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Social Media Marketing Management: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Managers today face many challenges when using social media in their marketing strategies. Drawing from social media literature, this study introduces a new framework to assist managers in developing and using social media as a marketing tool. This framework has four dimensions related to the actions managers perform when implementing and engaging with social media: messaging/projecting, monitoring, assessing, and responding. Each dimension of the framework may be applied differently based on the firm's strategic direction or focus. The framework provides an opportunity for a firm to examine the entire scope of social media marketing from a broad strategic perspective as well as a more tactical perspective. Propositions formulated by the authors suggest how organizations with different strategic characteristics may manage social media differently. The study provides an understanding for managers of the variety of issues related to the specific aspects of maintaining a firm's online presence based on a firm's scope, culture, structure, and governance.

KEYWORDS

Social media; social media marketing management; social media monitoring

Introduction

The emergence of social media as a marketing tool has changed how businesses talk to their customers and share information about their brands. No longer are consumers passive recipients of marketing materials. Consumers today use social media to interact with companies, which increases consumer engagement (Araujo, Neijens, and Vliegenthart 2015) and creates new types of relationships between consumers and companies (Lipsman et al. 2012). Social media has emerged as a relatively low-cost way for firms to generate new business and build relationships with their customers (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017).

Social media is prevalent and, as a result, companies can no longer rely solely on delivering messages through traditional media, as marketing has

become a two-way conversation (Drury 2008). Marketing managers today need to go beyond creating content to generate exposure and engage consumers online. Social media enables managers, in addition to creating awareness, to develop interactivity and engagement online on an ongoing basis, and it is a source of market research that enables companies to improve their operations. Managers need to review what is happening on social media by mindfully monitoring customers, competitors, and their environment and effectively responding to online activity (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). Monitoring social media may help firms to generate more effective promotional materials and social media content and improve business operations if the information acquired is assessed properly and acted on within an appropriate time frame. Understanding what the data gathered mean and making decisions about whether and how and when to respond to online activity is essential to successful social media marketing but can be challenging without guidance (Malthouse et al. 2013).

This is not a simple task. Firms often struggle and many merely establish a social media presence by paying for advertising on social media sites or by creating and maintaining pages on various social media platforms (Hodis, Sriramachandramurthy, and Sashittal 2015). Even those who understand the benefits of social media face challenges that prevent them from fully benefiting from being online (Drury 2008). Effectively navigating the social media space can be intimidating for managers. Managers may feel that they lack competency related to social media and related technology or capacity in terms of vision and time to effectively manage their social media without external support (Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown 2013). The strategic orientation of organizations may determine whether managers go beyond just projecting information online. Some—especially smaller organizations—may simply generate awareness on social media, whereas others—more flexible and risk-prone businesses—may engage in social media monitoring, assessment, and creative interactions with consumers. They will learn from social media and adjust their online approaches based on what they learn from social media.

Due to the complexity involved with managing a firm's social media marketing strategies, there is a need for a framework that outlines the actions required to implement each aspect of social media marketing. Past literature has addressed many of the components of social media marketing management, but a framework that considers the process with a strategic focus has not been presented. Drawing from this literature, this article introduces a new framework to assist managers in developing and using social media as a marketing tool. Also proposed is how the framework will be used by businesses with different strategic orientations, as not all organization may be able or willing to fully adopt social media.

Framework/literature review

The framework proposed in this study consists of four dimensions that sum up the actions managers perform when implementing and engaging with consumers on social media. These actions can be grouped into four categories: messaging/projecting, monitoring, assessing, and responding. In the following section, we discuss what these categories entail and how their implementation will differ in organizations with different strategic approaches. As the propositions that we formulate suggest, each dimension of the framework may be applied to a different extent based on the firm's strategic focus. A firm's messaging/projecting, monitoring, and assessment strategies may change over time based on how they respond in social media. A description of the framework and the literature that inspired it follows (see [Figure 1](#)).

Dimension one: Messaging/projecting

To create awareness, businesses need to establish a presence and build an identity online (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Creating awareness, attracting new customers, and communicating the brand are popular reasons firms engage on social media (Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides 2011). Studies refer to social media as a megaphone used to send information to large amounts of customers (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010), which may help to acquire more customers (Malthouse et al. 2013). Managers also need to understand that social media is interactive, so how a business chooses to interact with its customers will determine its online identity and the nature of its relationships with customers. Interactivity is when firms value relationships over “hard selling,” using personalized contact and evoking engagement (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010; Kwok and Yu 2013; Fox and Longart 2016). The act of drawing in customers is what separates a firm that only

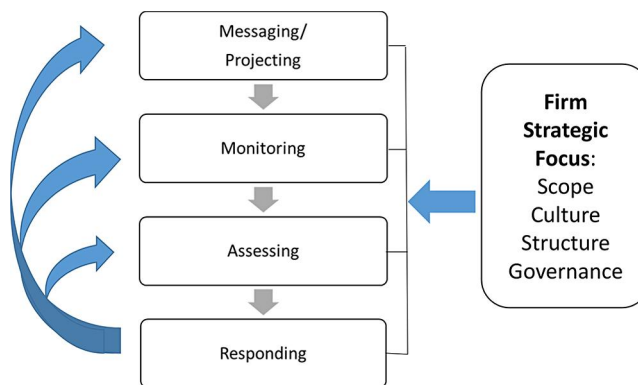


Figure 1. Social media marketing management: A conceptual framework.

boosts awareness from one that also encourages interactivity. Firms should not be afraid of engaging in conversations with customers as conversations help to build community, retain customers, establish new connections, and build relationships (Malthouse et al. 2013; Pentina and Koh 2012). Two-way conversations help to personalize the experience for consumers and provide feedback for firms (Levy and Gvili 2015). Customers want to be heard and want firms to listen to them (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Kietzmann et al. 2011) and respond.

To create awareness and interactivity, firms must generate appropriate content. Finding the right content to include in messages is essential, as consumers may distrust marketer-generated information and overly promotional posts may even lead consumers to stop following a business online (Fox and Longart 2016). For example, Kwok and Yu (2013) found that Facebook posts that contain information about a company's activities were more popular than posts that were sales- and marketing-oriented. Establishing a social media presence can be accomplished by contacting customers via messages in the form of ads and posts that can include text, photos, videos, and graphics. Projected messages can promote events, deals, and product offerings and share business hours and news, especially if they are timely, detailed, and rich in information to ensure consumer knowledge and understanding (Pantelidis 2010; Kwok and Yu 2013; Needles and Thompson 2013; Levy and Gvili 2015). Mozas-Moral et al. (2016) suggest that audiovisual and visual content create the most visibility. Using the appropriate tone within a message is another important consideration. Using a casual and more conversational tone may resonate more with consumers (Kwok and Yu 2013; Fox and Longart 2016). Firms can use social media to draw inbound dialog and potentially attract even passive observers (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010) either by responding to consumer-initiated inquiries and comments or by prompting this consumer engagement in the first place. Firms should create posts that interest users and try to sustain that interest by offering incentives for those who participate, as content that is engaging is more likely to be shared (Lipsman et al. 2012; Fox and Longart 2016). To appeal to customers, successful firms frequently use distinctive communication, casual tone, and personalization and must strive to be creative across social media platforms (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010; Fox and Longart 2016). Content that creates social currency (encourages users to engage with social media rather than just "liking" it), generates emotional reactions, is useful and informational, and tells a story drives sharing behavior (Yuki 2015). Managers should also strive to ensure that their employees interact with customers on various social media platforms, granted that they have guidelines helping them to formulate posts. While firms cannot control the conversation on social media, they can dictate the flow of the conversation to project a desired identity (Kietzmann et al. 2011) or to divert consumers from undesired topics.

In addition to determining desired content on social media, firms must make decisions about how often to post. Businesses need to be active and post fresh content but should avoid posting too frequently to avoid annoying customers (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Lipsman et al. 2012). The appropriate frequency may vary by social media platform, and posts should be published at different times and on different days on different platforms (Fox and Longart 2016). How often a firm engages with customers and the positivity/negativity of content project an image of that firm (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Overall, when a messaging strategy is implemented effectively, these messages create exposure, project an image for the firm, and foster interactivity, which can ultimately lead to awareness, loyalty, and brand preference.

Dimension two: Monitoring

While messaging is an important function, it is not enough to just post content; managers also need to monitor online activity. Therefore, the second dimension of the framework involves mindful monitoring strategies to constantly improve, as the marketing environment changes frequently and firms must keep pace (Fox and Longart 2016). They must learn how to recognize and acquire new knowledge (Malthouse et al. 2013). Monitoring social media often provides a firm with valuable customized primary research. A firm should monitor the social media landscape to acquire competitive intelligence about their customers, competitors, and the environment and gain an understanding of how social media can affect their own competitive position (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Kwok and Yu 2013).

Monitoring can be achieved by reading customer comments and reviews on social media platforms and blogs. This helps managers obtain knowledge about how customers use their products (Malthouse et al. 2013). Listening to customers and discovering what they enjoy seeing and responding to on social media can help a firm to create content that meets customer expectations (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Understanding consumers may help to give a firm a competitive advantage, because by monitoring it will learn about consumer needs and preferences (Needles and Thompson 2013). Monitoring can help managers identify which customers to avoid and which customers to cultivate relationships with (Seyed-Ahmad and Murphy 2010). Managers should also monitor consumers to observe and learn about the relationships, dialogs, and interactions between firms and consumers in their industry to better assess when to respond to consumer comments (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010).

In addition, a firm should strive to monitor its competitive environment to learn from the best examples of competitors (Kwok and Yu 2013). In the restaurant industry, for example, there is evidence showing that more than two-thirds of all firms monitor competitors on social media and that more than half maintain an alert system that notifies them any time a consumer

mentions the firm's name (Needles and Thompson 2013). Monitoring competitors allows businesses to learn basic information about them and, more important, to learn how they project themselves to the buyers, how they interact with their customers, and what creative approaches they use to generate followers. Effective monitoring allows businesses to learn and later adapt and better react to the changes in the competitive situation.

Dimension three: Assessing

Monitoring is not sufficient though: It is how businesses *use* the information they obtain from monitoring that often makes a difference. Firms must be able to process and assess the information to determine when and how to respond. While many businesses monitor their consumers and competitors, only the most successful ones evaluate the information and determine how to handle the information. Not all information needs to be acted on, and how social media activity is measured will determine how accurately the information generated informs decision makers (Kwok and Yu 2013; Gallagher and Ransbotham 2010; Schweidel and Moe 2014).

One approach to assessing social media activity is to evaluate volume measures (likes, retweets, shares, followers, pins, etc.) that primarily indicate the popularity of a brand or post and may be more useful if assessed over time (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Volume measures can be helpful, however, when companies monitor posts on a regular basis because this allows them to assess when their posted content is most successful in terms of consumer response rates. For example, prior research suggests that using social media to stimulate electronic word-of-mouth marketing generates the most responses on Thursdays, but invokes many fewer responses on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays (Fox and Longart 2016). Consumers check social media at idle times, varying based on work schedule, demographics, and psychographics, so a firm that monitors successfully can assess when they should post, specifically for their target market.

Another approach to assessing is to analyze the content of incoming social media messages and user-generated content to measure sentiments, identify inaccuracies or problems, or notice opportunities to offer praise or encouragement to users or their employees (Gallagher and Ransbotham 2010; Schweidel and Moe 2014). Assessing content is essential, as firms need to make decisions about which messages to respond to, which messages to ignore, how to respond to messages in terms of tone, whether to address messages in public or private, whether to remove negative messages, and when to respond (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010).

Assessing may require internal debate and changes; if a consumer posts an inaccuracy, a firm must assess the benefits against the costs of correcting it (Gallagher and Ransbotham 2010). Does informing consumers of a minor inaccuracy truly outweigh the potential ramifications of annoying a consumer

online? While the assessing process can be overwhelming, especially for smaller businesses, tools such as TweetDeck, Social Mention, and Google Alerts help to manage the assessment process. Firms must develop an absorptive capacity to learn from the activities and content of their customers, which implies that they must be able to recognize and acquire new knowledge and exploit this knowledge on a cyclical basis (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010). In addition, they must understand that the sentiments consumers express on social media may depend on the social media platform. Some platforms, such as Twitter, limit the length of responses, which may encourage more extreme opinions, while others (e.g., Facebook, blogs, and review sites) allow for more in-depth responses that generate more refined opinions (Schweidel and Moe 2014). This implies that firms must also consider the source of information when assessing the relevance of it. If information is not adequately assessed, the firm may not respond appropriately and risks damaging its reputation by responding incorrectly.

Dimension four: Responding

Once information is monitored and assessed, the final step is responding to the acquired information. Responding allows firms to interact with customers and show that they care (Pantelidis 2010). Businesses may respond to address a customer, a competitor, or the environment. Responses can be external by making direct or indirect responses to customers either publicly or privately or internal by making changes to specific products, services, or marketing tactics or implementing new policies within the business. Firms need to decide whether to engage in one-on-one conversations or to post messages geared at a broader audience.

Studies provide some guidance on how companies should respond to customers. Online business responses need to interest the audience and should go beyond responding to negative comments and being defensive (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Fox and Longart 2016). For example, “organizations can curate conversations by showing YouTube videos of credible individuals on their site, or by presenting existing research from other sites” (Kietzmann et al. 2011, 249). This type of post would likely be most successful if consumers are yearning for more information about a certain product or the firm’s processes (Kietzmann et al. 2011, 249). Firms also need to respond in a professional manner, be honest, and use an appropriate tone (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Kwok and Yu 2013). External responses also need to be introduced into the conversation at the right time, as research suggests that response time is a crucial factor in responding to consumers (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). Looking at consumers’ posts and at examples from other businesses can help demonstrate the key buzzwords and interests in the marketing environment; responding by

suggesting hashtags or prompting response can take advantage of this (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010; Kwok and Yu 2013). New product ideas may be introduced based on ideas generated from consumer posts on social media (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010).

Developing internal procedures on how to respond to social media externally and internally is vital (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010). There needs to be a clear designation of who represents the firm online and their roles (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Those who respond to customers externally need to know what they can say and what language they can use to be effective and not endanger their organization. Having guidelines helps employees understand when and how they should respond to the customer (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Lack of guidelines may prevent employees from responding online altogether for fear that they may say something wrong or do it in an improper way. For example, they may not know whether they should respond in private or public or utilize both approaches. If they respond in public, they may publicly demonstrate that they listen and care about their customers, but public responses, if misunderstood, may elicit unexpected backlash from consumers (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). If businesses respond in private, they may limit potential damage but sacrifice the number of customers they reach. Businesses are often unsure about how they should address negative comments. Firms must decide whether to censor information, acknowledge a problem, or assert that they are not at fault (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010; Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Decisions must also be made about publicly offering incentives to customers who complain on social media to compensate and make them feel better. Providing incentives, however, may generate more negative reviews as customers may complain just to get something for free (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). Once firms take action, they need to continue to monitor and assess information to see whether their response resulted in desired action and whether a change is needed (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

A firm's response, as Figure 1 indicates, may affect how the firm projects information and engages on social media, monitors social media, and assesses its volume and content. Businesses may decide that they need to change the language they use online; the types of images, videos, and promotions they utilize; and other aspects of social media after assessing the effectiveness of their current social media approaches. They may decide to more closely monitor their competitors if they see that their customers respond to them and engage in conversations with them more, or they may assess social media content differently to be more effective.

Strategic focus

Each step of the proposed framework provides the requirements for implementing and maintaining social media marketing and will help a business

to establish a social media presence and cultivate relationships. However, this framework is not a one-size-fits-all solution. How a firm utilizes and implements each of the aspects of the proposed framework will depend on its strategic focus, which may vary by market, the firm's goals, the customer's perceived interest in engaging in social media, and what benefits the firm hopes to achieve by implementing social media marketing (Pentina, Koh and Le 2012; Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown 2013). Firms may be reluctant to engage on social media if it is not perceived to be important in the industry they operate in or if there is uncertainty about how social media could help market a brand (Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides 2011). Determining strategic direction helps to guide the firm manager in developing a social media strategy by first answering the question of how the firm wants to approach social media. It is important to note that social media use should be considered strategic activity and not a discrete operational activity (Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown 2013). How a firm develops its social media strategy will depend on its marketing scope, culture, structure, and governance (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). The elements of the framework are applied differently by firms depending on these four factors. In this section, propositions that address these differences are discussed.

A firm's *marketing scope* refers to the level and nature of communication along a continuum of defenders and explorers. The term *defender* refers to a firm that uses social media almost purely as an extension of traditional marketing among few stakeholders. In contrast to a defender, an *explorer* is a firm that takes marketing risks and engages in conversations with multiple stakeholders, such as customers, current and potential employees, suppliers, and society (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Marketing scope will have a strong influence on a firm's messaging/projecting strategy on social media. The tactics a firm employs on social media will differ depending on whether they view social media as just another form of advertising or as a tool for promoting customer engagement (Pentina and Koh 2012). Defenders will likely focus on building awareness and use social media as a megaphone to promote their business and share information with customers (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). Defenders are more conservative and will be less likely to experiment with new tactics (Pentina and Koh 2012). Explorers will likely go beyond just sharing information and be more of a magnet by encouraging direct communication among employees, customers, and other stakeholders as they strive to create reciprocal relationships with them (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010). Explorers will appreciate the two-way communication that social media platforms such as Facebook offer that encourage interactivity (Ainin et al. 2015; Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). When considering the monitoring dimension, defenders—because they use social media as a method of communication to push content—may not see the value of monitoring, assessing, or responding or use monitoring just

to screen incoming information online. Conversely, explorers view social media as a collaborative way to communicate with their stakeholders and are more likely to engage in mindful monitoring strategies to search for information and ways to improve their communication in order to strengthen their relationships. Explorers are likely to see the need to assess the information they receive in order to mindfully use it to form meaningful interactions and connections with their stakeholders. They will attempt to respond to the information they obtain on social media in open and collaborative ways by reaching out to their stakeholders. This may not apply to defenders, who do not engage in interactions with their customers online and see little need to assess information or respond unless they truly have to.

Proposition 1: Firms with prevalent defender characteristics will focus on projecting information on social media, in contrast to businesses with explorer qualities that will move beyond projecting and seek to engage customers, monitor social media, and assess and use it to improve its business.

Marketing culture may play an important role in determining a firm's messaging/projecting strategy and can be evaluated along a continuum between *conservatism* and *modernism* (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Firms with a conservative marketing culture are risk-averse and internally focused and therefore are likely to take more of a traditional mass advertising approach to social media, where messages simply broadcast information rather than encourage interaction (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Modern marketing cultures are more open and flexible, which may lead to more authentic and open interaction between a consumer and a firm (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017) rather than just a projection of information at consumers. They may stimulate consumers' interactions online and even allow customers take control over social media, as they are not afraid of losing control (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Marketing culture may also influence how a firm chooses to monitor its social media presence and what it does with information gathered. Firms with a conservative marketing culture are more likely to simply collect data for internal purposes, while those with a modern marketing culture may gather information to learn about the stakeholders, assess it, and use it to determine appropriate actions. They may take risks in responding to stakeholders in authentic and nontraditional ways. Conservatives will evaluate information obtained from monitoring only to determine when it is necessary to respond, as they are risk-averse and therefore resist ways that lead to a loss of control. Modernists will not be afraid to open up and appreciate the social aspect of social media. They will be more likely to assess information and risk to respond in novel and open ways, engaging consumers in conversations not only with the firm but among each other.

- Proposition 2: Firms with prevalent conservative marketing cultures are more likely to use social media to project information at its consumers, while more modern marketing cultures will also interact with their stakeholders and monitor, assess, and utilize information on social media to improve their operations.

Marketing structure refers to where social media is handled within in the firm (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Firms may have structures that are hierarchical, built around networks, or somewhere in between. *Hierarchical* structures are centralized and clearly define roles and tasks. Firms that demand a high need for control are hierarchical. *Networks* imply that all employees are responsible for social media marketing. It is important to determine whether the organization allows all employees to engage with its dedicated social media accounts. In some organizations, one department is responsible for monitoring, processing, and responding to the incoming communications to recognize and acquire new knowledge to develop the absorptive capacity needed to respond to information provided by customers and other stakeholders (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010). Deciding who is responsible for monitoring and assessing information is important in determining whether and how the firm will respond. When management of social media is hierarchical, it is clear who is responsible for monitoring and assessing information gathered and who will interact with the stakeholders to post information, address concerns, or create relationships. When social media management relies on networks, all employees across different departments have a common responsibility for the firm's social media, and who is responsible for assessing may be less obvious (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). While a hierarchical structure allows for control, coordination in media management, and therefore a more cohesive overall company image on social media, networks may lead to more creativity in responses and result in stronger and more meaningful relationships, as the entire organization participates on social media and different employees may better engage in creating and fostering meaningful relationships with multiple stakeholders. Certainly, guidelines will need to be provided for the networking individuals to know what they can and cannot do on social media.

- Proposition 3: Firms with a more hierarchical marketing structure will be less effective in projecting, interacting, monitoring, assessing, and utilizing information on social media than firms with a marketing structure more built around networks, granted that networks have guidelines on how to manage social media.

Marketing governance, or the rules established by a firm for managing social media, determines how the organization can project information to the stakeholders, interact with them, monitor these interactions and other communication on social media, and assess it and whether and how to respond to it

(Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Firms can have governance policies that fall somewhere between autocratic and anarchic. *Autocratic* governance has precise rules for who within a firm can interact on social media. *Anarchy* implies that there are no rules for who can interact on social media. Having policies in place that outline who should respond and when and how to respond to different types of stakeholder messages is important to employees (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010). On one extreme, an autocratic firm will have a designated department with a designated system of rules that handles all aspects of social media so that responsibility for social media management will be clearly defined (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). On the other, an anarchist firm will have no clear guidelines for the employees and departments, so they can interact on social media and do with it what they see fit (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). In most businesses, some guidelines are likely necessary, especially when training employees to guide them on what to do. Employees need to know what is acceptable and appropriate behavior online and when it is appropriate and beneficial for the business to participate in social media (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Having policies that determine what types of messages merit a response, how to monitor social media, how to assess its value, and how to utilize it in the organization is important (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubilaga 2010). Effective guidelines may actually enable employees to use social media mindfully by taking away the fear that they may do something wrong, as they provide clear direction on how to manage social media (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Firms with autocratic characteristics are also more likely to provide better training for employees on how to assess social media information because roles are structured and more clearly defined and employees are designated assigned responsibilities and taught the ways to fulfill them. Conversely, anarchic firms lack the structure for managing social media. As a result, employees may desire more training. There is also a risk that implementing too many guidelines may stifle creative and reduce flexibility in responding to and interacting with customers (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). It is essential for organizations to determine the balance between autocracy and anarchy that specifically works for them.

Proposition 4: Firms that have effective guidelines about how to project information; interact with consumers; and monitor, assess, and utilize information gained on social media will be more effective than anarchic marketing firms in social media management.

Conclusion

This paper presents a conceptual framework that could be used by managers of any size firm in any industry to help them manage their social media marketing activities. It could be used to compare social media marketing strategies

across industries and sizes of firms. The framework and propositions provide an opportunity to examine a greater scope of social media marketing from a strategic perspective as well as a more tactical perspective. It provides an understanding for managers of the variety of issues related to the specific aspects of maintaining a firm's online presence based on firm scope, culture, structure, and governance.

It is clear that there are no perfect approaches to managing social media, as it is the organization that has to decide which path it can or needs to follow. For example, a small business may not have time or resources to interact with multiple stakeholders and thus may become a defender by default. The scarce resources they have may limit them from engaging in relationships or from monitoring or mindfully assessing information on social media. Projecting information on social media may be the only thing that they are able to do. However, critically assessing what a business does and how it can mindfully improve its social media marketing is essential today, and this article proposes a framework that could be used in such an endeavor.

Each dimension of the framework identifies actions that managers in different types of organizations (with different scope, culture, structure, or governance) undertake when implementing social media use as a marketing strategy. It also highlights advantages and problems that stem from actions developed by businesses with different strategic approaches. The framework begins with identifying why a firm wants to use social media, usually initially to distribute a message and later evolving to interacting and projecting a firm's image to customers. Once a firm publishes content, there is a need to monitor reactions to it and to monitor the competition. Information gained from monitoring needs to be assessed to determine when and how to make a response to it. Then once information is assessed and evaluated, a decision about how or whether to respond needs to be made. How a firm manages each of the different aspects will vary depending on their marketing scope, marketing culture, marketing structure, and marketing governance. This strategic focus varies among businesses, and different strategic approaches may work well with different types of businesses depending on their size, type, and marketing goals.

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