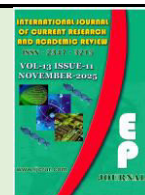




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Social Media Marketing Communication

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Abstract

Social media are important in recent trends in today's marketing world and its became a major factor in influencing brand, communication and consumer behavior etc., Social media like facebook, twitter, orkut, myspace, skype etc., are used extensively for the purpose of communication. One of the most important advantages of the use of social media is the online sharing of knowledge and information among the different groups of people. The social web has presented a new form of communication through social media which allow people to interact and converse with each other. Social Media Marketing has become a powerful marketing technique for international businesses to its cheap costs and high promotional effects. Most of the consumers in social media communication had a negative influence on brand equity and brand attitude. In addition, some analysis indicated that social media communication affected only brand attitude. In this paper we have to find the internet user preferences for social media marketing and develop the best tools for attract, engage, retain the consumers.

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Social media, Brand attitude, Consumer behavior.

Introduction

Social media marketing is a new-fangled marketing concept and businesses are seeking ways to create value through this new media for their business. Though social media is relatively a new media, its popularity is increasing rapidly across the world. As the number of people using social media including face book, twitters and my space is growing, companies have realized the importance of utilizing social media as an important tool to enhance their marketing effectiveness and to improve their marketing activities. This paper examines the role of social media in international marketing communication and improving the engagement marketing by involving customers, it helps building and developing the company's brands. Social media also could facilitate Customer Relationship Management

Social Media started in 1978 when the first Bulletin Board Systems exchanged data over phone lines with other users. Social Media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media takes on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. With the world in the midst of a social media revolution, it is more than obvious that social media like facebook, twitter, orkut, myspace, skype etc., are used extensively for the purpose of communication. This form of communication can be with a person or a group of persons. Today most of the people specially the youngsters are hooked on to the different social media for keeping in contact with their peers. Social media is media for social interaction as a superset beyond social

communication. There are pros and cons to the use of social media. One most important advantage is the online sharing of knowledge and information among the different groups of people.

Also, what is important about Social Media Marketing is that marketer can listen, track and measure what is shared on the Social Media Sites in order to improve the offered message and adapt it more to the customers' needs. Thanks to the Social Media analytics and metrics available, the impact of Social Media on a company's marketing strategy can be measured and evaluated relatively easily.

Definition

Social media marketing

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites. Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks.

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to techniques that target social networks and applications to spread brand awareness or promote particular products. Social media marketing campaigns usually center around:

- Establishing a social media presence on major platforms
- Creating shareable content and advertorials
- Cultivating customer feedback throughout the campaign through surveys and contests

Social media marketing is perceived as a more targeted type of advertising and is therefore believed to be very effective in creating brand awareness.

Social media

Social media as “media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.”

Social Media is a new marketing tool that allows you to get to know your customers and prospects in ways that were previously not possible. This information and knowledge must be paid for with output of respect, trustworthiness, and honesty. Social Media is not a fad,

but I also think it's just the beginning of the marketing revolution – not the end. Marjorie Clayman – Clayman Advertising, Inc.

Social media marketing tools

- Social media measurement
- Social network aggregation
- Social bookmarking
- Social analytics
- Automation
- Social media
- Blog marketing
- Validation
- Brand ambassador

Social Media Measurement

Social media measurement or ‘social media monitoring’ is an active monitoring of social media channels for information about a company or organization, usually tracking of various social media content such as blogs, wikis, news sites, micro-blogs such as Twitter, social networking sites, video/photo sharing websites, forums, message boards, blogs and user-generated content in general as a way to determine the volume and sentiment of online conversation about a brand or topic.

Social media monitoring allows users to find insights into a brand's overall visibility on social media, measure the impact of campaigns, identify opportunities for engagement, assess competitor activity and share of voice, and be alerted to impending crises. It can also provide valuable information about emerging trends and what consumers and clients think about specific topics, brands or products. This is the work of a cross-section of groups that include market researchers, PR staff, marketing teams, social engagement and community staff, agencies and sales teams. Several different providers have created tools to facilitate the monitoring of a variety of social media channels from blogging to internet video to internet forums. This allows companies to track what consumers are saying about their brands and actions. Companies can then react to these conversations and interact with consumers through social media platforms.

Social Network Aggregation

Social network aggregation is the process of collecting content from multiple social network services, such as

My Space or Facebook, into one unified presentation. The task is often performed by a social network aggregator, which pulls together information into a single location, or helps a user consolidate multiple social networking profiles into one profile.

Various aggregation services provide tools or widgets to allow users to consolidate messages, track friends, combine bookmarks, search across multiple social networking sites, read RSS feeds for multiple social networks, see when their name is mentioned on various sites, access their profiles from a single interface, provide "life streams", etc. Social network aggregation services attempt to organize or simplify a user's social networking experience, although the idea has been satirized by the concept of a "social network aggregator."

Social Bookmarking

A social bookmarking service is a centralized online service which enables users to add, annotate, edit, and share bookmarks of web documents. Many online bookmark management services have launched since 1996; Delicious, founded in 2003, popularized the terms "social bookmarking" and "tagging". Tagging is a significant feature of social bookmarking systems, enabling users to organize their bookmarks in flexible ways and develop shared vocabularies known as folksonomies.

Social media analytics

Measuring + Analyzing + Interpreting interactions and associations between people, topics and ideas. Social media analytics is a powerful tool for uncovering customer sentiment dispersed across countless online sources. This analysis is often called Social Media Listening or Online Listening. The analytics allow marketers to identify sentiment and identify trends in order to better meet their customer's needs. There have been significant examples where companies, such as Whirlpool, Royal Bank of Canada and JetBlue, have used such analytics tools to engage customers in response to their feedback.

Likewise, academic research projects have tried to investigate the use of this social data stream in analyzing and explaining further circadian, daily or seasonal emotional patterns arising in a population. A tool titled as Mood of the Nation and developed by researchers at the University of Bristol is an example, where affective norms for the emotions of anger, fear, sadness and joy

are extracted based on Twitter content published by users geo-located in the United Kingdom.

Automation

Automation or automatic control, is the use of various control systems for operating equipment such as machinery, processes in factories, boilers and heat treating ovens, switching in telephone networks, steering and stabilization of ships, aircraft and other applications with minimal or reduced human intervention. Some processes have been completely automated.

The biggest benefit of automation is that it saves labor, however, it is also used to save energy and materials and to improve quality, accuracy and precision.

Social media

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Heinlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals.

Validation

Social proof, also known as informational social influence, is a psychological phenomenon where people assume the actions of others in an attempt to reflect correct behavior for a given situation. This effect is prominent in ambiguous social situations where people are unable to determine the appropriate mode of behavior, and is driven by the assumption that surrounding people possess more knowledge about the situation.

The effects of social influence can be seen in the tendency of large groups to conform to choices which may be either correct or mistaken, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as herd behavior. Although social proof reflects a rational motive to take into account the information possessed by others, formal analysis shows

that it can cause people to converge too quickly upon a single choice, so that decisions of even large groups of individuals may be grounded in very little information (see information cascades).

Social proof is a type of conformity. When a person is in a situation where they are unsure of the correct way to behave, they will often look to others for cues concerning the correct behavior. When "we conform because we believe that other's interpretation of an ambiguous situation is more accurate than ours and will help us choose an appropriate course of action," it is informational social influence. This is contrasted with normative social influence wherein a person conforms to be liked or accepted by others.

Brand ambassador

Brand ambassador (celebrity spokesman) is a marketing term for a person employed by an organization or company to promote its products or services within the activity known as branding. The brand ambassador is meant to embody the corporate identity in appearance, demeanor, values and ethics. The key element of brand ambassadors lies in their ability to use promotional strategies that will strengthen the customer-product/service relationship and influence a large audience to buy and consume more. Predominantly, a brand ambassador is known as a positive spokesperson appointed as an internal or external agent to boost product/service sales and create brand awareness. Today, brand ambassador as a term has expanded beyond celebrity branding to self branding or personal brand management. Professional figures such as good-will and non-profit ambassadors, promotional models, testimonials and brand advocates have formed as an extension of the same concept, taking into account the requirements of every company.

Marketing techniques

Targeting, COBRAs, and eWOM

Social media marketing involves the use of social networks, COBRAs and eWOM to successfully advertise online. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter provide advertisers with information about the likes and dislikes of their consumers. This technique is crucial, as it provides the businesses with a "target audience". With social networks, information relevant to the user's likes is available to businesses; who then advertise accordingly.

Consumer's online brand related activities (COBRAs) is another method used by advertisers to promote their products. Activities such as uploading a picture of your "new Converse sneakers to Facebook" is an example of a COBRA. Another technique for social media marketing is electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Electronic recommendations and appraisals are a convenient manner to have a product promoted via "consumer-to-consumer interactions". An example of eWOM would be an online hotel review; the hotel company can have two possible outcomes based on their service. A good service would result in a positive review which gets the hotel free advertising via social media, however a poor service will result in a negative consumer review which can potentially harm the company's reputation.

Role of social media in marketing

Social media is now increasingly becoming an ingrained aspect of political campaigns, national defense strategies, public policy, public relations, brand management and even intra company communication.

Since the major task of marketing as tool used to inform consumers about the company's products, who they are and what they offer, social marketing plays an important role in marketing.

Social media can be used to provide an identity about the companies and the products or services that they offer.

Social media helps in creating relationships with people who might not otherwise know about the products or service or what the companies represent.

Social media makes companies "real" to consumers. If they want people to follow them they need not just talk about the latest product news, but share their personality with them.

Social media can be used to associate themselves with their peers that may be serving the same target market.

Social media can be used to communicate and provide the interaction that consumers look for.

Example of social media

Twitter

Twitter is a real-time information feed, where users communicate through 140-character "tweets" with their

followers. Many businesses use Twitter as a means of connecting directly with their customers and to communicate company news and promotions. Most professional services firms on Twitter use it to share knowledge, communicate best practices and network with others in the industry specific communities.

According to Bernie Borges (2009), Twitter is a combination of a microblogging and social networking. Twitter gives users an opportunity to involve in real time sharing of so-called tweets. A tweet is usually no more than 140 characters, which followers of the user can see (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). According to Twitter's official statistic (Twitter, 2012) the website handles more than 340 million active tweets a day. According to Nielsen Online, Twitter experienced an unbelievable 1,382 % growth between February 2008 and 2009 (Nielsen Online, 2010) and until now has consistently enjoyed high growth rates. Twitter can be used both by individuals and companies for personal and corporate purposes respectively (Borges, 2009).

Twitter tops other social media websites on its ability to connect to a larger audience. It can be used very effectively to promote products and services online and get them noticed immediately. Twitter gives businesses the best chance to go viral. In addition, twitter allows its users share important updates and interesting news with their followers. Although Twitter posts are limited to 140 characters, it is a very powerful tool to connect a brand with millions of people.

Facebook

Facebook is a real-time information feed, where users can create personal and corporate pages. As of March 2012 Facebook has more than 900 million registered users (Nation, 2012) and in April 2012 (Techtree, 2008) it surpassed MySpace as the world's most popular social network website based on the number of unique visitors. Facebook pages can be considered social media versions of a business's website. Firms use their pages to announce news and updates, which then drop into the feeds of other Facebook users that have chosen to receive them. Much like Twitter, businesses use Facebook to share information, and to create online connections with followers. Creating a Facebook fan page is an integral part of social media platform. The ever improving design of Facebook has made it easy to create a page exclusively to promote a brand and build an engaged and organic fan base.

However, there are some limitations associated with utilizing Facebook as a promotion tool such as little authority over personalization of a fan page. Above all content available on Facebook is only accessible by registered users.

The presence on Facebook can create a fan base leading to growth for businesses (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). Provided it is created properly, a Facebook page facilitates interaction with consumers, i.e. brand fans. A fan page is a dynamic tool to encourage participation and interaction of a brand's fans with the brand. Fan pages also create more potential for going viral, offer more ways to communicate and allow offering of exclusive contests and coupons specifically for a brand fans.

Blog

According to Stokes (2008), the word "blog" was first coined by Peter Merholz in 1999. Paul Beelen (2006) describes blogs as web pages which can be easily updated, published by a single person or group of people, typically as brief articles displayed in reverse chronological order. The author further states blogs differ from a company's primary website in that new content is added on a very regular basis. In addition, blogs tend to have a conversational tone and are less formal, providing commentary on current issues and trends, with the goal of sharing knowledge and sparking a conversation.

Often, blogs are connected to a firm's main website so visitors can access one from another easily. Readers can subscribe to blogs via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds so that they are notified when any new content is added. According to Smith (2009), a blog is a tool that helps companies build trust by posting in-depth company news, as well as creating solid "about us" and "contact us" pages, therefore, is the basic element of businesses Social Media platform. Generally, blogs are created free of charge while some blog supporting sites charge fee for displaying blogs on their sites. Blogs can be accessed on a global basis. Technorati is the leading blog search engine or a blog index as it monitors 112.8 million blogs and 250 million tagged items of social media (Singh, 2010). According to Technorati 2008 report, almost 36% are 25-34 years old, 27% are 35-44 years old, 13% are 18-24 years old, and 8% are over 55 years old (Singh, 2010). These demographics reveal the fact that the new generation of consumers is more active in the blogosphere.

LinkedIn

Founded in 2002 and launched in 2003, LinkedIn is an online contact database for professionals with more than 150 registered users as of February 2012 (Wall Street Journal, 2012). LinkedIn is basically meant for users to connect with one another for business or professional purposes such as finding jobs and exploiting business opportunities (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). Evans & Leest (2011) categorizes LinkedIn as social networking site specifically designed to build professional networks. LinkedIn members can interact with other professionals in an online social setting. According to the authors it can also serve as a centralized, web-accessible database of one's professional contacts. Users can stay up to date on connections' work status or job changes and subscribe to updates from specific companies. LinkedIn groups are usually industry specific communities created on the site that allow for networking within one's own industry.

In conclusion, Social media marketing communication is rapidly becoming a new force in organizations around the world, Social media are constantly developing a set of tools that facilitates online relationships and information sharing. The central aim of this paper is to generate new tools and knowledge about how social media communication affects brand equity and brand attitude and consequently influences consumer, building

trust and attracting the right audience in right way, as fast as possible. We can expect social media to continue evolving but it is difficult to predict what the next popular platform or technology will be and how we can tap on it for brand building effectively.

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