

# Economic Affairs

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Review Paper

# Use of Social Media Platforms as a Key Element of Brand Marketing Strategies

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## ABSTRACT

This article delves into the exploration of social media platforms as crucial components of brand marketing strategies. It characterizes the essence of social media platforms, emphasizing the significance of social networks within this context. The primary objectives of brand strategies, specifically those deployed on social media, are explicated. Contemporary brand strategies employed on social media platforms are elucidated. The study also scrutinizes the distinct features of brand marketing strategies utilized for positioning within social networks. This research aims to unveil the intricacies surrounding the utilization of social media platforms as pivotal elements within brand marketing strategies. The object of this study centers on social media platforms functioning as integral components of the virtual environment. The research employs various methodologies, including description, analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, and content analysis, to achieve comprehensive insights into the subject matter. This article focuses on the examination of social media platforms as vital elements within brand marketing strategies. To fulfill the objectives of this study, an exploration is conducted on the role of social media platforms in individuals' lives, encompassing the essence of social networks and the positioning of brand promotion within their life cycle. Additionally, the article characterizes the business opportunities arising from the integration of social media platforms as components of marketing strategies. This paper provides an in-depth examination of the advantages and disadvantages associated with leveraging social media platforms for brand promotion. It defines contemporary strategies adopted by brands on social media platforms. Additionally, the research sheds light on the pivotal role of targeting within the realm of brand promotion.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- This article delves into the exploration of social media platforms as crucial components of brand marketing strategies.
- The primary objectives of brand strategies, specifically those deployed on social media, are explicated.
- This article focuses on the examination of social media platforms as vital elements within brand marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** Brand, visitor, Instagram, user, marketing, promotion, social media platform, social network, strategy, Facebook

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Amidst the escalating competitive landscape, the imperative to foster the growth of each brand has become increasingly pronounced. Consequently, manufacturers are actively seeking to captivate consumer interest through novel product attributes, appealing designs, enhanced functionalities, and competitive pricing. These endeavors not only enable them to sustain desired profit margins but also facilitate the expansion of their arsenal of potential tools. To attain the desired outcome, diverse marketing channels are employed, including outdoor advertising components, print media advertisements, radio, and television commercials. Such multi-faceted approaches amplify the brand's outreach to a substantial consumer base and aid in accomplishing the desired objectives.

Nevertheless, in pursuit of efficient brand promotion, an increasing number of manufacturers are turning to social media platforms as the most effective means to establish their market positioning, introduce new products to potential consumers, cultivate brand identity, boost revenue, and broaden their target audience. Consequently, deploying marketing tools on social media platforms enables the formation of distinct consumer perceptions about the brand and facilitates product promotion across diverse segments of the population. However, it is noteworthy that the strengths and weaknesses of brand strategies executed through social media platforms have been subject to only indirect scrutiny, underscoring the significance of this topic for further investigation.

The primary goal of this paper is to elucidate the intricacies surrounding the utilization of social media platforms as pivotal elements within brand marketing strategies. This goal is spurred by the escalating significance of social media platforms in the lives of individuals and their impact on the economic landscape of the country. Consequently, the intensifying competition compels an increasing number of companies to adopt social media platforms as a highly effective communication channel for promoting their brands (Ostapenko *et al.* 2020; Kovaleva *et al.* 2020).

The utilization of social media platforms as a pivotal element in brand marketing strategies has been the subject of investigation by various domestic researchers. A noticeable surge in interest in this topic occurred after 2015, as social media

platforms evolved beyond mere communication tools and gained recognition as potent instruments for e-business and trade. Notably, the scholarly works of T. Ivanyukha (2017), K. Larina (2020), K. Lyubchyk (2019), O. Rybina (2020), and O. Yarmolyuk (2020) have distinctly contributed to this area of study. These researchers assert that social media platforms harbor significant potential to promote nearly any brand effectively.

In her article titled «Media Platform as a New Trend in Trade Development,» researcher K. Lyubchyk (2019) highlights that modern brands employ multiple development strategies on social media platforms (Lyubchyk, 2019). Notably, the prevalent approach involves establishing an online store, wherein the brand disseminates a substantial volume of content on its dedicated social media page. This content encompasses diverse media formats such as photos and videos of products, model ranges, product characteristics, and descriptions, as well as information on payment and delivery methods. Moreover, the convenience of payment transactions is enhanced, often enabled through special links that eliminate the need for entering detailed payment information. Cumulatively, these strategies significantly contribute to brand development. Concurrently, complementary strategies like online insurance and digital banking are also employed in tandem.

In her article titled «The Power of 'Likes': The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer Acquisition,» scientist O. Rybina (2020) posits that brand marketing strategies on social media platforms constitute meticulously planned systems of steps, which, predicated upon product characteristics, facilitate the attraction of a broad spectrum of potential buyers (Rybina, 2020). Concurrently, in the contemporary context, this feat can be achieved across numerous social networks, provided that the brand identifies platforms where the age group of potential consumers predominantly resides. Furthermore, the brand must recognize the importance of aligning the content with user preferences, thereby fostering a sense of motivation to purchase the brand's products. To this end, the content should address current topics and present solutions that align with the manufacturer's product offerings.

Based on the analysis of existing literature, it can be asserted that the utilization of social media



platforms as a fundamental component of brand marketing strategies remains a pertinent topic. However, the research in this area is still relatively limited, leaving ample room for further exploration. Notably, a recurring point of contention among researchers revolves around the effectiveness and reliability of social media advertising.

**Research objectives.** Aligned with the purpose of this study, the following objectives have been delineated:

- ♦ To characterize the primary objectives of brand strategies employed in social media promotion.
- ♦ To identify contemporary brand strategies prevalent on social media platforms.
- ♦ To unveil the existing strategies adopted by Ukrainian brands within social media platforms.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed the following research methods: description, analysis and synthesis, comparison, generalization, and content analysis. The description method was applied to ascertain the fundamental essence of brand marketing strategies. The method of analysis and synthesis was utilized to identify the principal strategies adopted by brands on social media platforms. To compare the existing marketing strategies of Ukrainian brands in social media, the method of comparison was employed. Lastly, the method of generalization was employed to summarize the research findings.

The content analysis serves as a method employed to identify brand strategies through a comprehensive examination of their social media pages. This method facilitates the formation of an understanding of the most effective approaches for brand promotion. By employing content analysis, one can discern the composition of the page content, encompassing textual elements, photos, videos, and their influence on the overall brand image.

## RESULTS

In the present phase of information society development, social media platforms have garnered substantial attention due to their significant impact on diverse societal processes. This heightened interest is primarily attributed to the user-friendly

nature of these platforms, their extensive user base, and the array of tools available to visitors for promoting their pages, consequently influencing individuals' perspectives on various aspects. Consequently, social media platforms are widely utilized for social interactions, dissemination of vital news to the public, and reporting on emergencies. Remarkably, the user demographic has evolved, where in the past, predominantly young people used such services, whereas presently, individuals of all age groups, including children and older adults, are increasingly embracing these platforms (Girchenko, Kossmann, 2019).

It is essential to acknowledge that social media platforms encompass a broad array of systems operating in the virtual realm, enabling communication and data exchange among a large number of individuals. This entails not only traditional social networks, which are commonly associated with social media platforms, but also video hosting platforms, streaming services, online blogs, forums, photo-sharing platforms, geolocation services, podcasts, groups, and communities. In essence, these services facilitate the convergence and communication of people from diverse social statuses, age groups, and appearances. Social media platforms may serve a specific purpose, catering to communication-related to particular topics (e.g., discussions on specific events, artist fan clubs, or specialized themes), or they may have a more general objective of facilitating communication on a wide range of topics, fostering the exchange of information of various natures. Consequently, these platforms significantly influence the nature of communication, providing options for conventional text-based exchanges, as well as video conferences (Smith, 2020).

Consequently, the substantial influence wielded by social media platforms has rendered them actively instrumental in the realm of trade, particularly within the domain of e-commerce. This observation underscores the profound impact of social media platforms on consumers, as compelling images and videos possess the capacity to cultivate a positive perception of products among potential buyers. As a result, contemporary businesses are fervently embracing social media platforms as a means to showcase their brands, concurrently formulating

comprehensive strategies to achieve this objective (Larina, 2020).

Social media platforms offer significant value to businesses, enabling them to effectively promote their brands to geographically dispersed consumers and facilitate the identification of timely partnerships that contribute to business growth. Consequently, these platforms have been instrumental in the emergence of social media marketing as an integral component of brand marketing strategies. Within this domain, a brand harnesses marketing tools within the context of social media platforms to promote its products. This approach incorporates digital technologies and fosters personal communication with potential consumers, enhancing the effectiveness of brand promotion (Yarmolyuk, 2020).

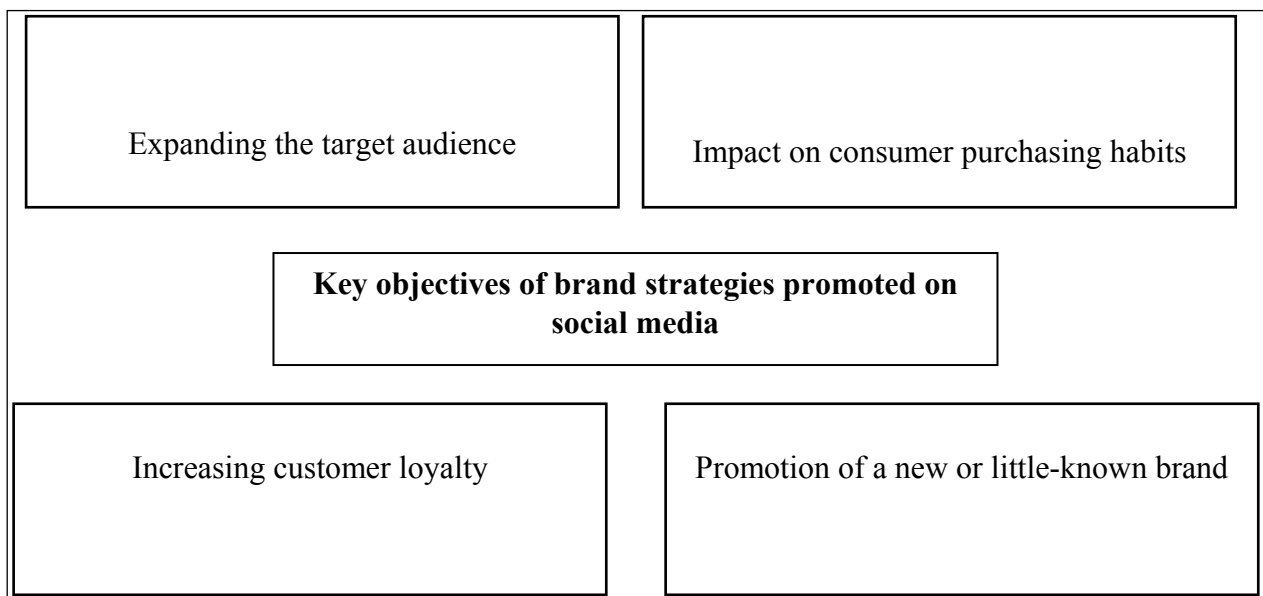
The advantage of utilizing social media platforms lies in the elimination of physical contact requirements. The entire process of brand promotion and sales occurs solely through virtual tools within the Internet space, enabling buyers to conveniently access comprehensive product information without the need to invest time in product selection or inquiry. Photo and video content, reviews, statistics, and information about quality systems, when viewed by users, significantly influence their perceptions. As a result, users develop a growing interest in the brand and cultivate a positive attitude toward the brand and its products. This aspect gains particular importance when manufacturers

introduce new brands and seek to expand their audience, not only ensuring awareness but also stimulating purchase intentions (Savytska, 2017).

Overall, the utilization of social media platforms, with social networks assuming a dominant role among them, signifies a persistent trend in brand promotion over recent years. This can be attributed to the favorable outcomes brands attain through these platforms, despite the considerable costs associated with their maintenance and the integration of marketing tools. Compared to traditional communication and promotion channels, social media platforms enable brands to yield higher profits and attain their objectives more expeditiously. This can be attributed to the platforms' broader audience reach and the availability of diverse marketing instruments for effective influence (Rybina, 2020).

Simultaneously, the analysis reveals several principal objectives characterizing brand strategies employed in social media promotion, as depicted in Fig. 1.

The process of expanding the target audience entails projecting brand attributes that would captivate potential consumers and evoke interest in the product, thereby augmenting the number of consumers actively engaged with the product. Social media platforms play a pivotal role in facilitating this endeavor, as individuals exposed to advertisements or page content tend to follow



**Fig. 1:** Principal objectives characterizing brand strategies employed in social media promotion

product-related updates, subsequently heightening the likelihood of their purchase intent. Achieving this objective involves diverse strategies, such as publishing advertisements and maintaining brand pages with engaging photos and videos, organizing promotions and sweepstakes on social media platforms (Tatomyr, 2021).

The influence on consumer purchasing habits is exemplified by how brands utilize social media platforms to alter users' perceptions of a specific product within the virtual space. This is particularly relevant for brands that may have faced negative reputations due to issues such as producing low-quality goods or delivering products that differ from their descriptions. Consequently, brands can leverage social media platforms to shape users' opinions, portraying themselves as reliable and trustworthy entities, while asserting that any adverse incidents do not implicate their products as a whole. This can be achieved through active management of a brand page with an abundance of photos and posts, along with the publication of consumer reviews and interviews with industry experts (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, Algharabat, 2017).

Enhancing customer loyalty entails fostering positive attitudes toward products. Consumers' decisions to purchase a product can be influenced by factors

such as pricing or a company's values. Therefore, adjusting pricing or revising the company's policies in specific aspects can lead to improved brand perception. Social media platforms provide a platform to achieve this objective by populating brand pages with compelling content and featuring celebrity endorsements that promote the brand (Rosário, 2023).

Market segmentation refers to the process of categorizing consumers within the market into distinct groups, or segments, based on shared or similar needs that are addressed by specific marketing strategies (Alkire, Pohlmann, Barnett, 2019). Social networks offer convenient tools for facilitating this process, as users can easily set specific parameters such as age range and geographic location in their search queries, enabling targeted audience selection. Furthermore, social media platforms provide enhanced feedback mechanisms, allowing businesses to gather valuable insights and opinions from their audience (Alrousan, Al-Adwan, Al-Madadha, Al Khasawneh, 2020).

It is noteworthy that brands have the option to adopt multiple strategies for brand promotion on social media platforms concurrently (Lyubchik, 2019). This aspect is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Modern brand strategies in social media platforms

Sl. No.	The strategy	Strategy characteristics
1	Active management of the brand's page on social networks	The brand consistently populates its website with captivating and premium content, inclusive of engaging photos, videos, and updates on its operations. The information is regularly updated, and new content is consistently published.
2	Virtual store	The page comprehensively encompasses all pertinent information about the brand, effectively rendering the brand engaged in virtual commerce, as it offers details about the product, pricing, and model range, supplemented with relevant photos and videos.
3	Digital banking	The brand provides its customers with diverse payment options for purchasing goods, which encompass a range of electronic payment methods.
4	Virtual logistics	The brand offers consumers access to trackers that facilitate the monitoring of the delivery route of goods, concurrently enabling the system to calculate the associated cost and delivery speed.
5	Online insurance	The brand assures the security of users' funds and provides refunds in the event of force majeure circumstances.
6	QR codes	The brand employs QR codes for product information dissemination and payment processing.
7	Cloud technologies	All data is stored on diverse virtual services, enabling the brand to furnish users with comprehensive information about any facet of its business operations.

In general, each brand exercises autonomy in selecting its strategy, which it perceives to be the most effective. Prominent strategies frequently encompass content-rich brand page management, facilitating digital payments, and establishing a virtual store. Brands frequently concentrate on leveraging the technological capabilities of their pages to attract a wider audience. Additionally, they often disclose information that other brands might conceal, publicly demonstrating their commitment to consumer loyalty. Concurrently, brands on social media platforms frequently conduct promotions and sweepstakes to stimulate consumer interest in their products (Widenmaier & Fill, 2018).

It is noteworthy that communication and the attraction of new consumers represent widely adopted tools for brand promotion on social media platforms. Communication entails the continual updating of brand information and the solicitation of feedback from consumers. For instance, a food brand might post about a new product and inquire about consumers' recipe ideas for using this product. The brand could subsequently publish the most intriguing responses on its page, thereby stimulating interest in the brand among social media users (Vafeiadis *et al.* 2020).

New customers are primarily enticed through promotions and contests, effectively piquing the interest of potential buyers and bolstering their enthusiasm and involvement in making purchases. For instance, a brand may initiate a flash mob, encouraging users to capture photos of the brand's product. The most exceptional photographs will be showcased on the brand's page, and the winners will be rewarded with prizes. Consequently, this initiative enhances the appeal of the brand's products, ultimately leading to increased sales (Chahine, Malhotra, 2018).

However, at the present stage, we can identify several problematic aspects concerning brand presence on social media platforms. Foremost among these is advertising. Although advertising can address numerous brand strategy objectives, its effectiveness remains relatively low. This phenomenon can be attributed to the lack of trust in social media advertising, as it is often perceived as flashy and detached from reality (Sitta, Faulkner, Stern, 2018).

Another challenge is the necessity to secure substantial technical, financial, and human resources. Brand promotion, for instance, demands significant financial investments, along with the requirement for specialized equipment to maintain the page and generate content. Additionally, managing brand presence on social media platforms necessitates a sizable workforce, entailing appropriate remuneration levels. In many instances, these resource constraints contribute to a decline in content quality, resulting in reduced user interest (Seo, Primovic, Jin, 2019).

Another important aspect to consider is the necessity for a consistent corporate presence. The brand must continually generate and publish posts, photos, and videos, as well as engage in regular communication with its audience. This demands both time and additional expenses, particularly since a significant portion of content creation is typically delegated to specialized personnel, such as page administrators, social media managers, development managers, and marketers. Furthermore, these specialists must continuously seek new information and foster audience engagement. For newly established brands with limited budgets, this endeavor can be challenging and nearly impractical (Sacavém, Cruz, Sousa, Rosário, 2019).

Furthermore, there exists a potential risk of tarnishing a positive brand image. Active brand presence on social media platforms can expose the brand to negative reviews or unfavorable stories shared by users regarding their interactions with the brand. Although such information may be inaccurate or maliciously propagated by competitors, it can still detrimentally impact the brand's reputation. However, if the company proactively engages with the audience and presents evidence to counter such claims, it has the potential to improve its image. Ultimately, audience trust significantly influences brand resilience and growth (E-commerce share of total global retail sales from 2015 to 2021).

Information hacking represents another pressing issue. Brand data may be subject to theft or illicit disclosure in the public domain. This act is often motivated by the intention to reveal negative narratives or tarnish the organization's image. However, such stories frequently fail to exert a substantial impact on the brand's reputation (Yahia, Al-Neama, Kerbache, 2018).

The strategies adopted by certain Ukrainian brands on social media platforms are noteworthy. For instance, the cosmetics brand Biokon extensively shares product photos on Facebook, ensuring consistency in color and style across all images. The photographs predominantly feature women aged 25-35, expressing their satisfaction with the product. Additionally, user reviews, brand updates, and information about new and seasonal products are also regularly published. In essence, the strategy employed here entails prolific content dissemination that primarily stimulates product purchases through the vibrant product presentation and its availability in retail chains (Biokon).

The LionOk brand has adopted a strategy to promote its products through regular video content on social media, particularly on Instagram. As a grocery supermarket chain, the brand actively leverages its social media presence to engage with its audience. Daily, the brand posts videos on its page, offering comprehensive overviews of the store's products, including their respective price points, and showcasing new arrivals. Some posts also feature promotional offers and information about upcoming promotions. Furthermore, the brand frequently shares photos of its products, accompanied by supporting information validating their quality. This approach aligns with a virtual store strategy, where the buyer can virtually experience a real shopping environment. The video reviews are conducted within the actual store, enabling social media users to view images of shelves displaying products with their current prices ("LionOK" supermarket).

Galya Baluvana, a brand specializing in homemade semi-finished products, has employed a content strategy centered around cooking recipes using the manufacturer's products. Given the emphasis on semi-finished products, videos showcasing the store's assortment are infrequently published, with exceptions for desserts and ice cream. This approach is due to the typical appearance of semi-finished products, which may not be as visually appealing, whereas the finished dishes appear delectable and have the potential to attract a larger number of potential consumers. The brand predominantly shares content featuring cooking demonstrations for specific dishes, along with their recipes and presentation tips. Such informative content enables

consumers to access cooking instructions in a convenient format. Additionally, the brand actively engages its audience through various promotions and contests on the social media platform Instagram, incentivizing consumers to make purchases (Galya Baluvana).

The Dvi Pechi bakery brand emphasizes the utilization of video content on Instagram. Notably, they post videos featuring freshly cooked pizzas, capturing the satisfaction of guests as they relish the delicious taste. These videos also showcase the pizza preparation process, highlighting the ingredients used. Additionally, several videos portray the pizza placed beside the oven in which it was cooked, emphasizing the brand's commitment to the concept of «pizza in the oven,» as stated in their business card. Moreover, the brand shares videos demonstrating the preparation of lemonades, shawarma, and burgers. The brand's social media presence also emphasizes special offers such as fast delivery services, the creation of delectable Easter baskets, and the option for customers to place pre-orders via phone ("Dvi Pechi" bakery).

Consequently, it can be asserted that each brand adopts a unique strategy contingent upon its specific activities and addressing particular issues. Established brands often combine multiple strategies, whereas lesser-known brands may opt for a single strategy, but one they have confidence in. Furthermore, social media tools possess the capability to autonomously identify suitable strategies for each brand through the analysis of trends on social media platforms and comparing the most favorable options for brand development. Moreover, the advancement of contemporary marketing tools facilitates rapid customization of the brand's page itself, along with disseminating targeted information about the brand to an appropriate audience, considering crucial factors such as age, social status, and other pertinent parameters (Rosário, Cruz, 2019).

Targeting assumes a crucial role in brand promotion on social media platforms. This tool enables the dissemination of brand information to a broad audience, and through the analysis of the page and its content, this marketing tool can automatically formulate target audience parameters or allow the brand to manually select the audience. The essence of the brand's products and the desired

outcomes, such as increased page visits, user interactions, and sales, are taken into account to determine the appropriate targeting parameters. These parameters may encompass factors such as age, gender, geographic location, social status, income level, and user preferences. Subsequently, the target audience is exposed to brand pages, posts, videos, and advertisements. By leveraging targeting, brands can efficiently reach a significant number of potential consumers within a relatively short timeframe (Rosario, Rosário, 2021).

When formulating a brand strategy on social media, particularly on the main channel of social media platforms, it becomes essential to proactively assess whether the costs incurred align with the potential outcomes. For instance, if a brand aims to achieve a sales target of UAH 100,000, then an advertising investment of UAH 10,000 would be deemed profitable, even if only 1 in 5 individuals interacting with the advertisement makes a purchase. Conversely, if the targeted turnover is relatively small, significant expenditures on advertising may not be cost-effective, and it would be more prudent to opt for free or low-cost promotion methods. However, it should be acknowledged that the latter approach might yield results below the initial expectations.

## DISCUSSION

The issue of brand promotion on social media platforms is a subject of contention among researchers (Petrenko *et al.* 2022). Some scholars argue that promotion through advertising is effective and yields swift achievement of set objectives, whereas others contend that advertising on social media platforms lacks credibility, thus rendering it ineffective (Dudnik *et al.* 2020). On the other hand, the average social media user perceives social media as a quick and effortless means for brands to achieve desired outcomes without significant investments and resource allocation (Akimov *et al.* 2021; Kotenko *et al.* 2020). However, in reality, brand promotion entails substantial financial and human resource investments to expand the audience and cultivate loyalty, involving a complex process that employs various tactics (Kryshtanovych *et al.* 2021). As a result, brands should prioritize educating consumers that promotion constitutes a comprehensive strategy necessitating investments,

resources, and time to foster consumer loyalty.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the specific aspects of utilizing social media platforms as a crucial component of brand marketing strategies. The findings indicate that social media platforms serve as versatile systems, offering numerous functions that can effectively promote a brand and enhance its competitive edge.

The article provides an overview of the primary objectives of brand strategies employed on social media platforms. These objectives include expanding the target audience, influencing consumer purchasing habits, increasing consumer loyalty, and promoting new or lesser-known brands. The attainment of these objectives is facilitated by the consistent publication of diverse yet brand-relevant content on social media platforms.

The current strategies adopted by brands on social media platforms are outlined. Modern brand strategies on social media platforms encompass various approaches, including active brand page management on social networks, virtual stores, digital banking, virtual logistics, online insurance, QR codes, and cloud technologies. It is common for brands to utilize multiple strategies concurrently, enabling them to attain more favorable outcomes.

The article presents an exploration of the prevailing strategies adopted by Ukrainian brands on social media platforms. Notably, Ukrainian brands on Facebook and Instagram employ diverse strategies, including content-rich publications, regular information updates, visual displays of products, and demonstrations of product usage or workflows. This approach is observed in several prominent Ukrainian brands, such as the cosmetics brand Biokon, the grocery supermarket brand LionOk, the homemade semi-finished products store brand Galya Baluvana, and the bakery brand Dvi Pechi.

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