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Social Media Marketing Practices as Predictors of Customer Loyalty among Youth-Owned Businesses in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effects of social media marketing on customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State. It was guided by objectives that evaluated the effects of blog use and content marketing on customer loyalty. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a population of 19,767 students, from which a sample size of 392 youth entrepreneurs was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire, of which 392 copies were correctly retrieved and analyzed. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and response patterns, while multiple regressions in SPSS tested the hypothesized relationships at the 0.05 significance level. The model result showed a strong positive relationship between social media marketing components and customer loyalty, with $R = 0.805$, $R^2 = 0.648$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.645$, and $F(4, 387) = 178.448$, $p < 0.001$. Blogging and content marketing had significant positive effects on customer loyalty. The study concluded that well-structured blogging and rich content marketing were the strongest social media drivers of customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in the institution. Among others, the study recommended that youth entrepreneurs prioritize consistent, value-adding content and strategically managed blogs to translate high social media usage into sustained customer trust, repeat patronage, and stronger customer loyalty. Institutional support for training in analytics-driven social media planning was also considered essential for implementation.

Keywords: Blogging, Customer loyalty, Content Marketing, Customer Engagement, Social Media Marketing, Social Networks, Youth Entrepreneurs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed contemporary marketing by enabling interactive and cost-effective communication between businesses and customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Among its various tools, blogging and content marketing have emerged as key strategies for engaging audiences, delivering value, and shaping consumer perceptions (Alalwan, 2022). Unlike traditional promotional approaches, these content-driven strategies allow firms to provide relevant and persuasive information that fosters stronger customer relationships and enhances brand visibility (Yadav & Rahman, 2017).



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For youth entrepreneurs, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria, the adoption of blogging and content marketing is increasingly critical due to their affordability and broad reach (Agboola & Ologunde, 2022; Casper et al., 2021). These entrepreneurs utilize digital platforms to share product information and stimulate engagement, thereby strengthening customer relationships. In this context, customer loyalty can be defined as a sustained commitment to repurchase and recommend a brand, this remains essential for business survival and growth.

Although prior studies have established the general relevance of social media marketing in enhancing customer loyalty (Bhanot, 2020; Hafez, 2021), limited attention has been given to the specific roles of blogging and content marketing among youth entrepreneurs in Nigeria. This study therefore examines blogging and content marketing as drivers of customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Despite the increasing adoption of social media marketing, many youth entrepreneurs struggle to translate digital activities into sustained customer loyalty. Blogging and content marketing, recognized as effective tools for delivering value and shaping consumer perceptions, remain underutilized or poorly implemented in many small business contexts (Alalwan, 2022; Pulizzi & Barrett, 2020). Blogging, in particular, has been identified as a powerful long-form content strategy that enhances credibility, builds trust, and supports customer relationship development (Hong, 2020; Stockburger-Sauer & Hoyer, 2021). However, observations among youth entrepreneurs at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, indicate inconsistent blog usage and lack of strategic integration into marketing efforts.

Although prior studies affirm the general impact of social media marketing on customer loyalty (Bhanot, 2020; Hafez, 2021), there is limited empirical evidence on how blogging and content marketing specifically influence customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of social media marketing on customer loyalty using a study of Youth Entrepreneurs at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State. Other specific objectives of the study however are to;

- i. examine the effect of Blog on customer loyalty in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State.
- ii. investigate the effect of content marketing on customer loyalty in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Concept of Blogs

Blogging represents one of the earliest and most established forms of social media, emerging in the late 1990s and evolving alongside technological advancements (Alasilta, 2021). Today, blogs play a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions and are regarded as one of the most effective online marketing platforms (Schroeder, 2021). Modern consumers are digitally savvy and make well-informed purchasing decisions (Cina, 2021). As technology empowers both buyers and sellers, the nature of their relationship continues to evolve, heightening customer expectations and driving innovation. Consequently, businesses strive to provide more personalized experiences, recognizing that delivering superior shopping experiences is a key objective in contemporary retail (Hong, 2020). Blogs short for “web logs” are online journals or platforms that allow individuals or organizations to publish content regularly (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Johnston, & Mayer, 2024). They can include text entries, hyperlinks, images, and reader comments. Unlike traditional websites, blogs are frequently updated often daily and offer a low-cost, user-friendly method for publishing content to a global audience (Cina, 2021).

2.1.2 Content Marketing



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Content marketing is a contemporary marketing strategy that emphasizes long-term relationship building by engaging target audiences with valuable and relevant content rather than direct promotional techniques (Bening & Kurniawati, 2023). Unlike traditional advertising, which focuses on persuading consumers to purchase products or services, content marketing seeks to inform, educate, and inspire audiences, thereby strengthening brand credibility and trust. According to Charmaine (2022), content marketing involves creating and distributing meaningful content to a clearly defined audience to develop brand awareness and thought leadership.

Pulizzi and Barret (2020) describe content marketing as an online marketing strategy that focuses on producing, publishing, and distributing digital content to achieve goals such as increasing brand visibility, credibility, sales, customer engagement, and lead generation. Although often considered a modern innovation, content marketing is not new. As Du Plessis (2020) notes, businesses have long used content to attract, educate, and retain customers; however, advancements in technology have made it more accessible, interactive, and measurable.

Ahmed (2023) highlights that content marketing differs from traditional marketing in three major ways: (1) it uses content as an indirect means to drive sales, (2) it is not a form of direct advertising, and (3) it employs a pull rather than a push strategy. Instead of bombarding consumers with messages, it provides informative, entertaining, and helpful material that meets their needs at the right moment (Demangeot & Broderick, 2023). Key motivations for adopting content marketing include consumers' demand for more product information, the ability to analyze customer preferences more effectively than traditional marketing, and its relatively low cost due to affordable and accessible technology (Du Plessis, 2020). Consequently, even small businesses can now create and share impactful content with ease.

2.1.3 Customer loyalty

The concept of loyalty has long been a central theme in marketing research (Shanglin, 2024). Loyalty is commonly defined as a customer's emotional attachment or commitment toward a brand or company (Al-Hawary, Singh, Eldahamsheh & Al-Quran, 2023). It represents a critical component of business success, as organizations strive to maintain competitiveness by cultivating enduring customer relationships (Muhammad & Kanesh, 2022). Customer loyalty refers to the degree to which consumers consistently choose the same brand within a specific product category, driven by favorable attitudes and emotional bonds (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). Essentially, customer loyalty signifies the depth of consumer commitment and the strength of the consumer brand relationship.

In marketing, customer loyalty serves as a vital determinant of sustainable competitive advantage. Loyal customers are less likely to switch to competitors and are often willing to pay premium prices for their preferred brand (Ebrahim, 2020). Moreover, loyal customers contribute to business growth by reducing marketing costs since retaining existing customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones (Mehrabi, Islami & Aghajani, 2014) and by promoting the brand through positive word-of-mouth, thereby enhancing its reputation and attracting new consumers (Al-Dmour, 2023).

2.1.4 Blogs and Customer loyalty

Companies can use blogs as strategic tools to educate consumers about various applications of their products (Stockburger-Sauer & Hoyer, 2021). Through blog posts, marketers can emphasize product features, compare their offerings with competitors, and highlight key benefits. Consequently, blog content serves not only potential customers but also existing clients by providing valuable, updated information. A corporate blog allows businesses to respond to



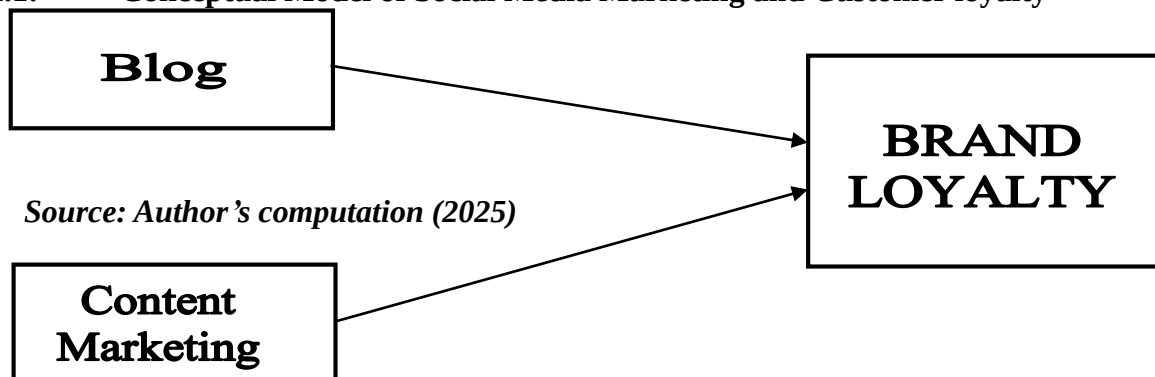
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individual questions while simultaneously sharing expert knowledge with a wider audience. Encouraging readers to ask questions and leave comments fosters interaction and strengthens relationships between brands and consumers (Bouhlef, Mzoughi, Ghachem & Negra, 2020). In essence, blogs serve as portals to a wide array of information sources, where readers can engage with authors by sharing additional materials and feedback (Loken, 2020).

2.1.5 Content Marketing and Customer loyalty

Content marketing plays a vital role in fostering customer loyalty by providing valuable, relevant, and consistent content that aligns with the needs and interests of the target audience (Hollebeek, 2021). Through the delivery of informative and engaging material, businesses can build credibility and trust with a consumer, which in turn promotes repeat interactions and strengthens long-term relationships. Consistent engagement of this kind enhances emotional attachment to the brand, ultimately translating into customer loyalty. Effective content marketing not only attracts potential customers but also nurtures existing ones by addressing their evolving needs and improving their overall brand experience (Sashi, 2022). According to Strauss (2021), businesses use content marketing within the Web 2.0 environment to encourage active consumer participation and engagement. Because relevant digital material is available whenever and wherever consumers seek it, content marketing serves as a powerful form of inbound marketing that draws potential clients and prospects organically. Vivek (2022) emphasized that offering quality content is one of the most effective strategies for attracting consumer attention and driving brand engagement, which subsequently leads to repeat purchases. Similarly, Puro (2024) highlighted that creating high-quality, persuasive content motivates consumers to interact with brands by visiting websites, exploring products, and taking steps toward purchase decisions. As Hollebeek (2021) observed, content marketing remains one of the most influential methods for enhancing online interaction and engagement.

Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Model of Social Media Marketing and Customer loyalty



2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Sociologist George Homans first introduced the Social Exchange Theory (SET) in his seminal 1958 paper "Social Behavior as Exchange." Drawing from sociological research, SET explores how individuals and small groups engage in social interactions and relationships based on the principles of cost-benefit analysis (Emerson, 1976). The theory posits that individuals assess the potential rewards and costs of their actions, seeking to maximize benefits while minimizing losses. In essence, people are more likely to engage in behaviors perceived as rewarding and to avoid those that impose excessive costs (Homans, 1958). Homans (1958) summarized this by



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noting that social behavior involves the exchange of both tangible and intangible goods such as approval, respect, or status between individuals.

Digital marketing platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and blogs possess the potential to transform users' initial perceptions into positive, long-term relationships through consistent and value-driven exchanges. As such, this study adopts Social Exchange Theory as its theoretical foundation to explain how reciprocal interactions between businesses and consumers on social media enhance engagement and customer loyalty. Consequently, the present study draws upon the dimensions of blogs, and content marketing as identified by Risius and Beck (2020) and Tsai, Chou, and Leu (2021), to measure the effectiveness of social media marketing.

2.3 Empirical Review

Ajiboye (2021) analyzed the effect of content marketing on sales volume among selected manufacturing firms in Oyo State, Nigeria. Using a purposive sampling technique, five manufacturing firms were selected, while 50 respondents participated through simple random sampling. Data were obtained via structured questionnaires and analyzed using Mean and Regression Analysis. Findings revealed that content marketing significantly influences key performance indicators such as effective decision-making, customer satisfaction, and market share. The study identified challenges including unstable power supply, lack of government support, low managerial education levels, and poor document security in e-commerce. It concluded that email marketing and other content-based digital strategies are vital for organizational competitiveness and survival. The study recommended that the government should provide a supportive environment for the growth of e-commerce in Nigeria.

Raji, Yusuf, and Olowe (2024) investigated the effects of social media marketing on mobile phone customer loyalty in Nigeria, focusing on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter marketing activities related to Samsung products. Employing a survey research design and random sampling, data were collected from 431 Samsung users. Findings revealed that social media marketing has a positive effect on consumer customer loyalty. Specifically, Facebook marketing increased repeat purchases, Instagram marketing improved customer satisfaction, and Twitter marketing reinforced brand patronage. The study recommended that mobile phone companies should expand their social media marketing efforts to enhance consumer loyalty.

The empirical review revealed that although several studies have examined social media marketing and customer loyalty in different contexts, most existing studies focused on large organizations or developed economies, with limited attention given to youth entrepreneurs and tertiary institution environments in Nigeria. Moreover, previous studies often examined social media marketing as a single construct rather than analyzing the combined and individual effects of its key components. This creates a clear research gap, particularly in understanding how blogs and content marketing influence customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs.

Consequently, the reviewed literature underscores the need for an empirical investigation within the context of youth entrepreneurs at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State. This study therefore seeks to bridge the identified gaps by examining the effects of social media marketing constructs on customer loyalty, thereby contributing to existing knowledge and providing practical insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and marketing practitioners.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey research study that aims at examining the impact of social media marketing on the customer loyalty of youth entrepreneurs in the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State. The target population of this research is all young



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entrepreneurs among the students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, both current students and recent graduates who actively participate in business affairs through social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X (ex-Twitter), Tik Tok, and blogs). The relevancy of this population is that the youth entrepreneurs are among the most active users of the social media and a dynamic group whose marketing practices are largely affected by the interactions they make via digital platforms. The total population of this study 19, 767 students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State.

Table 1: The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Students Statistics 2024/2025 Academic Session

SCHOOLS	ND I	ND II	HND I	HND II	PT I	PT II	TOTAL
School of Applied Sciences	745	747	803	707	472	679	4153
School of Agriculture Technology	163	89	53	38	0	0	343
School of Communication & Information Technology	589	433	408	450	423	686	2989
School of Engineering	726	562	576	435	368	440	3107
School of Environmental Studies	696	624	305	281	140	0	2046
School of Management Studies	1165	1068	1353	1216	1016	1311	7129
TOTAL	4084	3523	3498	3127	2419	3116	19767

Source: Student Statistics 2024/2025 Academic Session as at Tuesday, July 8, 2025

The sampling technique adopted for this study is the stratified random sampling technique. The researcher determined the required sample size from the study population using the Taro Yamane (1967) Statistical formula at a 95% confidence level. The formula is presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = The desired sample size.

N = The size of the population of interest (in the research case study N = 19,648)

e = Limit of error tolerance which the researcher assumed to be 5.0% = 0.05 by way of substituting the figure (e = 0.05) into the formula, we therefore have:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{19,767}{1 + 19,767(0.05)^2}$$
$$= \frac{19,767}{1 + 19,767 (0.0025)} = \frac{19,767}{50.4175} = 392.07 \text{ sample size}$$

A sample size of three hundred and ninety-two (392) was derived from a study population of nineteen thousand, seven hundred and sixty-seven (19,767) students.

The main tool of collecting data that was used in this research was a structured questionnaire to the sampled respondents. The questionnaires have been disseminated both physically and online (through Google Forms and WhatsApp) in order to have wide access and involvement.

To ensure reliability, the questionnaire underwent pilot study on 20 Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro youth entrepreneurs who did not form the primary sample of the study. The answers received were evaluated with the Cronbachs Alpha coefficient and a thresh of reliability of 0.70 and more was deemed as acceptable. This assisted in establishing the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability technique of Cronbach Alpha (α) was employed to assess the acquired data.



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Table 2: Instrument Reliability Table

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Value	Number of Item
2. Blog	0.825	5
4. Content Marketing	0.739	5
5. Customer loyalty	0.881	5

Source: SPSS Output, 2025.

The result of the analysis shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for is 0.825 for Blog 0.739 for content marketing and 0.881 for customer loyalty. These values are high and it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable and can be used for the research work.

Statistical Package of the Social Sciences version 25.0 data analysis was done using SPSS. The standard data and responses were summarized using frequencies distributions, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. The effect of each of the social media marketing variables that included blogging and content marketing on customer loyalty was determined using inferential statistics, especially multiple regression analysis. The findings were provided in tables and charts so that they could be understood easily. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance, allowing the researcher to draw valid conclusions about the relationships among the study variables.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation of results in this study will be based on the analysis obtained from the statistical methods adopted, which will test the hypothesis stated for the study in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.805 ^a	.648	.645	.45125

a. Predictors: (Constant), Content Marketing, Blogging

Source: Author's Computation, (2025)

Table 3 shows the model summary for the regression analysis examining the combined effect of blogging and content marketing on customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. The correlation coefficient R of 0.805 indicates a very strong positive relationship between these social media marketing activities and customer loyalty, which implies that as blogging and content marketing increase, customer loyalty also increases among the respondents. The R Square value of 0.648 shows that 64.8 percent of the variation in customer loyalty is explained by blogging and content marketing taken together, while the remaining 35.2 percent of the variation in customer loyalty is due to other factors not included in this model. The Adjusted R Square of 0.645 further indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors and sample size, 64.5 percent of the changes in customer loyalty are still accounted for by blogging and content marketing, which confirms that the model provides a very good fit and that social media marketing has a substantial explanatory power on customer loyalty in this study.



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Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	145.350	2	36.337	178.448	.000 ^b
	Residual	78.805	387	.204		
	Total	224.155	391			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Content Marketing, Customer Engagement, Blogging, Social Networks

Source: Author's Computation, (2025)

Table 4 shows the analysis of variance result for the regression model that examined the effect of blogging and content marketing on customer loyalty. The table indicates a regression sum of squares of 145.350 across 2 degrees of freedom with a corresponding mean square value of 36.337. The residual sum of squares is 78.805 across 387 degrees of freedom with a mean square value of 0.204. The computed F value of 178.448 with a significance level of 0.000 confirms that the overall model is statistically significant. This means that customer engagement, blogging, social networks and content marketing jointly exert a significant predictive effect on customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.602	.134		4.495	.000
	Blogging	.120	.043	.137	2.773	.006
	Content Marketing	.561	.052	.566	10.847	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty

Source: Author's Computation, (2025)

Table 5 shows the coefficient estimates for the regression model used to determine how blogging and content marketing influence customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

Specified Model: $CL = 0.602 + 0.120(BLO) + 0.561(COM)$

The constant value of 0.602 with a t value of 4.495 and a significance level of 0.000 indicates that when all the predictors in the model are held at zero, customer loyalty will have a baseline value of 0.602. This shows that independent of customer engagement, blogging, social networks and content marketing, a foundational level of customer loyalty still exists in the sample. The strong significance of the constant confirms the stability of the model.

Blogging recorded an unstandardized coefficient of 0.120 with a t value of 2.773 and a significance value of 0.006. This implies that one increase in blogging activity leads to an increase of 0.120 in customer loyalty. The significance value below 0.05 shows that this effect is statistically meaningful. This means that blogging plays an important role in strengthening customer loyalty among the respondents. The result confirms that consistent and strategic blogging activities can improve customer connection and loyalty.



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Content marketing produced the largest unstandardized coefficient of 0.561 with a t value of 10.847 and a significance level of 0.000. This means one increase in content marketing leads to an increase of 0.561 in customer loyalty. The coefficient is highly significant, indicating a strong and reliable effect. This finding demonstrates that content marketing is the most influential predictor in the model, showing that relevant and appealing content plays a major role in shaping customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

4.2.1 Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were tested with the use of the regression coefficient table (Table 4.38).

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than the chosen significance (0.05), accept null hypotheses if otherwise.

Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant effect of Blog on customer loyalty. The significance value for blogging is 0.006 which is less than 0.05. Based on the decision rule, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant effect of blog on customer loyalty.

Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant effect of content marketing on customer loyalty. The significance value for content marketing is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Based on the decision rule, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant effect of content marketing on customer loyalty.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that social media marketing is a powerful determinant of customer loyalty among youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, but that its components do not contribute equally. Blogging and content marketing emerged as significant positive predictors of customer loyalty. This pattern reinforces the centrality of value laden, consistent, and strategically structured content in converting social media presence into enduring customer loyalty, while also indicating that interaction and networking need to be anchored on substantive content to translate into measurable loyalty outcomes, a position that resonates broadly with the multi country findings of Wang, Mokhtar, and Ahmad (2024) and the cross-sector evidence reported by Bimpe (2020).

Based on the empirical findings of this study, recommendations are proposed to guide youth entrepreneurs in Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, as well as policy makers, business support agencies, and other stakeholders in the entrepreneurial and marketing ecosystem as follows:

1. Youth entrepreneurs should treat blogging as a core element of their social media marketing rather than an optional channel. Blogs should be used to educate customers, narrate brand stories, explain product benefits, and clarify how offerings solve real customer problems. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to update their blogs regularly with clear and relevant content, integrate blog links into their social media pages, and guide followers from short posts to more detailed explanations on the blog. This will deepen trust, clarify brand identity, and support long term loyalty.
2. Youth entrepreneurs should place deliberate emphasis on creating and consistently sharing high quality, relevant, and engaging content as the backbone of their social media marketing. They should plan content calendars, use photos, videos, and infographics, and craft messages that speak directly to the needs and aspirations of their target audience.

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Regular tracking of customer reactions and basic analytics will help them adjust message tone, timing, and themes so that content continues to build trust, encourage repeat patronage, and reinforce customer loyalty.

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