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Social Media Marketing and Customer Engagement: Case Study of Swiggy - An Evidence-Based Analysis of Campaign Engagement, Measurement and Marketing Effectiveness

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1. INTRODUCTION

Swiggy is a technology platform company based in India that delivers food and other convenience services. Swiggy's social media marketing makes for a relevant case study in understanding how creative interaction can help facilitate participation and raise brand awareness. The primary case that will be covered in this paper is Swiggy's "Voice of Hunger" campaign on Instagram that was made in collaboration with Dentsu Webchutney.

The case study will be conducted using various published sources on the campaign in addition to some academic and corporate literature. Although agency and award entry reports have valuable information about the campaign, they do not make up for the absence of a formal audit in terms of sales growth and profit improvement. In consequence, reported campaign performance metrics are presented here as outcomes rather than causes.

2. CENTRAL MARKETING PROBLEM

Swiggy's marketing problem was how it could create awareness and engage actively with its brand, when there is already plenty of competition in the food delivery space where customers can easily compare various options. The recorded campaign brief attempted to give a boost to the brand among the younger audience and gain more followers on Instagram (ICMR, 2020).

The task was not just about getting likes. Swiggy had to create an awareness for its brand and get its customers involved without putting them under any obligations, in order to find out if this created engagement would result in anything useful, such as app visitation, first order placement, repeat business, etc. There is public information on participation, reach and gains in number of followers, but this is not enough to prove anything else.

3. OBJECTIVES

This case study has three objectives:

1. To analyse how Swiggy's interactive social media campaign attracted attention and encouraged customer engagement.
2. To evaluate the campaign through marketing frameworks and distinguish engagement indicators from acquisition, conversion and financial outcomes.
3. To identify the limitations of social-first marketing and recommend measurement practices that can improve future campaign effectiveness.

4. CASE BACKGROUND AND CAMPAIGN EXECUTION

4.1 The "Voice of Hunger" campaign

The campaign used Instagram's voice-note feature as the creative mechanism. Users were encouraged to record sounds whose visual waveforms resembled food items, then submit their creations. Dentsu reports that the campaign involved more than 100 comedians, musicians, rappers, actors and DJs, alongside real-time brand responses and content partnerships. It also reports more than 16 million social impressions and over 150,000 voice notes.

The creative idea connected the product category to the platform's native functionality: food was represented through sound, and users became participants rather than only viewers. This design reduced the distance between the campaign concept and the action

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required from the audience. However, participation should not be treated as equivalent to a purchase; users could take part because the challenge was entertaining without becoming customers.

4.2 Cultural relevance and creator participation

The campaign report describes creator involvement and real-time replies, both of which helped extend the idea beyond a conventional paid advertisement. Such tactics can increase social sharing and earned exposure. Nevertheless, the available evidence does not establish that all Swiggy social posts use a formal real-time response team or that local micro-influencers consistently outperform celebrity partnerships. These broader claims should be tested campaign by campaign rather than assumed.

4.3 Evidence boundary

This case uses "Voice of Hunger" as the primary documented example. Swiggy's own article on Smart Links provides a separate example of efforts to connect social discovery with restaurant menus and orders. Swiggy reports that Smart Links had driven more than four million menu sessions for 35,000 partners and that 58% of Smart Links orders came from new users; these are company-reported figures and relate to a product feature for restaurant partners, not proof of the sales impact of the "Voice of Hunger" campaign (Maloo, 2024).

5. QUANTITATIVE CLAIMS: VERIFICATION AND TREATMENT

The original submission included six prominent quantitative claims. The table below distinguishes what is supported by a traceable campaign source from what should be removed unless a primary source, reporting period and calculation method can be supplied.

Claim in original draft	Verification status	Treatment in this revision
150,000 DMs / voice notes	Supported in campaign reports as over 150,000 voice notes. Dentsu and The One Club describe voice notes; "DMs" is less precise.	Retain as "over 150,000 voice notes," attributed to Dentsu. Do not imply these were 150,000 unique customers.
7,700% increase in organic reach	Dentsu reports a 7,700% increase in Instagram reach. The One Club version describes a 7,700% increase in Instagram traffic, so the metric label is inconsistent across campaign reports.	Retain cautiously as agency-reported reach growth, noting the reporting-source discrepancy and absence of baseline/period details in the public summary.
40% follower growth	Dentsu reports a 40% rise in Instagram followers during the campaign and 40,000+ new users aged 18–35 joining the Instagram community.	Retain as a reported campaign-period metric, not as a verified long-term retention outcome.
24% increase in dessert orders	No credible primary source identified for this specific claim.	Remove.
30% reduction in CPI	No credible primary source identified for this specific claim.	Remove.
17% increase in app downloads	No credible primary source identified for this specific claim.	Remove.

The public agency material does not provide the complete baseline values, exact measurement windows, platform analytics export, cost data or independent verification needed to reproduce all reported percentages. Therefore, the 150,000 voice-note figure and campaign reach/follower figures should be described as campaign-reported results, not independently audited outcomes (Dentsu, n.d.; The One Club, n.d.). The original claims about dessert orders, cost per install (CPI) and app downloads have been excluded because a traceable source was not located.

Metrics must also be kept conceptually separate. Impressions count displays, reach estimates unique accounts exposed, voice notes indicate participation, followers indicate audience growth, app installs indicate downloads, and orders indicate transactions.

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None of these alone establishes incremental profit. A causal sales claim would require a suitable attribution or experimental design and controls for other influences such as discounts, seasonality, paid advertising, competitor activity and organic demand.

6. ANALYSIS USING DIGITAL MARKETING FRAMEWORKS

6.1 AIDA: Attention, Interest, Desire and Action

AIDA stage	Application to the campaign	What the evidence can establish
Attention	An unusual use of Instagram voice notes created a distinctive creative hook.	Reported impressions and reach indicate exposure, subject to the source's measurement definitions.
Interest	The waveform challenge invited users to experiment and share their attempts.	More than 150,000 voice notes are reported; this is a participation indicator.
Desire	Food-related play and the possibility of food vouchers may have increased positive associations with the brand.	The available public reporting does not provide a validated measure of purchase intent or brand preference lift.
Action	Users submitted voice notes and could engage with Swiggy's social account.	Voice-note submissions are a campaign action, but they are not equivalent to app installs, first orders or repeat purchases.

The AIDA framework helps organise the campaign journey, but it should not be interpreted as proof that every user moved through all four stages or that social engagement necessarily led to purchase. A stronger evaluation would measure drop-off between exposure, participation, click-through, app activity and completed orders (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022).

6.2 Customer engagement

Customer engagement includes more than a passive view: it can involve cognitive attention, emotional responses and observable participation or sharing. The "Voice of Hunger" format created an opportunity for active participation and user-generated content, consistent with research that treats engagement as an interactive, context-dependent process (Brodie et al., 2011). However, high participation does not automatically indicate trust, loyalty or customer profitability. Follow-up surveys, repeat-purchase cohorts and retention measures would be needed to evaluate those outcomes.

6.3 Consumer decision-making

The campaign may contribute to need recognition and information exposure by associating Swiggy with food and entertainment. It can also support brand recall through repeated social exposure. Yet food-delivery choices are likely to depend on additional factors, including restaurant availability, delivery time, price, service reliability, fees and prior experience. The case does not provide evidence isolating social media from these factors. Social content should therefore be treated as one influence within a wider decision process, rather than as the sole driver of an order.

6.4 Customer acquisition cost (CAC)

Customer acquisition cost is commonly calculated by dividing acquisition-related expenditure by the number of new customers acquired in the defined period (Davis, 2012). For a social campaign, the cost definition should include relevant creative production, agency fees, creator payments, media spend, incentives and measurement costs. The

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denominator should be verified new customers, not impressions, followers or app installs. Since no complete cost and new-customer dataset is available for "Voice of Hunger," this case cannot conclude that the campaign reduced CAC.

6.5 Return on marketing investment (ROMI)

ROMI evaluates the incremental contribution attributable to marketing relative to the marketing investment. A practical form is: ROMI = (incremental contribution profit attributable to the campaign − campaign cost) ÷ campaign cost × 100. This calculation requires an estimate of incremental contribution, not just gross revenue or engagement. Marketing response can vary by spend level and may be affected by other campaigns, making simple comparisons unreliable (Hanssens, 2007; Hanssens, 2024). The public campaign reports do not provide the financial data needed to calculate ROMI for "Voice of Hunger."

7. CRITICAL EVALUATION: BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

Strategy	Potential benefit	Limitations and risks	Recommended control
Meme and culturally relevant content	Can make the brand appear timely, accessible and distinctive.	Humour can age quickly, be misunderstood across audiences or appear opportunistic; engagement may not reflect purchase intent.	Use brand-safety checks, audience testing and a clear connection to the brand proposition.
Interactive/viral campaigns	Encourage active participation and earned sharing.	Virality is unpredictable; platform rules, moderation issues or a negative response can interrupt the campaign.	Prepare escalation protocols and assess sentiment and qualified traffic as well as reach.
Influencer and creator partnerships	Can offer contextual demonstrations and access to relevant communities.	Audience fit, fake engagement, disclosure failures and creator reputational risk can weaken trust.	Vet audience quality, require clear paid-partnership disclosures and use tracked links/codes.
Organic reach	May extend distribution without paying for every impression.	Reach depends on platform algorithms and can decline without notice; content production and community management still cost money.	Model organic and paid distribution together; avoid assuming reach will remain free or stable.
Social-to-app conversion	Clickable links can reduce friction between discovery and browsing.	Clicks or installs may not produce completed orders; attribution may be affected by cross-device behaviour and other channels.	Use tagged links, app-event tracking, cohort analysis and controlled lift tests.

Overall, Swiggy's campaign illustrates a strong creative mechanism for earning participation. Its limitations are mainly evidential and operational: the available public sources do not show incremental orders or profitability, and social-first tactics can be vulnerable to rapid trend changes, algorithm changes and reputation risk. These constraints do not negate the campaign's engagement results; they limit the conclusions that can be drawn from them.

8. Traditional Advertising and Social-First Marketing: A Balanced Comparison

Dimension	Traditional advertising (e.g., TV, print, outdoor, radio)	Social-first marketing	Objective interpretation
Reach	Can deliver broad, planned reach, including audiences less active on social platforms.	Can reach large audiences and specific communities; organic distribution is less predictable.	Choice depends on target audience, geography, budget and campaign objective.
Targeting	Often broad or based on location, programme,	Can use platform targeting, creator communities and	Social targeting may be more granular, but targeting precision and

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	publication or audience research.	behavioural signals, subject to platform policies.	data quality must be verified.
Interaction	Usually limited immediate two-way interaction.	Supports comments, shares, direct responses and user-generated content.	Social is better suited to observable interaction; traditional media can still build awareness and legitimacy.
Measurement	Uses reach estimates, surveys, brand-lift studies, response codes and sales analysis.	Can provide platform metrics, tracked clicks and app events, but attribution remains imperfect.	Neither channel guarantees causal sales attribution; use consistent outcome definitions.
Cost structure	May involve substantial production and placement costs; cost per reach can be efficient at scale.	Can start with lower distribution costs, but quality content, creators, moderation and paid amplification require investment.	Do not assume social is always cheaper; compare total cost per incremental customer.
Speed and lifespan	Often requires longer planning; placements may provide sustained exposure.	Can respond quickly to cultural moments; posts can also lose relevance quickly.	Use social for timely participation and traditional media when planned scale or continuity is valuable.
Risks	Limited interaction and potential waste when broad audiences are poorly matched.	Algorithm dependence, public backlash, platform changes and brand-safety concerns.	Risk profiles differ; integrated planning and measurement are preferable to declaring one channel universally superior.

This comparison is conceptual rather than a claim that one channel is universally more effective. Outcomes depend on execution, audience, product, spend, timing and measurement design. Swiggy's case supports the usefulness of interactive social creative for engagement; it does not prove that traditional advertising is generally inefficient or that social-first campaigns always produce lower acquisition costs.

9. Findings and Recommendations

9.1 Findings

- The "Voice of Hunger" campaign used a platform-native feature to turn an advertisement into a participatory activity, which is a plausible explanation for its reported volume of voice-note submissions.
- Campaign sources report more than 150,000 voice notes, a 7,700% increase in Instagram reach and a 40% rise in followers. These are agency/award-entry figures and should be interpreted with their source limitations.
- The evidence supports a conclusion about attention and participation more strongly than it supports claims about new paying customers, repeat orders, CAC or ROMI.
- The original claims of a 24% increase in dessert orders, 30% lower CPI and 17% higher app downloads could not be verified from credible primary sources and have been removed.
- A balanced channel strategy is more defensible than treating social media as a universal replacement for traditional advertising.

9.2 Recommendations

Recommendation	Implementation	Success measures
Build a full-funnel measurement plan	Define awareness, engagement, traffic, acquisition, first order and repeat order before launch. Set a baseline and reporting window.	Reach, participation rate, qualified click-through rate, install-to-order rate, first orders and repeat-order rate.
Use controlled incrementality tests	Where feasible, compare eligible exposed and holdout audiences or matched geographic groups; control for discounts and seasonality.	Incremental orders and contribution margin, with uncertainty reported.

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Calculate CAC and ROMI consistently	Include production, creator, agency, media and incentive costs. Use verified new customers and incremental contribution profit.	CAC by channel/cohort; ROMI based on incremental contribution rather than engagement alone.
Track social-to-app journeys	Use tagged links, campaign identifiers and app analytics; distinguish installs from registrations and completed orders.	Landing-page sessions, installs, registration completion, first purchase and repeat purchase.
Strengthen creator governance	Assess creator-audience fit, engagement quality, disclosure, content rights and brand safety.	Qualified reach, cost per engaged target user, tracked conversions and sentiment.
Manage algorithm and reputation risk	Maintain a diversified channel mix, content calendar, moderation guidance and escalation plan.	Reach volatility, response time, negative sentiment and campaign interruption incidents.
Report limitations transparently	Label figures as company/agency reported, disclose periods and definitions, and document any missing baselines.	Reproducible reporting with source, formula, time window and owner for each KPI.

10. CONCLUSION

Swiggy's "Voice of Hunger" campaign provides a documented example of how a platform-native, interactive idea can encourage user participation and expand social visibility. Published campaign reports attribute more than 150,000 voice notes, a 7,700% increase in Instagram reach and 40% follower growth to the campaign These figures suggest that the creative format generated substantial engagement, although the public reports do not provide all baselines and measurement details needed for independent reproduction.

The case does not establish that the campaign caused a 24% increase in orders, reduced CPI by 30%, increased app downloads by 17%, or generated a positive ROMI. Those claims require verifiable source data and an attribution method capable of estimating incremental outcomes. The main lesson is therefore specific: interactive social media can be a useful mechanism for earning attention and participation, but its commercial effectiveness must be assessed through reliable conversion, cost and incrementality measures. Swiggy's experience should not be generalised to every brand or market without considering audience, category, execution and evidence.

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