

Summary of Research Paper

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Summary of Social Media and Prosumerism

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Research Paper Information

Title: Social Media and Prosumerism

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10 (annual 2013) p67.

Summary

Introduction

The objective of this research paper is to examine the perceptions and the use of product marketing and customer relationship management through social media. Buzzetto-More acknowledges the current state of social networks and the unprecedented scale of network communication.

“The average person has been transformed to a hyper-connected user of social media.”

The paper continues with the effect of marketing campaigns on social media websites. As users spend extended periods of time on social media sites they are being exposed to a vast number of product and brand messages. The user is considered to be the consumer by the marketing companies. This new social media consumer of well-informed, self-motivated users, persuaded by the opinions of their peers.

Through social media, marketing campaigns and the way the public views products and brands, companies can track their campaigns and adverts across the consumer end. This involvement of consumer data on social media is known as prosumer. A prosumer acts as an influencing agent that can propagate important information about products across social networks.

It is important to understand the prosumer, the prosumer is critical to the central idea of this study. Prosumers can be divided in to six categories of consumer using social media.

- Creators: those who create content, perspective and opinions
- Critics: those who comment/rate/review
- Collectors: those who aggregate data to make decisions
- Joiners: those who simply maintain a presence through social media
- Spectators: those who read/watch/listen but take no action
- In-actives: those who do not participate at all

Hypotheses and method

Buzzetto-More proposes three hypotheses that are to be tested.

1. Social networking site users promote products and services.
2. Social networking sites can support customer relationship management (CRM).
3. Word of mouth messages are the most effective form of social marketing.

Method Step 1

A pilot instrument was created in May 2010, using the online survey tool Zoomerang to gather information from users. The survey was distributed to 586 individuals. 258 individuals completed the survey. A panel of experts was formed to review and assist in the validation of the instrument. Based on the results of the pilot study, and feedback from the reviewers, an amended instrument was developed.

Method Step 2

A revised instrument was launched through Zoomerang in late 2011 and data was collected over a seven-month period. The respondent pool ranged from marketing executives to under grad students. The link to the survey was sent via several professional automated mailing. A paid advertising campaign was also placed through Facebook for a one-month.

The survey was comprised of a combination of Likert scaled, dichotomous multiple choice, and ranking questions. Quantifiable questions were examined based on response percentages, means (where applicable), mode, and standard deviation. The opinions of social networking users and non-users were compared where applicable. Additionally, Anovas, and Chi Square Tests, were performed for select questions.

Results

- 912 survey submissions
- 54% female response
- 33% aged 20-24
- 19% 25-31
- 25% 32-44
- 22% >45
- 86% have social network account

The respondents' information seems average; nothing about the ages or number of people that completed the survey seems disproportionate. This helps for an even and unbalanced opinion within the results.

Hypotheses Results

Social Networking Site Users Promote Products and Services via Word of Mouth Advertising

A series of questions explored whether social media messages impacted purchasing decisions.

The results show that 79% of social network users have made a purchase based on a recommendation they have seen via social media. 73% of users like or follow a product or company they like. 62% report their feed has regular product recommendations. 66% report that they have submitted a product review online.

These findings are considered a little higher than the expected results. This method of user promotion is a little more significant than anticipated. Since the last research paper on this topic, it seems that this medium of advertising is getting larger.

Social Networking Sites Can Support Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

51% of social networking site non-users and 76% of users agreed that social networking site usage is an important corporate strategy.

81% of the employed participants reported that their employers maintain a social media presence; however, <16% of employers do not take advantage of their social media reach.

61% of the participants agree with the statement "corporate executives are not adequately informed with strategies for how to effectively use social media to support marketing and brand management efforts."

The findings from this question are consistent with anticipated results drawn from previous studies. No new result of significance.

Word of Mouth Messages are the Most Effective Form of Social Marketing

A Facebook campaign was targeted specifically for management and marketing executives. A standard homepage advertisement was placed on their Facebook homepage.

The advertisement generated 530,974 targeted impressions with 26,273 clicks. From the 26,273 clicks there were 782 "likes. The 782 "likes" resulted in the generation of 6,665 social impressions (impressions that included that names of friends that liked the advertisement).

The results from a Facebook ad campaign are well documented and the generated likes from this advert is nothing significant about the findings.

RESULTS

According to the results word of mouth advertising was considered the most effective with standard homepage advertisements considered to be the least effective form of marketing conducted via the use of social media outlets.

Results confirm prosumer behavior, with each category of prosumer being accounted for. The possibility of social network sites being able to support customer relationships seems certain, with non-users agreeing 51% and users agreeing 76%.

Conclusion

Prosumerism is widely recognized by both professionals and academicians. The consumer's evolution is being manipulated by social networks, facilitating users to interact and get involved with products, brands and campaigns. This study found that participants exhibited prosumer behaviors, acknowledging peer-reviewed brands and commenting on products.

This study is significant because it takes a multi-methodological approach and uses a large nationwide base of participants. The study connects a number of concepts into a single study that have previously only been explored individually. Finally, an un-bias, validated instrument was employed.