A Literature Review on Social Media as a Marketing Tool

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Introduction

Technologically proficient retailers often employ social networking platforms to expand the reach of their marketing initiatives to a broader audience. Chi (2011, 46) defines social media marketing as a "personal channel and currency for user-centred networking and social interaction, [while] enabling a connection between brands and consumers."

Consumer communication technologies and strategies have progressed since social media's birth, therefore organisations must grasp how to use it to achieve their strategic goals (Mangold and Faulds 2099). This is important for companies seeking a competitive edge. Retailers' use of social media in marketing is examined in this study. Since social media is a recent phenomenon, most study has concentrated on two areas: (1) clarifying its novel vocabulary and concepts, and (2) evaluating how a company's social media integration affects consumer behaviour. This essay opens with a social media marketing lexicon. Recent research examines user-generated content, viral advertising, consumer incentives, and virtual brand communities.

Even though the only methods used to study social media marketing have been experimental and theoretical, studies have repeatedly been unable to pinpoint the precise advantages that shops receive from this type of advertising. The analysis of comprehensive multidisciplinary research highlights the definition of social media marketing and investigates the elements influencing client behaviour about social networking. Notwithstanding initial progress by researchers, there has been minimal advancement in this discipline. The next step in research is to evaluate merchants' long-term promotional benefits from social media marketing. To exceed anticipated outcomes and attain a more profound understanding of reality, a more rigorous research is required. The present literature analysis aims to highlight the gaps in current understanding of social media marketing and underscores the need for additional investigation into its benefits, specifically for small businesses.

Definition of Social Media

Retailers must have a thorough understanding of social media platforms before evaluating their effectiveness as a marketing tool. Understanding Web 2.0 is crucial for comprehending social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that Web 2.0 enables end users to interact with the World Wide Web through shared and collaboratively updated content that is constantly changing. Campbell et al. (2011) state that "the emphasis is more on users' interactions with technology than on the technology itself, as individuals are now engaged in creating and consuming information rather than merely retrieving it, thus enhancing the value of the websites that facilitate this process." Web 2.0 features include simple information retrieval, interactivity, interoperability, and

In contrast, social media enhances communication by enabling users to construct personal information profiles and disseminate these profiles among friends and colleagues (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 63). As a result, social media functions as a platform for social networking and has revolutionised the way consumers research products and make purchasing decisions.

Lawson et al. (2001) define CSM as consumers' comprehensive perceptions of marketing and the marketplace. An individual's propensity to participate in consumer activities is profoundly affected by their perception of the overall market (Mady 2011). For social media marketing to thrive, people must accept it. Social media is "a collection of Internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content." (Sinclaire and Vogus, 2011) It is "a collection of Internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0" (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Many people use social media and social networking sites interchangeably.

Parasuraman (2000) characterizes consumer technology readiness as "individuals' propensity to embrace and utilise new technologies to fulfil goals in professional and domestic settings." Retailers must account for consumers' technological preparedness when employing social media for marketing. Ineffectiveness in social media marketing may arise from the target market's disengagement, lack of awareness, or negative perceptions of social media. A retailer can ascertain its target market by evaluating technological readiness and assessing the effectiveness of interactive advertising as a marketing strategy.

The Innovation Adoption Process (IAP), as described by Rogers in Mady (2011), helps people make decisions about new technology. It has five steps: learning about the invention, forming an opinion, deciding to accept or reject it, implementing the decision, and evaluating the option.

Retailers and marketers are using these websites as an additional channel to engage customers and offer an alternative shopping option. Examples of how technological advancements have expanded marketers' access to consumers via n The concept of "shopper marketing" is a recent development that provides companies with a new method to connect with their customers. Shankar et al. (2011) define shopper marketing as "the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper throughout the entire purchase journey, from the initial motivation to shop through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation." In consumer marketing, retailers may evaluate perceived fit. Cha 2009 explain that perceived fit measures the extent to which an extended product category resembles existing products linked to the brand. People are more likely to buy on social networks if they see the shopping functions as beneficial and user-friendly. Due to the diverse consumer base that visits these websites, retailers offering social media shopping services may grow.

The Community of Digital Brands

Virtual brand communities (VBCs) are a major research field in social media marketing. Georgi and Mink (2012) define VBCs as "aggregations of consumers that emerge on the internet due to their interest in a particular brand or product." Casaló et al., (2008) define a brand community as a group of people who share a common interest in a brand or product. Furthermore, Cha (2009) explains that security has an impact on users' perspectives regarding social networking sites and has the potential to progressively alter their levels of confidence. Casaló et al. (2008) found that brand satisfaction increases brand loyalty and member engagement. For the VBC to continue existing, trust is absolutely necessary.

Research shows that VBCs provide new social relationships, including eCCI amongst electronic service consumers (Georgi and Mink 2012). According to Georgi and Mink (2012), there are seven different elements that make up the concept of eCCIq. It has been determined that there are seven parameters that have an effect on the performance of eCCIq. These include content, security, quality, ambiance, usability, sociability, and hedonic variables, which affect consumers' emotions when using products. E-consumer-to-user interaction, also known as eCCI, refers to any interaction that takes place between users of electronic services. Engaging with other people is an essential component of consumer purchasing, and social networking platforms have evolved into places where customers may connect with businesses as well as with one another (Georgi and Mink 2012). As a result of the implementation of eCCI, customers are now actively influencing the purchasing decisions of one another. For example, when one person asks another about the colour or fit of an online product, and the other person responds to the inquiry, this is an example of that type of interaction. Another client responding quickly, accurately, and courteously should make the eCCI event great. The client interaction in question is a perfect example of an eCCIq event because it incorporates a number of social and practical aspects that are associated with eCCIq. According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), when customers are given the option to submit feedback, they demonstrate a higher level of engagement with the companies and products they purchase. Consumer-driven marketing is changing customer behaviour, therefore businesses must value social media quality.

Companies have a responsibility to acknowledge that their social media presence is influenced by a variety of factors, one of which is the online social identity of their customers. There have been a number of research conducted on VBC that have demonstrated that social identity and group norms have a substantial impact on the purchasing decisions made by online societies. Social media members evaluate organisations differently based on their membership and culture. Furthermore, according to Muñiz and Jensen Schau (2007), in addition to items. Social identities, as defined by Zeng, Huang, and Dou (2009), are comprised of the concepts and principles that have an impact on the behaviour

of particular groups. Online social organisations with strong collectives are more likely to accept advertising (Zeng, Huang, & Dou, 2009). If there were a Facebook group dedicated to premium companies, then marketing campaigns that promoted high-end products would be more relevant to the individuals who are members of the 8 VBC. The norms of the group are reflective of the views, values, and objectives that are held in common by its members. Muñiz and O'Guinn (2007) suggest that some individuals quickly adopt commercials by accepting its connotations, while others understand the brand's significance through personal experiences.

If a Facebook group were to be created specifically for premium companies, then marketing campaigns that promote high-end products would be more relevant to the individuals who are members of the 8 VBC. According to Muñiz and O'Guinn, as cited in Muñiz and Jensen Schau (2007), there are persons who assimilate commercials more quickly by adopting its meanings. On the other hand, there are individuals who recognise the value of the brand through their own personal experiences.

Using the framework of the Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM3), Pookulangara and Koesler (2011) conducted research on the influence that culture has on social media. TAM3 addresses technology's perceived utility and usability standards and attributes. The model proposes that the elements that influence perceived ease of use do not affect perceived usefulness, and vice versa. Using TAM3, the researchers investigated whether or whether an individual's cultural background had an effect on their assessment of the benefits and simplicity of an idea, as well as how this influenced the users' intentions regarding their conduct on social media (Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011).

The research model created by Pookulangara and Koesler (2011) shows that culture influences people's responses to technology like social media. This suggests that cultural or ethnic background affects how people interpret social media content. Social networking has facilitated the emergence of a new culture, influenced not only by individual values and ideologies but also by novel rituals and communication tools within the social realm of Web 2.0." Retailers employing social media must acknowledge the importance of culture, as these platforms foster interactions among diverse cultures and the development of new online cultures. Moreover, a consumer's cultural background and the customs that they observe might have an effect on the perspective and attitude that they have towards a certain brand or product (Pookulangara and Koesler 2011).

Consumers' Attitudes and Motivations to Make Purchases

Retailers and marketers must understand consumer views and motives as people provide a massive amount of brand-related information previously managed by companies (Heinonen 2011). Because of this, an inquiry has been launched to determine the influence that social media platforms have on the attitudes and intents of customers in the present day.

Chu (2011) examined differences in Facebook brand self-disclosure, attitudes, advertising responses, and group membership among members and non-members. According to the data, persons who are members of a Facebook group have a greater tendency to disclose personal information than their counterparts who are not members of the group. Chu (2011) states that Facebook group members publicly expose their affiliations and support products or firms when broadcasting adverts to peers, requiring more personal exposure for group participation and online marketing. "Disseminating viral content regarding brands to social contacts and Facebook groups provides avenues that consumers perceive as beneficial when pursuing self-status within a product category" (Chu and colleagues 2011). Chu (2011) reports that college-aged Facebook users are the fastest-growing and most positive about social media advertising. Social media networks may be effective for internet advertising, especially for businesses targeting younger consumers.

Facebook group members view advertising and social media more positively, Chu (2011) found. Customers who like advertising are more inclined to join a brand's Facebook group for promotions. Chu (2011) links customer engagement and user participation in social media group apps. Facebook user behaviour and group application use affect social media advertising frequency and effectiveness. Chi (2011) asserts that people's impressions of advertising vary considerably depending on the social network that they make use of. This shows that the reasons behind the behaviours of individuals who engage in online social networking may have a significant impact on the responses of customers to social media marketing. The technology acceptance model (TAM) was utilised by Harris and Dennis (2011) in order to provide an explanation for their findings, which were the same as the findings that Pookulangara and Koesler

(2011) discovered. By utilising a versatile framework that was drawn from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Harris and Dennis (2011) were able to integrate trust with associated attributes such as perceived enjoyment, simplicity of use, and usefulness. According to Chi (2011), people's impressions of advertising vary depending on the social network that they choose to participate in for themselves. It suggests that customers' reasons for using social media may affect how they react to social media marketing. Harris and Dennis (2011) employed TAM, as Pookulangara and Koesler (2011) described. With the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a flexible framework, Harris and Dennis (2011) linked trust to TAM components. Enjoyment, usability, and utility were among these factors. TAM findings show students have a hierarchical trust system for Facebook. According to Harris and Dennis (2011), students place a higher importance on their "real" friends than they do on their Facebook friends, celebrities, independent review sites, professional blogs, and other online influencers.

Di Pietro and Pantano (2012) found that enjoyment drives buyers to use social networks to make purchases. According to research, the fact that Facebook has a pleasant atmosphere and a proposal submission process that is simple to use increases the possibility that users will notice advertisements for products that are displayed on the network. Retailers can use games, contests, and interactive programs to increase customer engagement and traffic to their Facebook sites, according to Pantano and Di Pietro (2012). The attitudes of customers regarding social media marketing are something that retailers need to understand. By getting a full understanding of the customer perspective about social media marketing, it is possible to ensure that advertising campaigns will be successful. Rather than being influenced by a single drive, Heinonen (2011) asserts that consumer behaviours, which include production, involvement, and consumption, are formed by a number of different reasons. According to Heinonen (2011), the image of individuals as merely consumers has been replaced by the awareness that customers actively give value to enterprises. This is due to the fact that user-generated content reduces the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods. Understanding customer motivations helps you understand why people create content about a company or brand.

Content Created by Users

"Despite the boundless avenues for communication that social media presents, it is individuals, rather than technology, who serve as the genuine influencers" (Gonzalez and colleagues 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that brand-related information becomes social currency when shared. Through the facilitation of brand definition, user-generated content bestows social value upon advertisers. The totality of all methods through which individuals engage with social media, generally referring to the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users."

Connections that are established by an individual within social networks have the potential to make businesses indispensable to the social interactions of their customers. Bourdieu (1977) and Coleman (1988) have provided a definition of social capital, which is intricately connected to the concept of social currency. Social currency has a tremendous impact on the performance of brands. Social capital growth depends on personal relationships. The breadth of an individual's network of connections that are available for utilisation is what determines their social capital, according to Bourdieu, who is quoted in Zinnbauer and Honer (2011). Social currency, the sum of a brand's real and potential resources from social networks and communities, adapts Bourdieu's theory to the rapidly changing online social interactions.

Indemnity, advocacy, information, utility, discourse, and connection are the six components that Zinnbauer and Honer (2011) describe as being the components of social currency. According to the findings of their empirical research, it is not necessary for marketers to make use of all six components of social currency in order to cultivate user loyalty to their brand. Brand success depends on its ability to fit into people's daily routines. Consumer-generated marketing expands when a brand is integrated into a consumer's daily life because it strengthens connections, interactions, and benefits among like-minded customers. Furthermore, they argue that social currencies are not directly controlled by a firm and instead originate from the interactions that customers have with the company. Campbell et al. (2011) define consumer-generated advertising (CGA) as user-generated content that shows users creating brand-focused messaging to inform, persuade, or remind others. Pehlivan, Sarican, and Berthon (2011), call CGA "vigilante marketing." Businesses establish social media accounts to monitor and regulate user-generated content related to their brands. Because of the capacity of customers to communicate with one another, Mangold and Faulds (2009) contend that businesses have less control over the dispersion and content of the information that they provide to their customers.

The social capital that is generated from user-created content is something that businesses have the ability to manage, as well as the obligation to do so (Muñiz and Jensen, 2007).

Viral Marketing

The use of viral advertising as a marketing tactic has grown increasingly widespread among organisations as a means of disseminating additional information regarding their brands and products and this method helps organisations better target their messaging (Bampo et al., 2008). "Viral communication grants marketers enhanced creative freedom via a more personal and intimate message delivery method, thus augmenting the probability of engaging elusive audience members" (Bampo et al. 2008, 274) provides further evidence of this concept. Porter and Golan define virtual advertising as "unpaid peer-to-peer communication of provocative content from an identified sponsor, utilising the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to disseminate the content further." Chu (2011, 31).

Taylor's six-segmented strategy wheel was utilised by Golan and Zaidner (2008) in order to conduct an analysis of 360 viral ads. The researchers came to the conclusion that the most important factors that attract viewers are humour and sensuality. The likelihood of viewers sharing a commercial with their friends and acquaintances increases when they find the commercial to be humorous. It was discovered by Golan and Zaidner (2008) that word-of-mouth can last for years if advertisements are strategically placed in the right places. Ferguson (2008) conducted research to determine the effect that viral marketing strategies have on return on investment by analysing the responses of customers to advertisements from well-known businesses. Ferguson (2008) and Chu (2011) acknowledged the effectiveness of viral marketing, despite the fact that some members of the group were reluctant to spread viral advertisements through their Facebook networks.

Kelly et al. (2010) said task interruption, website clutter, and poor personal experiences with internet advertising make people avoid them. In accordance with the findings of research, "the credibility and reliability of the medium affect the consumer's assessment of the truthfulness of the information presented". The findings of this study indicate that people only pay attention to commercials when they are interesting or invasive, but the majority of advertisements that are displayed on social media platforms are considered to be irrelevant. Many studies have found that humorous ads are well-received and recommended.

In the year 2000, Pavlou and Stewart came up with an innovative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of an organization's interactive advertising advertisement campaign. The processing of information, retrieval of information, and the selection of media materials are the three key focal areas for a given set of metrics. Pavlou and Stewart (2000) say the second set of metrics measures interactive media users' results. Retailers are able to determine the information that customers place the most importance on when evaluating a product by analysing the data that users of interactive media seek out (Pavlou and Stewart, 2000). Retailers are need to take into consideration this fundamental concept when assessing the degree to which customers are reacting to their social media marketing and promotional endeavours. Advertising evaluation must evolve from an exclusive emphasis on results to a dual focus on both process and outcome, since the reciprocal communication between consumers and marketers complicates the isolation of the impacts of individual advertising exposures (Pavlou and Stewart 2000, 74). Given the client's changing role in the process, it is vital to understand user interactions with online advertisements for the design of efficient social media marketing campaigns.

Summary and Recommendations

Research shows that inventive social media client involvement can boost brand recognition. Shankar et al. (2011) state that "promotion via these media has gained significance as an increasing number of consumers utilise social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn) for their marketing and shopping decisions." Curran was et al. (2011) argue that social media platforms like Facebook, by retaining user data, enhance advertising efficacy compared to traditional channels and more accurately target a retailer's desired market. Retailers may improve consumer experiences and social media interactions by using platform data. Hill, Provost, and Volinsky (2006) found that social networks can help companies predict purchases. This is achieved through an examination of data gathered from particular networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, employed by an organisation. Network data

analysis improves a company's marketing by revealing user insights that help determine the best social media techniques for that platform (Hill, Provost, and Volinsky, 2006). Based on the findings of the study, it appears that having a solid understanding of the social media platforms that a company intends to target is an essential component in ensuring the success of its online marketing plan.

Research suggests that corporations should utilise social networking platforms to gather data on consumer behaviour and purchase intentions as a fundamental aspect of their marketing strategies or business models. Business models are interrelated structures, activities, and processes that constitute the organisational framework and benefit partners, customers, and the organisation, according to Sorescu et al. (2011). Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media should always be part of a company's marketing plan. Cappo (2023) states that modern technology lets customers create marketing and brand content with tailored and targeted messaging. Businesses use social media to boost brand appeal and consumer reach. Mangold and Faulds (2009) propose replacing the promotional mix with a new paradigm that uses all kinds of social media to create and implement integrated marketing communication plans. Use this new perspective in these actions. Retailers are beginning to recognise the impact of opinions expressed on social media platforms, which they have been working towards for years in order to gain a crucial component. Throughout history, the input of customers has been an essential component in the development of brands, goods, and company strategies. Most social media marketing studies have focused on customer responses and incorporating them into business strategy, therefore more research is needed to determine strategy efficacy. Social media marketing may not pay off for firms, despite recent research on customer behaviour.

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