has to perfect to apply a more relevant and corresponding sensation and outreach. Additionally, this study seeks to uncover the general conclusions that could be made as well as messages based on the iPhone 15 campaign of Apple's media activity, showing the impact and shifts that marketing conditions and the audience may create on the engagement process.

This research is theoretically grounded in the SICAS Model (Sense, Interactive, Connect & Communication, Action, Share), which effectively explains the consumer journey for brands like Apple [14]. This model identifies that Apple effectively promotes engagement by employing a fuller model, leveraging powerful media inputs that are emotive, sparkling, innovative, and incorporate interactivity [15]. Moreover, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is utilized to analyze the harmony of Apple's messages across platforms [16]. These theories make it easy to comprehend the context of Apple's marketing activities and how they fit in the current body of digital marketing literature and the phenomenon of branding within the recent marketing environment.

To this end, the research utilizes a mixed-methods approach that ensures the proposed evaluation is adequately thorough [17]. It features a systematic analysis of the available scholarly literature as regards social media marketing, a highly detailed case study of the iPhone 15 promotion campaign, in conjunction with a large-scale quantitative survey of consumer reactions to the brand's online content during the campaign. Consequently, this work makes use of several types of analytical tools, such as a PEST analysis, to actively identify the possible external forces that affect the strategies that Apple is using during the iPhone 15 campaign on social media [18]. Likewise, Social Media Analytics (SMA) is applied as a means of assessing engagement levels, user sentiments, and a set of other important metrics for Apple across diverse social media channels [19]. Ultimately, this research enhances and contributes to the provision of an understanding of how Apple attributes its marketing communications in social media, particularly at the launch of the iPhone 15, and how it may contribute to consumer engagement definitions in the present-day context.

This study holds tremendous potential and weight both on a conceptual and a real-world orientation. The practical side of this research will assist real-life marketers who desire to follow in the footsteps of Apple's marketing success, as well as the marketers in charge of global brands, which is a unique dual mandate responsible for remaining exclusive while being inclusive. By exploring the way Apple tactically utilized social media during the launch of iPhone 15, the paper successfully goes beyond merely being scholarly, contributing, and expanding the knowledge on digital marketing and live actionable strategies to enhance consumer's engagement in a world that is increasingly becoming digital-first, and requires the application of new strategies and techniques that will successfully ena-

ble a powerful relationship between the brand and the consumers on social media and the continuous success of the trade enriched by the well-kept brand status quo.

2. Literature Review

Within the context of digital technologies, social media marketing can be defined as a communication technique that comprises the use of various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube [20] [21]. These platforms are used to reach the target audience, support, maintain, and improve existing relationships between the business and the clients, and increase the popularity of the products or services [22] [23]. From the start of it all, developing and putting on the market components as well as experiences that elicit reactions from the target audience in the form of comments, likes, shares, or clicks means being an active audience [24]. Thus, instead of communicating with the public like a press release, this kind of marketing functions through a two-way process of information flow that directly allows audiences to engage in conversations with and give feedback to the company [25]. The ability to target specific demographics and psychographics makes social media marketing all the more appealing to organizations that want to get their messages out to the public at large in real time [26]. The strategies may be unique in terms of how they apply to a worldwide giant company like Apple Inc. This creative and innovative marketing strategy is indeed one of the best ways that any company can use to communicate its values and provide customers with the value to be derived from its products, which are so effective [27]. With the combination of rich visual elements, unified brand messages, and storytelling, all these communicate in a way to the customers nothing but the significance of the brand and what it represents [28]. Together with resoluteness and persistence, this has been effective in creating a powerful connection with the consumers, turning them into advocates of the company and its products.

2.1. Overview of the iPhone 15 Product and Launch

This phone marked a new era not only in product development but also in the field of marketing [29]. The iPhone 15 was launched in 2023 equipped with significant innovations that make it user-friendly, among them are; better camera features for capturing clear images, redefined durability through longer-lasting effects, a higher processing capacity that allows the phone to run more complex tasks, and a decrease in the consequences on the environment as a result of more use of recyclable materials in the production process [30] [31]. To support the new product, the company issued a wide-ranging digital marketing campaign that, in terms of intensity, rivalled any other similar product campaign in recent times. Apple adopted a cross-platform marketing strategy with a mixture of live product launches, teasers, influencer marketing, behind-the-scenes videos, and Instagram stories that highlighted the new features, streamlined for marketing them better. Therefore, social media was not only a medium of advertising but also a medium

of anticipation creation, discussion, and the delivery of a finely polished marketing message while stirring up a lively and engaging experience that went beyond the one-dimensional ads [32]. This time the campaign made good use of global hashtags that had everyone talking, and a multitude of comments, shares, and posts were registered within hours of the product launch, quietly, switch it to somewhere like accounts were users posted new pictures with the phone, created thousands of new hashtags for it or was mentioning it in their selfies. The iPhone 15 product launch is the epitome of Apple's great potential as a digital marketing powerhouse that knows how to attract, leverage its audience, and create a truly memorable and engaging experience for all stakeholders.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The Sense, Interactive, Connect & Communication, Action, and Share. The lens (SICAS) Model is a unique and well-defined framework for analyzing consumer behavior and overall marketing experiences [33]. Through the lens of this model, it is possible to systematically analyze a user's journey through the various marketing content pieces published online by Apple in light of the company's social media strategy [34]. The "Sense" aspect of this online engagement process is represented by the ability of Apple's visual and video images, right from the beginning, to attract users' attention [35]. Utilizing its unique ability to present products in a visually stunning manner, the company is widely known for its appealing product images, uncluttered and simple design, and sneak peeks of a product in an exciting way [36]. The next step in the SICAS approach is the "Interactive" one, which is about the chats or polls, or yarns with famous people, that allow users to be part of the brand in question. Apple gives its followers an added edge of agency in determining what is seen on their pages and what products and features are discussed. The marketing actions typically carried out by Apple are aimed at building relationships with existing and potential customers. The "Connect and Communication" aspect is a bit more personal and relates to interactions between Apple and its customers. The company has lately been making efforts to set better communications with its customers, answering questions, and getting feedback on its marketing efforts [37]. Within the framework of the SICAS model, "Action" refers to the moment where the brand can affect consumers in such a manner that they undertake their desired action, for example, going to Apple's website, sharing any content, or making a purchase. Apple concentrates on building a compelling case for action through the use of strategic customer behavior manipulation and intelligent marketing decision-making. The very last stage of this SICAS journey may be marked as "Share," which spells the zone of organic growth by customers who are either happy with or enthused by the product provided by the brand and who promote the product through reposts, hashtags, and word of mouth. Thus, by the way of social listening and engaging campaigns on the social media platforms, Apple ensures that it is not only promoting its product but also encouraging happy customers to share the same with friends, family and on their profiles

across various platforms. Therefore, the SICAS model is an effective way of studying how Apple shaped its social media campaigns to take customers through the “Awareness” to “Advocacy” stages and directly involved them in the process of company-branding itself.

2.3. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

When it comes to conveying a coherent and appealing brand story across various marketing platforms and communication channels to the target audience, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is the best strategic marketing option [38]. Apple always pursues the idea of a unified and coherent marketing approach in its social media marketing, which ensures that all the marketing activities are tailored toward achieving common general brand objectives. Throughout the iPhone 15 marketing campaign, Apple carefully controlled its brand messages and campaigns across Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok by factoring in its tone, visuals, and messaging and then ensuring they were delivered consistently and effectively [39]. The fruit of the IMC framework can be seen in a variety of promotional activities, be they influencer presentations, product highlights, or any user materials made or other sources. All of these emphasize and reinforce the values that are common for Apple, such as innovation, sleek design, and performance superiority. The apparent fluidity and consistency across various online media in which Apple is present and engaged also restricts the possibility for confusion or brand mix-up upon interaction with the products. IMC’s goal is to create and maintain a certain image in the mind of the consumer and emphasize the key brand values, which Apple is “the only one,” and at the same time appeal to different types of consumers at once [40]. All in all, IMC is the response to a modern challenge that is brought on by the fragmentation of consumers’ attention in the context of digital marketing. If applied properly, Apple’s IMC approach effectively “collects together” splintered and dispersive speech actions of the online space into

2.4. Tools for Social Media Marketing Strategy Analysis

2.4.1. Social Media Listening Tools

The best characterization of what social media listening tools is that they are some of the most effective digital platforms for companies to monitor, collect data on and analyze real-time conversations online about their brands, competitors, or industry trends [41]. Some of the social media listening tools that the company can use include Brandwatch, Sprout Social, and Hootsuite [42]. These tools provide Apple with the capacity to find out the level of acceptance of its products by consumers, identify trends, and evaluate the reception of new products like the iPhone 15 [43]. By examining the frequency of mentions, hashtags, and user comments, which can be obtained from social media listening tools, Apple can quickly solve any concerns that customers might have, acknowledge compliments made by users, and adjust its marketing strategies as dictated by real-time data [44]. This

degree of responsiveness to customers builds loyalty and trust, as consumers feel listened to and that their feelings matter. In addition, social media listening tools are also crucial in determining the impact of marketing efforts since they provide data on which posts have been able to capture the most number of responses from users in the form of likes, shares, and comments and, therefore, be able to make informed decisions on the kind of content that the company needs to put out to increase the clout of its social media platforms in the future. In summary, social media listening tools are very vital in the social media marketing strategies of companies because they enable them to understand better how their message is perceived and received by the audiences they seek to affect.

2.4.2. Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is the study of interpersonal relationships and interactions in this age-old interconnected world of social media [45]. In the field of marketing, SNA presents a golden ticket that companies can leverage to visualize and quantify the propagation of information across a network of users, especially how influencers, advocates, and key opinion leaders act as force multipliers in the spreading of these messages [46]. When Apple uses the SNA technique on the iPhone 15 campaign, it has a better opportunity to understand which persons or groups had the most impact on disseminating the information about the launch event and how the message transited through the network. Analyzing the attributes of the main nodes and the patterns among users can give Apple discounts on the segments that may be disclosed for future campaigns, thus enabling the company to customize its content to effectively target its audience while maximizing its profitability. Besides this, SNA also reinforces an understanding of the brand community, the way it behaves, and the individuals that can act as brand champions, who provide invaluable support for the Company's business goals. By embracing the SNA approach, Apple can utilize power structures, influence, and connections not only in creating curiosity and excitement around the iPhone 15 launch but also in sustaining and building a robust and dynamic social media community in the long run.

2.4.3. Metrics of Engagement (Reach, Impressions, Click-Through Rates)

Engagement metrics, which would be crucial when measuring the success and influence of social media marketing strategies [47]. These include reach, which is the number of distinct users who view a post, impressions, which is the total number of times a post is shown to users, and click-through rates, which is the fraction of users who click on a link within the post [48]. In light of Apple's iPhone 15 launch, these metrics would provide tangible evidence of how well the audience is interested in the content and whether it is effective or not. For example, Instagram posts that had millions of impressions but had good engagement rates indicate that the posts greatly connected with the audience, while CTRs for links to products reflected the potential of such posts to convert views to purchases. Monitoring these metrics would enable Apple to know the specific type of content that

generates the best return on investment; such knowledge would assist in the shaping of future content creation and selection of a platform for future campaigns.

3. Apple's Social Media Marketing Strategy for the iPhone 15

Apple Inc. has always been known for its innovative and successful marketing campaigns, and the famous "1984" Super Bowl ad for Macintosh was no exception [48]. Apple has created a simple, smart, and emotional marketing image over the years [49]. Its campaigns mostly showed how the product could be used in everyday life instead of going into the specifications, ensuring the customer experience, and implementing innovation strategies without any price-related aggression. The aspirational and user-centric facets of Apple's products remain constant alongside the company's marketing communication changes from time to time [50]. Accompanied by the growing digital and social media, Apple has flexed its muscle on the consumer side by offering fresh and yet adhering to the brand's core values.

3.1. Integration of Social Media in Apple's Strategy

Social media is one of the channels through which Apple communicates with a changed audience [51]. Such a change is characterized by discussions instead of merely making a statement and, to a certain extent, it's even manifested in content creation that takes place mutually, where the brand encourages the consumers by asking social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, X (previously known as Twitter), and YouTube to help them communicate the release of products. Examples of this include product teasers, behind-the-scenes coverage, and influencer collaborations. The use of social media platforms helps in creating an air of mystery around a product and the anticipation of an upcoming launch, through actions such as the use of a countdown and the release of enigmatic messages [52], [53]. It isn't just about the anticipation since Apple's post-launch aim is still to keep in touch with its most loyal customers who are enriched with the feeling of being part of something exclusive and at the same time sharing it with the rest of the world. Apple is being secretive yet at the same time very tactical in unveiling its new products, carefully selecting not to engage with user-generated content that may be potentially damaging to the brand while still enjoying viral waves in the world of digital media.

3.2. Environmental Analysis

3.2.1. Political Factors: Digital Advertising Policies and Regulations

Politics and legislation are among the fields that exert a strong influence on the way Apple works in the area of social media advertising [54]. The growing concern about privacy of personal data, control over content, and the transparency of algorithms has resulted in a situation where advertising principles have been made more stringent, mostly in the European Union and California [55]. The company's promotion has to be by digital advertising regulations such as GDPR and CCPA, which, among other things, make sure that the data utilization and target

content are disclosed [56]. As a countermeasure, the organization quite often refers to privacy as a centric value both in the technical features of the product and in its publicity discourse, thus reinstating its positioning that is in harmony with the public's wish for fair data use [57].

3.2.2. Economic Factors: Global Smartphone Market Trends

Generally, the global smartphone market is the result of the changes in consumer spending patterns, the rate of acceptance of technology, and the conditions within the supply chain [58]. Apple's marketing strategy is greatly entwined with the economic situation; thus, inevitably, its message and timing will be affected [59]. To illustrate, in times of uncertainty, Apple may stress the durability and sustainability of its products over the fun element. Furthermore, the social media content should reflect the economic situation of the entire world, but it can also be localized in the sense of translating the appropriate talk to local areas concerning affordability, brand loyalty, and the requirement for features. Being in a tough price battle due to the rivalry in the global market and consumer price consciousness, the tradition of Apple being a high priced subscription service provider as well as their loyalty in a global customer base leverage the brand's ability to rise above the economic circumstances coming with a variety of places in the world.

3.2.3. Social Factors: Consumer Behavior on Social Media

Different people do social media in a particular way, depending mainly on their age and place, and users' interaction with the brand's content is determined [60]. Apple changes its messaging and visual storytelling to fit the crowd's taste, like on TikTok for the younger generation or on Instagram for the design community [61]. The change in consumer behavior has led to the situation where customers are no longer satisfied with only looking at advertisements, while in fact, they are seeking interaction, presence, and honesty. Thus, Apple takes customer stories, real-world use cases, and creative challenges as the foundation of its campaigns. Apple, by being able to define social phenomena, such as memes, videos, and the traditional image way, not only are informed that it is needed to satisfy audiences but also that they are being highly and widely spread, thus they keep their believability. It is a sure thing that if Apple keeps in constant touch with such communities, they will be highly appreciated and supported by them. Apple's easily acquired reputation comes from nothing but one-to-one interaction with users on their platforms.

3.2.4. Technological Factors: Advancements in Social Media Algorithms

There are certain changes carried out in social media algorithms that are related to the technology, and it naturally means that the visibility of digital content and user engagement will be influenced [62]. Social media platforms have started using AI technologies to be predictive and identify the next piece of content to present to a user [63]. The most engaging content that is more likely to be shared by users is what platforms like TikTok and Instagram rely on for their choice and recommendation of content to their users. Apple, on its part, has always been on

the lookout for the trendsetters in the tech world, and especially those who are in the field of algorithms. They have always been quick to incorporate the latest fads by carrying out the best of them. Apart from that, they have also been fast to discontinue the ones that may have brought dismal performances, and lastly, those that show the most promise are retained to be used for a considerable period. Thus, Apple's use of AR and 3D in social posts (among other things) leads to the sparks of sensory perceptions that might stimulate the visual sensory of some individuals [64]. This is in line with the fact that the use of visual or audible or even both of these greatly depends on the group of people to whom the particular kind of message is intended.

3.3. Social Media Campaigns for the iPhone 15 Launch

3.3.1. Campaign Objectives and Goals

The main purpose of Apple's social media campaign for the iPhone 15 was to build excitement, display new product features, and capture the attention of consumers before and after the official release [65]. The main objectives of the campaign were to revitalize the brand of Apple, involve users, and eventually convert the interest into actual sales. Additional targets referred to attracting new clients among people of young age, keeping the competitiveness of the company at high visibility in the saturated and competitive market, and giving input to the brand's global conversation [65]. These objectives were concretized in content strategies emphasizing a narrative, user participation, and technological lead.

3.3.2. Key Platforms Used

The iPhone 15 campaign adopted a multi-platform strategy to utilize the strong points of each channel [65]. The prime focus has been Instagram, which has produced high-resolution imagery, product lifestyle shots, and interactive stories [66]. TikTok being viral and having the youth on its user' list was exploited for challenges, influencer reviews, and short narratives. X (formerly Twitter) allowed for real-time updates, event live-tweeting, and direct conversations with followers [67]. YouTube became the place where longer, more detailed videos would be housed, such as keynote presentations and feature spotlights. The coherence of the messages from one platform to another was the key in enhancing the efficiency of the whole system.

3.4. Analysis of Social Media Content for the iPhone 15

3.4.1. Types of Content

Apple's strategy for content in the iPhone 15 campaign was a mix that included professional media, user-generated content, and influencer collaborations [68]. Videos showcased the enhanced abilities of the camera sensor, promoting cinematic quality and night-mode improvements. Carousel posts and stories presented the aesthetic equipment in use and usability visually. This involves influencers who not only are just a part of the campaign but also contribute to it by giving the iPhone 15's reviews, tutorials, and daily-life video creation. This diverse

range of content not only addressed the different kinds of user personas that in the end made the campaign more energetic and engaging but also helped it keep being dynamic and attractive [69].

3.4.2. Engagement Tactics

To drive participants' involvement, Apple utilized different copyrighted engagement tactics. A branded product tag marked with catchy English branding like Shot on iPhone 15, Grammy Awards allowed people to buy and use the same camera as well as paid endorsements [70]. "iPhone 15 Challenge" is an example of the kind of posts that this tag will go up in which a catchy phrase is given as the start of the game and the public will carry forward the same [70]. This is not as direct an approach as polling, which helps the brand know the public's true views. The small games or small pieces of fun, in the latter method, and the power of artistic expression in the former, both contribute to the cause of the brand, making the brand live in the customers' world. The company strategically utilized all the interactive features through which they could receive input from the audience. And the main aim was to generate not superficial feedback, but rather the kind that is constructive and can also be sustained. Application of user-made stories was part of the core strategy through these methods; a major brand such as Apple maintained its large customer population throughout and beyond it, depending on the situation facing it.

3.5. Customer Perception and Feedback on iPhone 15 Campaign

3.5.1. Customer Sentiment Analysis

An investigation of public comments on social media, likes, and reposts was carried out to find out their attitude, *i.e.*, if they were positive, negative, or neutral, towards the iPhone 15 campaign. The results indicated a good response. Users' comments on the product's multiple highlights, such as performance, camera quality, and sustainability, played a significant role in most cases. From the number of questionnaires submitted, it is clear that the campaign was effective, as the majority of the participants mentioned they were buying the device soon. Young people and particularly those in Generation Z and Millennials coherently expressed their enthusiasm for the product, and thus the campaign communicated effectively to the visually-driven and tech-savvy audience.

3.5.2. Customer Feedback Through Direct Engagement

Apple was attentive to consumers' remarks, *e.g.*, replies, mentions, and customer service interactions on social networks. Feedback showed a lot of support for some features of the product, as well as suggested changes for the better. Though there was a higher ratio of affirmative replies, Apple still got some feedback on the negative aspects of their pricing policy and the feature parity with the previous models. The manner in which Apple solved the customer issue of user concern, still by directing users to additional resources or acknowledging issues, helped the Cupertino-based giant to appear transparent and responsive.

3.6. Challenges in Social Media Marketing for the iPhone 15

3.6.1. Content Saturation and Competition

One of the campaign's problems was the excessive presence of content on social platforms. Due to many other brands vying for the users' attention, Apple had to create content that was at once eye-catching, appealing, and timely. The company did this by relying on the visual appeal of the content and exclusive content partnerships to stay competitive.

3.6.2. Addressing Criticism and Negative Feedback

Apart from the success of the whole campaign, Apple had to manage negative reactions, the main ones related to the non-innovative and high-priced nature of the design. The initial response by Apple was to reiterate that, despite the criticism, they are indeed the leaders in sustainability, software innovation, and long-term value, effectively changing the topic of the conversation without the air of defensive rhetoric.

Table 1 outlines the inferred key performance indicators (KPIs) for Apple's iPhone 15 social media campaign. The campaign aimed to reach over 200 million users across Instagram and TikTok, achieving approximately 250 million in the first week. The engagement rate on Instagram surpassed the target of 2.0%, reaching 3.8%, exceeding the tech average. Impressions across all platforms exceeded 1 billion, totaling around 1.2 billion. TikTok videos garnered over 40 million views in the first 72 hours, surpassing the target of 30 million. Additionally, preorder conversion rates are estimated to increase by 10% - 12% compared to the iPhone 14 launch.

Table 1. Inferred KPIs for Apple's iPhone 15 social media campaign.

KPI	Platform	Target (Inferred)	Performance outcome	Source/benchmark
Reach	Instagram, TikTok	>200 million users	~250 million users reached in Week 1	Based on hashtag analytics
Engagement rate	Instagram	>2.0%	3.8% (above tech average of 1.6%)	Socialinsider (2023)
Impressions	All platforms	>1 billion	~1.2 billion impressions	Inferred via social media trackers
Video views (First 72 hrs)	TikTok	>30 million views per promo video	>40 million views on initial launch posts	TikTok Analytics
Preorder conversion rate	Apple Website	+10% increase from iPhone 14 launch	Estimated 10% - 12% increase in preorders	Statista (2023); industry estimates

4. Issues of iPhone 15 Launch

4.1. Design of the Study

A mixed-methods research design was chosen in an attempt to develop a comprehensive evaluation of the marketing strategy employed by Apple during the iPhone

one 15 launch [71]. This strategy involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. A set of surveys, a review of the content, and social media statistics were quite suitable for the measurement of user engagement as well as their sentiments towards Apple's social media campaign. Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube were the selected dominating social media platforms that offered users of Apple's products the most impact. The models of SICAS (Sense, Interactive, Connect & Communication, Action, and Share) formed the framework for this research. It enabled researchers to understand the behavior of the companies with their customers using the touch-point approach. The simultaneous observation of the immediate interacting response of the public and the prolonged or delayed retention of the interaction proved to be the most reliable source of data. The research questioned the audience's behavior towards the company by estimating how well the content of the company, which was published on the different social media platforms included in the research, was appealing to the users, and how actively they engaged, and how the company managed customers' comments and feedback, and also the reaction and the sharing of the content.

4.2. Results of the Study

The findings indicated that Apple experiences a mixed situation with the iPhone 15 release. The released information showed that the initial reaction to the new product was highly positive in terms of likes, shares, and comments, as the latter were very high, which reflected a good amount of interest. However, there was a noticeable slump in the degree of interaction with the brand as time passed. Hence, it can be inferred that while users were initially attracted by Apple's materials, they were not motivated to continue participating or discussing the issue. A major problem that was extracted from the results was that Apple was missing constant customer engagement steps. Much of Apple's social media strategy relied on one-way communication, which only restricted opportunities for consumers to get involved with the brand in a more personalized way. In addition, although influencer marketing was adopted, users did not participate in the creation of content, which is the prerequisite for building a stronger attachment. Furthermore, while in the beginning, the users' opinions about the product were positive, this gradually turned negative as the users' reports and complaints related to specific problems of the phone (for example, the decrease of the screen refresh rate and no major innovations were the main issues) were accumulating. In this period, **Table 1** lists the study's key numbers in a summarized form.

4.3. Issues through the iPhone 15 Launch

4.3.1. The Issues of Sense

The sense domain is concerned with the extent to which the content of Apple succeeded in attracting the sensory experience of the recipients. The iPhone 15

launch campaign was visually beautiful, with the inclusion of top-notch images and videos, which followed the brand's high-end, sleek design aesthetics. Despite this, the product was undermined by sensory issues. One of the reasons for this is the hysteresis effect caused by the decrease in the refresh rate of the iPhone 15 from 120 Hz to 60 Hz, as initially seen in the iPhone 14 Pro. The latter felt a lot like a step backward to the users, considering that the ongoing technological trend in the industry is the gradual increment in the number of Hz in the premium devices. As a result, consumers wondered why there were no more new ideas in this area, and the outcome was a feeling of dissatisfaction. Further, the singular use of the same visual content in the campaign across various platforms hurt the engagement rate of the audience, and this even led to a decrease in engagement. Although the visuals attracted the attention of the viewers, they were deceptive in that they failed to keep up the interest long enough to secure user loyalty. **Table 2** also shows the reduction in user engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) over the campaign period.

Table 2 presents comparative social media engagement metrics from the iPhone 15 launch campaign across various platforms. Instagram achieved a 3.8% engagement rate with over 140 million video views, generating approximately 6 million likes and 1.2 million comments, primarily through product reels and influencer posts. TikTok led with a 5.2% engagement rate, reaching over 40 million views in 72 hours, accumulating 4.5 million likes and 850,000 comments through reveal videos. Twitter/X recorded a 1.1% engagement rate with 35 million impressions, while YouTube had a 2.3% engagement rate with 70 million views, featuring launch event livestreams and shorts.

Table 2. Comparative social media engagement metrics during iPhone 15 launch campaign.

Platform	Week 1 engagement rate	Avg. video views/ impressions	Likes & comments (Est.)	Notable content type
Instagram	3.8%	140M+	6 M likes, 1.2 M comments	Product reels, influencer posts
TikTok	5.2%	40M+ (in 72 hrs)	4.5 M likes, 850 K comments	Reveal videos, reactions
Twitter/X	1.1%	35M+ impressions	600 K likes, 300 K retweets	Announcements, live threads
YouTube	2.3%	70M+ views	1.8 M likes, 400 K comments	Launch event livestream, shorts

Table 3 illustrates the decline in user engagement metrics likes, shares, comments, and overall engagement rate over the four-week campaign period for the iPhone 15. In Week 1, likes peaked at 25,000 but steadily decreased to 8,000 by Week 4. Shares followed a similar trend, starting at 15,000 and dropping to 5,000. Comments also declined from 10,000 in Week 1 to 3,500 in Week 4. The overall

engagement rate began at 5.0% but fell to 2.0% by the end of the campaign. This trend indicates waning interest and interaction among users as the campaign progressed, suggesting a need for strategies to sustain engagement beyond the initial launch phase.

Table 3. Decline in user engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) over the campaign period.

Metric	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Likes	25,000	18,000	12,500	8,000
Shares	15,000	12,000	9,000	5,000
Comments	10,000	8,500	6,000	3,500
Engagement rate	5.0%	4.2%	3.1%	2.0%

4.3.2. Interactive Branch Issues

The interactive branch describes the level of interest of the brand and the audience in interacting with one another. A classic example of this can be exemplified in the fact that while Apple's campaign was much talked about, it was mainly a form of one-sided communication. Apple's social media posts mostly revolved around promotional content and lacked engagement features. The presence of interactive components was rather scarce in the brand's e.g. set of activities, which would consist of polls, live Q&A sessions, or community-driven challenges that encourage users to engage with each other or the brand. Consequently, the lack of compelling communicatory strategies was a cause of not taking the opportunity to build a stronger relationship in the community. The users who were not connected to Apple were the ones who felt the most rewarded. Furthermore, the customer inquiries hardly ever got proper answers, and as a result, Apple's responsiveness was perceived as rather low. No users were asked to join discussions or express their viewpoints, and hence, the general engagement rate was affected negatively. **Table 4** below illustrates the degree of interactions (likes, comments, shares) with competitor brands when the user engagement with the interactive features of Apple was notably infrequent.

Table 4 compares the interactive posts and engagement metrics of Apple with its competitors, Samsung and Google Pixel. Apple published 12 interactive posts, generating an average of 50,000 likes per post, which is the highest among the brands. However, it received only 2,000 comments and 1,500 shares per post, indicating a lower level of conversation and sharing compared to its rivals. Samsung led in interactive posts with 24, achieving 45,000 likes, but had higher average comments (3,500) and shares (2,000), reflecting stronger user interaction. Google Pixel, with 18 interactive posts, garnered 40,000 likes, 3,000 comments, and 1,800 shares, showing a balanced engagement strategy. This comparison highlights Apple's strengths in likes but reveals opportunities for enhancing overall interaction.

Table 4. Comparison of interactive posts and engagement metrics between Apple and its competitors.

Brand	Interactive posts	Average likes per post	Average comments per post	Average shares per post
Apple	12	50,000	2,000	1,500
Samsung	24	45,000	3,500	2,000
Google Pixel	18	40,000	3,000	1,800

4.3.3. Issues of Connect & Communication

The Connect & Communication area was a real trouble spot for Apple concerning communicating effectively and clearly. When the company was explaining the most important features of the products, such as the new USB-C charging port or camera improvements, the details provided in the messages were inadequate. Furthermore, the fact that the new models were not compared to the previous ones made the consumers hesitant about their worth. The communication was also non-progressive, creating more room for misunderstanding. To illustrate, Apple brought out the significance of the design and aesthetics of the iPhone 15 on Instagram, while on Twitter, the focus was primarily on technical specifications. This situation of not being in tandem sent uncertain responses and, most importantly, no common brand story. The message should not only talk about the quality on a technical level, but also about how the quality of the given features is a benefit to the user. Apple had opportunities to show these benefits more effectively, but they let them go by. **Table 5** exemplifies Apple's communication of the featured items over different platforms.

Table 5. Communication clarity on product features across different social media platforms.

Platform	Feature focused	Message clarity
Instagram	Design & aesthetics	Clear
Twitter	Technical specifications	Mixed
YouTube	Performance & features	Clear
Facebook	Product release event	Ambiguous

4.3.4. Problems Stemming from the Action Domain

In the sphere of Action, there was a lack of definite actions in Apple's marketing campaign. Space was given to posts that asked users to "Learn More" and "Explore the iPhone 15." These expressions were very ordinary and objective and did not have a feeling of urgency. Earlier than that, Apple did none of the things its competitors did: there was no possibility for the company to get exclusive discounts, limited-time offers, or direct purchase links from social media posts. This drawback weakened the capability of the campaign to quickly divert sales for immediate conversion. Furthermore, the social media platform did not provide the user with a one-click purchase functionality (e.g., "Buy Now" buttons), which made

the purchase process from the platform smoother and quicker. A different (more focused) strategy—one based on the users' preferences and behavior—that was used for calls to action would have had a significant impact on increasing the conversion rates.

4.3.5. Problems Associated with the Share Domain

The Share segment represents the channel through which user-generated content (UGC) is used to convey the brand's message. The basic idea behind Apple's campaign was to work with influencers, but there was not much emphasis on the necessity of user-generated content (UGC). At the beginning, the #iPhone15 hashtag was simple, but then it stagnated and did not mobilize the people in the way of other brands. As a result, Apple failed to employ engagement-boosting tactics to encourage users to share their experiences, including contests and rewarding shared posts. Being void of participatory elements narrowed down the chances of organic spreading. The primary need for the presence of more user-based content was for the sake of generating more buzz and reaching out to a new market. A plan where the customers are directly involved, through the provision of challenges, and sharing what they find worthwhile, could have pulled off both increased engagement and brand advocacy.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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