SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA GIVE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPANIES ON THE INTERNET

by

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Professor Lynn Kahle

Corporate social media strategy can have differential effects on the bottom line. In this project I observe the effectiveness of social media. . Specifically, I examine how social media affect companies in the 21st century and the extent to which social media give power and responsibility to companies on the Internet. Data have been gathered via personal interviews, reading scholarly articles, and working with faculty at the University of Oregon. I identify the strategies that are most effective for these very different target markets and give recommendations on what companies can do moving forward.

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Introduction

My thesis project involves researching the effectiveness of social media in marketing. Essentially, I am asking "How do social media affect companies and individuals in the 21st century?" and "To what extent do social media give power and responsibility to companies on the Internet?" Data will be gathered via personal interviews, reading scholarly articles, and working with faculty at the University of Oregon.

In today's modern and ever-changing world, consumers are using more and more social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter to interact. Although these sites are great for personal communication among consumers, they also provide marketers with opportunities to interact with consumers with whom they normally would not be able to interact. Marketers can post ads for consumers to see, generate buzz marketing through social media, and even ask for feedback from consumers online. Because social media are powerful in today's economy, marketers invite consumers to participate in promotional marketing by asking consumers to "like" the company page in order to receive promotional offers.

The Internet and social media have made the entire world the new marketplace for businesses. The companies with the most experience and skills in social media marketing will likely be the most successful as technology and culture change.

In order to be effective, social media marketing must therefore be both globally impactful and locally responsive. As technology and culture change, companies will have to adapt to new social media outlets and establish safe and effective social media practices.

Many papers have been written about social media marketing, but the rate of change in this field is so high that new ideas are always emerging. Social media present marketers with previously unprecedented opportunities for growth and success. In marketing terms, we are moving across adopter categories on the diffusion of innovation curve. We have seen the early majority of businesses adopt social media into everyday marketing practices in the last ten years. This group is the first half of the "mass market" of clients. They are risk-takers who were the first to dedicate teams to social media marketing, invest in marketing with intangible return on investment, and look for new markets centered around online communities. A few examples are Starbucks, United Airlines, and KLM. Now we are seeing the late majority joining in this endeavor. Representing the second half of the "mass market", this group has seen the early majority benefit from taking the aforementioned risks, and is determined to maintain a competitive edge in the market. Together, the early and late majority constitute over half of the overall market and illustrate the maturation of social media into the mainstream marketing landscape. During this transition, we will see social media continue to evolve as more and more companies and individuals use it to interact. Throughout this paper, I will give examples of these interactions and show that social media is moving from the early majority to late majority stage in terms of overall usage for business marketing. In terms of sophisticated usage, such as companies employing strategic social media marketing plans, we are still in the early majority stage – a few companies are leading the way for the majority in strategic social media marketing. Many companies, although engaged in social media, treat social media as a separate entity from traditional marketing. Furthermore, the late majority now joining the world

of social media may be in different stages of adoption for different platforms. Although a company could be in the late majority stage of sophisticated use on Facebook, it may only be an innovator on Snapchat, etc. In the next two to three years, sophisticated usage of social media will become more mainstream and give marketers increased power and responsibility.

Categories of Innovativeness*

*From E.M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 4th edition (New York: The Free Press, 1995)

As we move across categories on the curve shown above, it is fascinating to observe the influences of social media in marketing. Of the six external factors of environmental scanning from the PESTEL model of business management - political, economic, sociocultural, technological, environmental, and legal –sociocultural factors, particularly social media, are the most important. This concern about social media is especially important because of the possibility of two-way communication between companies and individuals.

In order to succeed with social media, companies must be FAST: focused, adaptive, strategic, and tuned in. I created this acronym to capture the four basic

qualities companies must have to succeed in social media marketing. Brands have to be focused about how they interact with customers, adaptive to the needs of their customers, strategic in their marketing efforts, and tuned in to what customers are saying or how customers perceive the brand. Being FAST on social media gives companies a competitive advantage because they are the first to react to changes in sociocultural factors. As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, companies that are FAST will evolve with it and therefore succeed.

The chart on the next page highlights some important factors of the external environment in the social media industry. First, market share is divided mostly among three companies – Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. With an estimated annual growth rate of 22.6%, companies should increase marketing on social media to reach more consumers, especially on the major platforms. Furthermore, key external drivers in the industry include percentage of services conducted online as well as number of mobile Internet connections. As will be discussed in Part 1, it is the power of network effects that makes social media so valuable to both marketers and individuals. As the number of mobile Internet connections increases, a higher percentage of services will be conducted online because companies will create these services. With more individuals participating, companies will continue to increase service offerings. As more services become available, more individuals will want to join social media sites. These trends indicate that understanding the power and responsibility of social media marketing is imperative for companies in the 21st century.

Industry at a Glance

Social Networking Sites in 2014

Key Statistics Snapshot

Revenue **$8.6bn**	Annual Growth 09-14 **36.1%**	Annual Growth 14-19 **22.6%**
Profit **$533.2m**	Wages **$4.9bn**	Businesses **6,943**

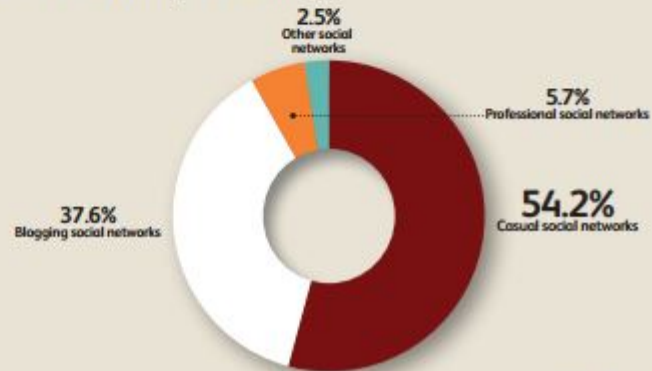**Market Share**

Facebook
68.5%

LinkedIn Corporation
15.6%

Twitter
12.2%

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Key External Drivers

Percentage of services conducted online

Total advertising expenditure

Number of mobile internet connections

Per capita disposable income

OD – Regulation

p. 4

Revenue vs. employment growth

■ Revenue   ■ Employment
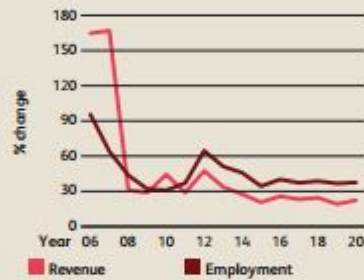
Total advertising expenditure

SOURCE: WWW.IBISWORLD.COM

Products and services segmentation (2014)

2.5% Other social networks

5.7% Professional social networks

54.2% Casual social networks

37.6% Blogging social networks

SOURCE: WWW.IBISWORLD.COM

Part 1: Understanding Social Media and Network Effects

Social media are "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" (Kahle 237). The idea of social media is made possible by the existence of what technologists call Web 2.0 – Internet services that foster collaboration and information sharing; characteristics that distinctly set Web 2.0 apart from the transaction-oriented Web sites of Web 1.0 (Gallaugher 129). With so many users able to go online and produce content, social media are affected both positively and negatively by network effects – also called "Metcalfe's Law" or "network externalities." According to this law, the value of a product or service increases as the number of users grows. For example, as more people use Facebook to post photos, communicate with their friends, or learn about what's going on in their various social networks, the value of Facebook increases because there are more opportunities for exchange. Not only that, but uploading more content to one social media website versus another adds switching costs. For example, if you and your friends have been using Facebook for ten years, it would be hard to switch to another social media site because all of your content (and contacts) are already on Facebook. Complementary products can also add value to social media through network effects. As more users get on Facebook, more advertisers will want to be on Facebook as well. As more advertisers and companies get on Facebook, this concentration of activity may attract more users to join. As new users join, more advertisers and companies will get on Facebook. This phenomenon is called a cross-side exchange benefit – an increase in the number of users on one side of the market (individual Facebook users) creates a rise in the other side

(advertisers and companies). Social media and network effects, however, are not only applicable to Facebook. Social media encompass blogs, Instagram, LinkedIn, online dating networks, Pinterest, Twitter, Reddit, YouTube, Whisper, Wikipedia, and any other online destination where individuals and marketers can interact or upload new content. *Network effects* means that in short amounts of time, a successful social media network can attract millions of new users. Jeff Bullas, a quasi-professional in the world of social media, reported that 1 in every 13 people on Earth is on Facebook. Additionally, in 20 minutes, 2,716,000 messages are sent on Facebook and 10.2 million comments are posted. About 48% of young Americans said they found out about news through Facebook, and the same percentage of 18 to 34 year olds said they check Facebook right when they wake up. Only about a third of Facebook users are in the United States – 70% are now in the rest of the world. (Bullas 1). That fact means we can expect increased global communication, with more users and a sea of new customers for marketers.

But the growth of social media networks can be both positive and negative, depending on the situation. In April 2014, a Dutch girl named Sarah on an American Airlines flight wrote to @AmericanAir on Twitter, "hello my name's Ibrahim and I'm from Afghanistan. I'm part of Al Qaida and on June 1st I'm gonna do something really big bye." What Sarah perceived as a joke was taken very seriously by the airline. In a follow-up message, American Airlines tweeted, "Sarah, we take these threats very seriously. Your IP address and details will be forwarded to security and the FBI." The girl instantly gained 30,000 followers and became the talk of Twitter Sunday morning after the joke started trending. (Gorman 1). Another example of this phenomenon is an

incident that happened in Portland, Oregon in December 2014. In this incident,

Nordstrom department store fired an African-American sales associate who made a

statement about killing police on his Facebook page. Aaron Hodges of Portland

suggested killing a white officer for every black man killed by police. A screen grab of

his comment quickly circulated online, leading to many complaints to Nordstrom.

According to KTVZ.com, Hodges said he made the comment in an exchange with a

friend from high school and didn't literally mean that officers should be killed. The 37-

year-old says he understands why Nordstrom fired him, but doesn't understand why

someone would take a screenshot of his comment and send it to his employer

(Associated Press).

Similarly, an inmate in a South Carolina prison was recently sentenced to over

37 years in solitary confinement for writing 38 Facebook posts. The posts were treated

by prison administration the same as Level 1 violations, which include rioting,

homicide, and other violent acts. The inmate, Tyheem Henry, also lost 74 years of

canteen, phone, and visiting privileges. The author provides that, "The sentences are so

long because SCDC issues a separate Level 1 violation for each day that an inmate

accesses a social network. An inmate who posts five status updates over five days,

would receive five separate Level 2 violations, while an inmate who posted 100 updates

in one day would receive only one" (Knibbs 2).

Another incident where the consequences of social media become apparent is in

the political sphere. According to the New York Times, there are about 20 million fake

users on Twitter. Out of over 500 million users, this means that about 4% of Twitter

accounts are fake. And during the last presidential election, Mitt Romney was accused

of buying 117,000 fake followers to make himself look more popular(Edwards 1). The same issue happens all the time on Facebook – companies create fake profiles so that they can get more "likes."

Simply put, network effects allow both individuals and marketers to leverage the power of social media for both good and bad. The ability to reach more people on the Internet creates not only a sense of power, but a need for increased responsibility. As we move from the early majority to late majority adopter category on the diffusion of innovation curve, we will see these challenges continue and the market develop new solutions. In the transitional phase, however, marketers hold great responsibilities to their companies and stakeholders to use social media carefully and strategically. According to Lynn Kahle in *The New Paradigm Marketing Model*, "marketing is the central mediating variable in the attainment and consolidation of power by politicians, governments, and nations" (Kahle 99). The New Paradigm Marketing Model (NPMM) states that "political, corporate, and national entities compete at a global level for the attention and loyalty of the emerging global citizen/consumer" (Kahle 101). Therefore, social media are an important part of global marketing since they connect marketers with individual consumers in direct communications unprecedented in history. As stated by Professor Kahle, "advanced technologies… and the Internet, provide unprecedented opportunities for the rapid dissemination of ideas, goods, and services to a global consumer/citizen" (Kahle 104).

Individuals and companies need to be aware of the network effects and power dynamic described above because they continue to increase the value of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. As more users join these sites, individuals have a

greater potential to influence others both positively and negatively. For example, an individual who posts a complaint against a company on Facebook now has millions of potential viewers and supporters in their audience as the post is shared with the individual's friends and friends of friends. Similarly, companies responding to or interacting with individuals online have a greater audience than ever before. Because of this, it is paramount that companies use social media and follow strategic guidelines of when and how to interact. At the same time, however, companies should not approach social media robotically. In Part 2: How We Use Social Media, I explain how individuals use social media to interact, and highlight some of the successes and failures of companies on social media sites.

Part 2: How We Use Social Media

Social media have a number of characteristics that add value for the end-user, and as described in the previous section, network effects cause this value to increase exponentially. A combination of detailed personal profiles, affiliations with groups and individuals, private messages, public discussions, media sharing, feeds of recent activity, and third-party applications make joining social media an attractive endeavor. Yet on the other hand, participating in this lifestyle can often mean that users expose their activities, lives, persona, photos, sense of humor, and friends to a broad community of unintended recipients (Gallaugher 141). Although marketers can go online to get feedback from a large crowd, Professor Lynn Kahle explains how the same online platform can give marketers greater access to a wealth of private information. Comparing social media with traditional market research, he explains, "Social media, on the other hand, aggregate real lifestyle groups. The social media group members have opted in to a category that embraces a cluster of motivations they possess.... Looking at places people choose to go is generally more informative than looking at where statisticians have pigeonholed them" (Kahle 238). Marketers can read user profiles, see where users "check-in", see who users are friends with, and even see how users interact on their "wall" if a user has not blocked this information from being viewed by the public. Oftentimes, marketers can request access to users' information in exchange for benefits such as coupons or sweepstakes entries. This openness creates new opportunities for companies because they get a much better sense of who someone is by reading online profiles or observing online interactions. Even financial companies have begun using social media as a way to verify consumer information. According to

Bloomberg BusinessWeek, "credit bureaus and payment companies Equifax, EBay's PayPal, WePay, and Intuit have begun trials to see whether social posts can help prove identities or detect whether customers are lying about their finances" (Kucera 1). They are using social media to combat online payment fraud, which cost an estimated $3.5 billion to retailers in 2013. The companies say that a great deal of information is readily accessible online – many young people allow the public to see certain parts of their Facebook profiles, as well as accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn. Companies look for employment history, state of residence, existence of a criminal record, and income level. Fake profiles create a huge concern, however. On Fiverr, an online marketplace, one user offered to add 50 friends to any Facebook account in 24 hours. New companies like Trulioo are now emerging to help companies detect fraudulent information.

Despite the risks and challenges present, early majority marketers have shown interest in the opportunities that social media bring to the table. On TripAdvisor, a website that allows users to rate places they have visited, travelers consistently give feedback on their experiences during trips and recommend others to engage in or avoid those same experiences. Steve Kaufer, The CEO of TripAdvisor, said "The popular belief that people only take the time to post something when they want to vent or discuss a bad experience is simply not true; at least in our experience. The majority of the over 20 million reviews and opinions we have received on TripAdvisor are positive ones. People are simply compelled to give back to a community that has given to them" (Qualman 94). In this same way, consumers are also able to use Facebook to make purchase decisions. For example, I might be debating between going to Target or Wal Mart to buy groceries. When I log onto Facebook and look at Target's page, I am able to

see that over 22 million people like Target, and that 63 of my friends like Target. If I go

to Wal Mart's page, over 34 million people like the company but only 31 of my friends

like Wal Mart. Based on this information, I might choose to go to Target since more of

my friends like this company than the number of friends who like Wal Mart. Because of

these early applications, late majority marketers are starting to build on the successes

observed among early majority players. As they see early majority marketers

overcoming the risks associated with social media, they are eager to join the game and

profit from value social media give both companies and consumers.

In *The New Paradigm Marketing Model*, Professor Lynn Kahle explains that:

> "Easier access to larger amounts of information on a global scale has
> increased the need to manage exchange relationships with greater care…
> It has been estimated that new customer acquisition costs six to nine
> times more than loyal customer retention, clearly demonstrating the
> value of relationships" (Kahle 106)… "At the market level, these
> developments have changed what customers everywhere can know about
> the way other people live, about the products and services available to
> them, and about the relative value such offerings provide" (Kahle 112).

Because of these facts, it is important for companies online to manage their customer

relationships carefully in order to benefit from the opportunities that social media have

to offer.

One of the important points to remember about Facebook and any social media

site is that all users see something different. This variation in content is based on a

user's group of friends, affiliations, interests, and even their hometown or location.

Companies frequently run promotions to try to get users to like their page, and some

even ask users to invite their friends. For example, the Chinese restaurant Panda

Express used to frequently offer coupons for free food in exchange for users liking their

page – the company now boasts over 3 million likes. CompareFord has approached

Facebook in a different way. Their page reads "There's a giveaway coming your way

once we hit 50,000 fans! Can't wait to find out what it is? Tag a friend in the comment

section below and ask them to "Like" our page so we can reach 50,000 fans even

sooner!" In this case, Ford is using both network effects and network marketing to try to

reach a large audience. Consumers might want to tag a friend and comment on Ford's

promotion so that the company gives away a great prize. Doing so makes Ford relevant

to not just the person who saw this page, but to all their friends as well because

Facebook reports recent activity to all friends via the News Feed. As mentioned earlier,

"liking" Ford's page will also increase the number of friends who like that page, which

is displayed for each of the user's friends who visit the page. From a marketing

standpoint, the return on investment here can be large. Generally marketing is one of the

most expensive operations in a business, but in this case, Ford can reach users for free.

The company posted this status on April 24, 2014. Shortly after, the company had 49,

901 likes on their CompareFord page. Through network effects and buzz marketing,

liking Ford may quickly become viral and create lucrative opportunities for the

American car manufacturer as it connects with consumers and gains popularity. Even

locally at University of Oregon, the Clark Honors College Apparel page has used

Facebook to leverage the power of social media and gain popularity. After it was first

created in April 2014, Clark Honors Apparel announced, "Remember, 3 lucky Honors

College students who like our Facebook page will receive a free clothing item of their

choice!" - the page has gained over 70 likes. Similarly, the University of Oregon

Libraries have recently announced an Instagram contest. Students submit a photo of

how they see the library. The library then selects two winners to win $50 campus cash. Clearly the University of Oregon Libraries values these photos, and the participation of students on Instagram allows for much greater outreach than ever before.

While some companies have been using social media for marketing since its inception, others have only recently begun to explore the opportunities. Late majority adopters from universities to ice cream shops are launching pages, networks, contests, and more on social media to interact with their constituents. The use of social media is becoming more advanced, which means that we are starting to see social media involved in every part of our lives. As consumers continue to fuel this online growth, marketers in all industries are continuing to follow suit.

Social media have transformed the ways in which we interact and do business. They have given a voice to people who otherwise had no forum in which to speak in the past. Social media have created transparency and accountability, instantaneous feedback and new opportunity. They have created new challenges and reshaped the marketing landscape. According to *Socialnomics* by Erik Qualman:

> "Social media has evolved from a mere post-it-answer it model (bulletin boards and blogs) to instantaneous publish-subscribe models (i.e., Twitter and Facebook updates). Combined with the portable surfing of today's phones, this pub-sub model has both fantastic and dire implications for businesses. It's fantastic from the standpoint that one can not only stand in front of a refrigerator in a store and check out reviews of that model, the consumer can tweet his network to get advice on all models, this brand, and this store instantaneously. If the product and store have good reputations, buying hesitancy is removed and the purchase takes place. The dire side of this is that if the price, the model, or the store has poor reputations, the transaction will definitely not take place. We are moving to a world with total retail and product performance transparency for the consumer. The market will be much less tolerant of poor service and poor products and high margins with this social communications infrastructure" (Qualman 99).

An interesting case example of the power of social media comes from *Groundswell* by

Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff. In this book, the authors describe the "groundswell", a

"social trend in which people use technologies to get the things they need from each

other, rather than from traditional institutions like corporations" (Li 9). The authors

point to Digg.com, a site where members vote and comment on news stories. Users

"digg" stories, and the company posts the most popular ones on its home page. In April

2008, Digg.com featured the number "09 F9 11 02" on its home page, not knowing that

this was the encryption code for new high-definition DVDs in the U.S. Because this

code would enable users to make copies of "uncopiable" DVDs, the AACS LA – an

organization backed by major media corporations – sent Digg.com a cease-and-desist

email. Digg.com's CEO Kevin Rose complied with the order and removed the code

from Digg.com, but not before thousands of people had found the number and posted it

on their blogs. "By the time Kevin woke up on May 1, there were 88 blogs that

mentioned the number. By the end of the same day, there were 3,172" (Li 5). Since

users also started voting for these blog postings on Digg.com, the code reappeared on

the site numerous times, and the CEO gave up. Digg.com allowed the posts to stay

featured on its site. "By the next day, there were 605 news stories about how Digg took

down the link and then reversed its decision. By asking that the story be taken down, the

representatives of the movie industry had created a whirlwind of publicity, ensuring that

it could never be taken down. People, by moving together on the Internet for a moment

in time, had created an irresistible, ineradicable groundswell" (Li 6).

Another entity that recognizes the power of social media is armies. According to

The Guardian, the British army is creating a team of Facebook warriors called the 77th

Brigade. This team will be responsible for "non-lethal warfare", meaning psychological operations and using social media to engage in unconventional warfare in the information age. With 1500 soldiers recruited from different army units, the 77th Brigade will attempt to control the narrative of situations the army is involved in. The article claims that the creation of a social media team is a response to increased social media use by enemies across the world. The U.S. and Israeli armies are already involved in psychological operations. For example, the Israeli Defense Forces are active on 30 platforms in six languages (MacAskill 1).

In an article titled "Social Media is Shifting Power from Advertisers to Consumers" by Brenda Wiederhold, the author explains how social media give increased power to advertisers spending billions in the U.S. market. She writes, "By the 2013 Super Bowl, some predict that advertisers will change less liked versions of their TV commercials to different versions later in the game- for the first time making real time changes in the commercial lineup. This is based on the estimated 5 million viewers who tweeted or otherwise commented on the commercials during the 2012 Super Bowl, for which ads cost an average of $3.5 million" (Wiederhold 577). Although this is unlikely to happen due to the high cost of producing Super Bowl commercials, it nevertheless proves that advertisers are gaining access to real-time consumer feedback. The possibilities from this two-way consumer interaction give advertisers more power to influence consumers in real-time by gauging consumers' responses to ads and other marketing efforts.

The power aspect of social media is fascinating. According to Professor Kahle in *The New Paradigm Marketing Model*,

"'We live at a moment when the entire structure of power that held the world together is now disintegrating. A radically different structure of power is taking form'. Toffler defines three types of power – violence, wealth, and knowledge, and he argues that we are in a period where knowledge is replacing the other two" (Kahle 107)… Simply put, "marketing skills enable a corporation, politician, or nation to utilize wealth to create knowledge, and knowledge to create wealth." (Kahle 108). "People, companies, and political entities seeking international economic power conduct surveys ('marketing research') to find out what new information ('knowledge products') will help them achieve their economic goals ('profit')" (Kahle 109).

To support these claims, a survey study was done in 2009 in which 115 public relations practitioners who were more frequent users of social network sites reported greater perceptions of their own structural, expert and prestige power. Marichris Diga and Tom Keller found that "by understanding how social network sites work, practitioners may determine what information is relevant to their clients and organizations and how they can use these sites to listen to and engage with publics. Since social network sites offer news, information, and story ideas, practitioners also may use them as a media relations resource, which can increase their perceived expertise. (Marichris 2).

The examples given above highlight the importance of social media in the global power structure, where customer relationships lead to knowledge, and knowledge leads to power. Professor Kahle argues that "marketing [is] perhaps the most significant force mediating the acquisition and maintenance of power" (Kahle 107). As more and more consumers move online to different social media spheres, companies will have more opportunities to practice direct marketing with these consumers, and learn from mistakes. Whether or not companies are ready for it, social media are now essential to gaining and maintaining power, or market share, in today's globalized world. For any company engaged in marketing online, social media that bring increased power also

give companies increased responsibility. As social media evolve from early majority adoption to late majority adoption, it will continue to give companies more of both. New regulations and best practices will keep developing to respond to social media's role in the mainstream market, and new strategies will continue to develop. In the next sections, I illustrate some common methods and strategies companies should use to be successful online.

Part 3: Social Media as a Department

In this new world dominated by various social media, one thing companies, marketers, and advertisers can do to be successful is take social media seriously. According to Flat World Knowledge, many companies are now getting SMART and creating a "social media awareness and response team" (Gallaugher 131). For example, Starbucks is known as one of the most aware companies in the world when it comes to social media. However, even SMART companies can make bad decisions, and Starbucks recently launched a #SpreadTheCheer Twitter campaign that backfired on the global corporation. According to The Huffington Post, "the coffee giant [Starbucks] recently asked customers to tweet out some holiday cheer, using the hashtag '#SpreadTheCheer.' What the company instead received was a slew of tweets using the hashtag to criticize Starbucks' low tax rates and labor policies in the United Kingdom. What's worse, the critical and at times profanity-laced tweets were displayed on a giant screen at London's Natural History museum, where the company sponsors the ice rink" (Huffington Post 1). Perhaps one of the biggest media issues Starbucks has faced in its company history, it responded by sending an apologetic email to The Huffington Post. Starbucks said, "As a family-friendly responsible company we are committed to ensuring that our publicly displayed content is appropriate for all audiences..." However, no matter how good Starbucks might be at damage control, irrevocable damage had already been done to its global brand. The story of Starbucks' Twitter disaster should send a clear message that companies need to be aware of what's going on in their Twitter accounts. It's not enough to just be reactive – companies need to be proactive to ensure that disasters like the one Starbucks had are prevented way ahead of

time. Companies need to interact with stakeholders online to prevent negative dialog, and if criticisms start appearing in the world of social media, companies need to straightforwardly address these immediately. But what happens when corporate Twitter accounts become hacked?

Bloomberg BusinessWeek reported in February 2013 that two multinational corporations – Burger King and Jeep – had their Twitter accounts hacked by a New England DJ. "Burger King's account instructed followers to "'look for a McDonald's in a hood near you.' Jeep's corporate account stated 'We just got sold to @Cadillac because we caught our employees doing this in the bathroom,' with an attached photo of a man with a prescription pill bottle" (Bixby 1). Although these messages might appear to obviously be a false representation of the company that got hacked, users can get confused, and corporate brands can be forever damaged. Not only that, but social media sites such as Twitter can become less trusted as security breaches like this one happen. In today's data-driven world, hacks and breaches have become more common. Both users and companies can best protect themselves by playing defense. First, being cognizant of what's happening with several corporate social media accounts can help a company address security breaches as they happen. Yes, users might see a message that is harmful to the brand, but responding quickly will show users that the company is aware of issues and taking corrective action. If a company responds in an appropriate amount of time, the company can alert both readers and media outlets of any mistakes. In fact, users who saw the erroneous messages from Burger King and Jeep probably went back to read these companies' corporate social media accounts right after seeing the false messages. Had the companies caught on to the hacks quickly enough, and

worked with Twitter to resolve the breach, they might have been able to communicate the error to users far more effectively than they did by apologizing after the fact.

Within their social media departments, companies should also make sure that they diversify their communications across many social media platforms, and that these communications remain consistent. Times are always changing, and what is popular among the crowds today may not be popular tomorrow. According to The Age, an Australian online newspaper, "A study of how older teenagers use social media has found Facebook is 'not just on the slide, it is basically dead and buried' and is being replaced by simpler social networks such as Twitter and Snapchat" (Sparkes 1). The article claims that young people now see the sites as "uncool" and update their profiles just to stay in touch with older relations that see the site as popular. Part of the problem, the article explains, is that parents have started using Facebook to stay connected to their children's' lives. Young peoples' response, of course, is to move on to simpler services – Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Whatsapp – as a way to follow new trends and spend less time updating profiles. According to researchers, "WhatsApp has overtaken Facebook as the number one way to send messages, while Snapchat has gained in popularity in recent months by allowing users to send images which 'self-destruct' after a short period on the recipient's phone in order to maintain privacy." As social media usage continues to change, marketers need to be aware and active through their social media departments. For example, if fewer users are updating profiles on Facebook, marketers must find new ways to obtain information or connect with customers. Prdaily.com reported in February 2013 that the top brands in terms of followers on Instagram are MTV (1.14 million followers), Starbucks (1.1 million

followers), Nike (880,000 followers), Burberry (660,000 followers), and Tiffany & Co. (364,000 followers) (Allen 1). Being on top of only one or two social media networks is not enough. Even though a company might be strong on one site, it must always remain valuable and relevant on every site. According to The Age, "Snapchat claims 350 million images are sent every day, and recently turned down a $3.2 billion acquisition offer from Facebook." With lots of competition in social media, there are bound to be changes constantly. But with a good social media awareness response team, companies can be SMART and keep up with such changes, leverage new technologies, and gain market share. They can also be FAST by being focused, adaptive, strategic, and tuned in. A great example of an organization that uses social media most effectively is the Jewish National Fund. In order to achieve its organizational objectives, the JNF must focus on three social media channels to most effectively reach its desired audience: supporters of Israel. Here's how the JNF uses its social media channels effectively:

Facebook – On its Facebook page, the JNF generated 44,582 likes and makes announcements such as "Our new blue boxes have been officially released!" The page helps educate readers on what the JNF is all about, and serves as an outlet for positive organizational communications.

Twitter – On its Twitter page, the JNF makes more specific announcements about some of its projects for up-to-the-minute information. The project of creating a large park in Be'er Sheba, for example, is announced via tweet.

Blog – On its blog – jnfus.tumblr.com, the JNF goes into detail about its projects, posting pictures and responding to any community concerns.

With these three major social media outlets, the JNF pursues a variety of effective communication methods, but makes sure to keep these communications consistent across all platforms. If someone voices a concern, the JNF has an active social media team to respond to issues via its online platforms. The JNF is also FAST. It focuses on who its customers are, is adaptive to new technologies, interacts with its customers strategically on its three main social media channels, and is tuned in to how customers are interacting with the organization.

Many of the companies mentioned above were early majority adopters of social media for marketing. Early majority adopters such as Starbucks are leading the market with new ideas, applications, and lessons learned from past mistakes. They have gained tremendous power in the market by being focused, adaptive, strategic, and timely. As late majority adopters come online, the applications of social media that early adopters previously practiced will become mainstream, improved, and refined. Social media are becoming an industry with greater and greater marketing investment, and there is profit to be made (or lost). Where there is money at stake, companies are becoming more strategic in their social media marketing efforts.

Part 4: Social Media Strategies

As companies think about how to use social media in business, there are many strategies they can use to be more competitive. To understand how businesses are approaching the challenge, Harvard Business Review analyzed strategies and practices at more than 1,100 companies across several industries and continents, and conducted in-depth interviews with 70 executives who were leading social media initiatives. They found four different social media strategies – the "predictive practitioner", the "creative experimenter", the "social media champion", and the "social media transformer." (Wilson 1).

The first strategy, the "predictive practitioner", confines usage to a specific area, such as customer service. It works well for businesses seeking to avoid uncertainty and to deliver results that can be measured with established tools. The second, the "creative experimenter", is for companies that embrace uncertainty, using small-scale tests to find ways to improve discrete functions and practices. These companies aim to learn by listening to customers and employees on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. "Social media champions" tackle large initiatives designed for predictable results, and may depend on close collaboration across multiple functions and levels, including external parties. On the other hand, "social media transformers" engage in large-scale interactions that extend to external stakeholders, allowing companies to use the unexpected to improve the way they do business.

An example of "predictive practitioner" is Clorox. To increase its virtual R&D capabilities, the social media team created Clorox Connects—a website that enables brainstorming with customers and suppliers. A typical query posted there: "We're

working on X product idea. What features would you like to see included?" Another example, at EMC, used "creative experimenting". It pays particular attention to how its 40,000 global employees use internal social media to locate needed expertise within the company. In an effort to reduce the use of outside contractors, it created a test platform, called EMC/ONE that helped employees network and connect on projects. Within a year EMC/ONE was delivering substantial benefits. For instance, a division that needed to produce a sales video connected with an in-house production group, saving $10,000 as a result. The company estimates that EMC/ONE has generated more than $40 million in savings overall. Companies with clear objectives for using and measuring social technologies in a specific part of the organization should begin as predictive practitioners. They should look for a group that wants to become more social in its business. Creative experimenters are driven in part by small budgets; labeling a project "experimental" can exempt it from ROI constraints. Both the predictive practitioner and creative experimenter strategies can quickly create significant results and learning and serve as a training ground for larger efforts.

Perhaps the most powerful strategy is "social media champion". In 2009, Ford decided to lend 100 Fiestas for six months to recipients who would use social media to discuss their experiences with the cars in an authentic, direct way. It held an online contest to select candidates, carefully choosing drivers with large social media followings. To further reduce uncertainty, it required them regularly to produce content on themed "missions" and designed a schedule for postings. Within six months the drivers had posted more than 60,000 items, which garnered millions of clicks, including more than 4.3 million YouTube views. The $5 million campaign created a prelaunch

brand awareness rate of 37% among Millennials, generated 50,000 sales leads to new customers, and prompted 35,000 test-drives. Companies should use a larger-scale strategy if they want significant results. A social champion strategy can help companies identify and enlist enthusiasts to expand initiatives inside and outside the organization.

Finally, companies like Cisco use the "social media transformer" strategy. In 2010, Cisco launched Integrated Workforce Experience (IWE), a social business platform designed to facilitate internal and external collaboration and decentralize decision making. In this platform, a real-time news feed provides updates on employees' status and activities as well as information about relevant communities, business projects, and customer and partner interactions. These technologies have accelerated collegiality and knowledge sharing among new geographically dispersed teams. The social transformer strategy can have the largest impact on an enterprise, affecting everything from R&D and operations to channel partners and customers. However, moving from a champion to a transformer strategy requires major, companywide changes to such things as incentive systems, business processes, resource management, and leadership styles. The social transformers we've seen often have broader social business objectives and view social technologies as a key enabler of - but not the final answer to - those objectives.

While all of the strategies that Harvard Business Review suggests are effective for companies that fit the necessary criteria, many companies (especially small businesses) will use simpler methods of leveraging social media to reach customers and drive sales. Although various social media sites continue to gain popularity over Facebook, the latter is still used by the majority of Americans. According to "The

Power of Like" by Andrew Lipsman, Facebook is the dominant social-networking site, with an audience of approximately 160 million U.S. visitors each month. It accounts for 90 percent of all time spent on social-networking sites" (Lipsman 1). This fact means that if a company can run a successful marketing campaign on Facebook, it can directly reach about half of the U.S. Population. In order to do so, companies use the power of "like".

The power of "like" is the power of endorsements. Suppose Panda Express posts an ad that all participating locations will be serving free chow mein in honor of Chinese New Year. If one of my Facebook friends clicks "like" on this post, I will see a message on my News Feed telling me that one of my friends "liked" a post by Panda Express, and I will also see Panda Express's post below the message. By "liking" the post, my friend makes it more likely for Panda Express to reach me because it now appears in my News Feed. Clicking "like" also tells me that one of my friends actually likes what Panda Express posted, and I become more likely to pay attention to the post as a consumer. "The Power of Like" claims that "the Newsfeed also is the primary location where branded content is consumed... users are 40 to 150 times more likely to consume branded content in the Newsfeed than to visit the Fan Page itself" (Lipsman 1). This phenomenon makes a "like" incredibly powerful, since it gives companies a presence in the News Feed and increases the likelihood of Facebook users consuming branded content.

A good example of this effect is from Starbucks. Lipsman states that "to understand differences in purchase patterns among the fans and friends segments, comScore analyzed Starbucks customers' in-store purchase patterns. The analysis,

which examined in-store purchase behavior during May 2011, revealed that Starbucks

fans and friends of fans spent 8 percent more and transacted 11 percent more frequently

than the average Internet user who transacted at Starbucks" (Lipsman 12). By

leveraging the power of "like" on Facebook, Starbucks can drive more sales and create

competitive advantage. Lipsman shows that other companies' data followed similar

patterns as well, with friends of fans visiting the companies' websites up to 230% more

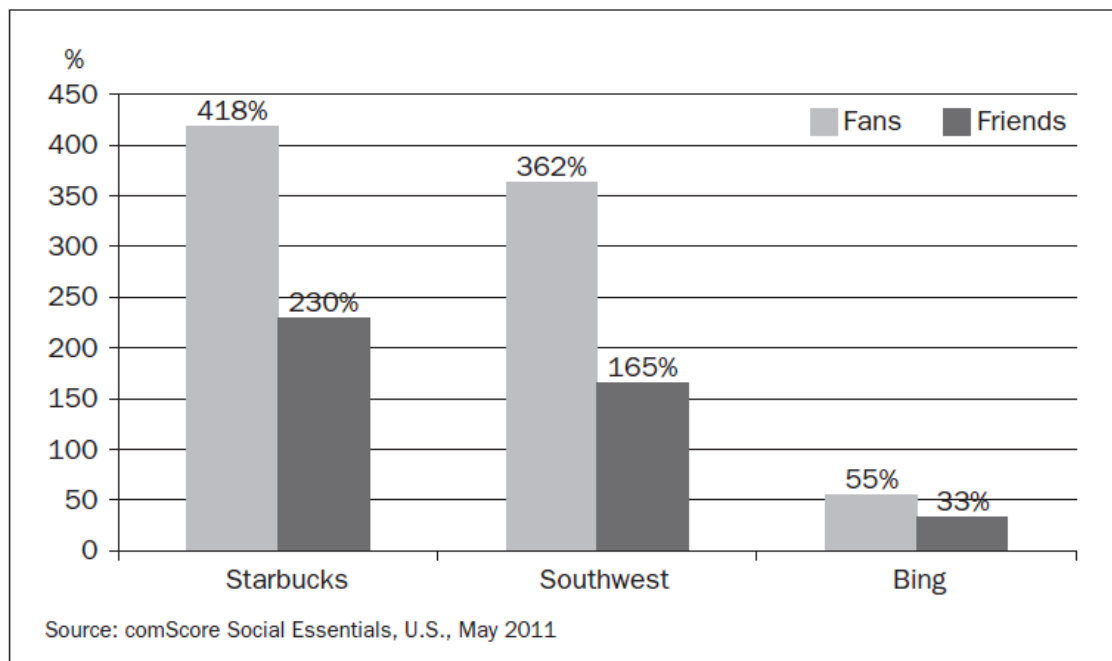frequently than average Internet users (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 Starbucks, Southwest, and Bing: Website Visitation among Exposed Fans and Friends of Fans versus Average Internet User.

The power of a "like" is the simplest tool a company can use to market itself on

Facebook, the dominant social media site in the United States. By creating targeted

branded messages for their patrons and measuring their reach with Facebook analytic

tools, companies will understand and optimize how to leverage their presence on Facebook. Once companies establish fans, they can then use the power of "like" to reach friends of their fans. (Lipsman 1). As mentioned earlier in this paper, a greater number of followers/fans multiplies quickly on Facebook, and companies that can continue to reach friends of fans will benefit from a larger audience, and potentially increased market share.

In order to succeed with social media, companies must be FAST: focused, adaptive, strategic, and tuned in. Brands have to be focused about how they interact with customers, adaptive with to the needs of their customers, strategic in their marketing efforts, and tuned in to what customers are saying or how customers perceive the brand. Being FAST on social media gives companies a competitive advantage because they are the first to react to changes in sociocultural factors of the environment. As this environment continues to evolve, companies that are FAST evolve with it, and therefore succeed.

A good example of this effect is from JetBlue. In 2007, the airline faced a public relations nightmare when a storm in New York caused many planes to be grounded on the runway for hours. Over 1000 flights were cancelled, and customers were unhappy with JetBlue. Posting a video on YouTube, JetBlue apologized for the service failure and explained plans for improvement. According to David Giantasio, "most times, brands who address a problem head-on, minus the spin, end up diffusing a situation. It's when they ignore public outcry that they dig themselves a hole" (Giantasio 5). In this case, JetBlue addressed the issue head-on and maintained its reputation of bringing humanity into the airline business. Furthermore, JetBlue was FAST. It created a focused

message, adapted to sociocultural changes in the way it had to talk to customers, was strategic in when and how it communicated, and was tuned in to customer needs. Giantasio explains, "that early use of a social channel, along with JetBlue's general openness and willingness to take responsibility, helped it soar above the media circus and resume it's steady course as a consumer favorite. Despite weeks of negative news coverage and consumer outcry, the carrier kept its place atop the J.D. Power North America Airline Satisfaction Study for low-cost carriers in '07" (Giantasio 2).

The way JetBlue responded to its customers in 2007 is not reflective of the way that many companies have engaged with social media. In fact, in a survey of 1255 consumers age 18 and older, Live Ops found that "about 70 percent of complaints on Twitter and Facebook are ignored [and] most customers wait more than two days for a response on Facebook" (Somerville 1). According to Natalie Petouhoff, a business consultant and lecturer at UCLA Anderson School of Management, "customers are likely to spend about 30 percent more money with retailers that interact on social media" (Somerville 2). When United Airlines failed to respond to a customer complaint in 2009, the airline suffered. The customer posted a YouTube video about how United Airlines breaks guitars, and the video went viral. If companies are FAST and SMART: focused, adaptive, strategic, and tuned in; and have a social media awareness and response team in place, they are much more likely to be successful.

I gained further insights on social media strategy by listening to social media professionals at the UO Social Media Club. I am fortunate to have heard from these social media "gurus" and would like to thank them for speaking with me and other

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students at University of Oregon. Two early majority adopters of social media I learned most from are Aaron Kaufman and Pinky Gonzales.

Aaron Kaufman – PlayStation

It was really interesting to hear Aaron Kaufman talk about his experiences as a community manager at PlayStation. What most surprised me was hearing that before Aaron started working at Santa Monica Studio, the business had almost no presence on social media and no social media strategy in place to interact with fans. Aaron explained that PlayStation today has teams working on its Instagram, Twitter, and other social media channels. But the lack of all this interaction on older channels ten years ago shows that businesses are still in the process of experimenting with social media, and many have not even created social media strategies to interact with fans.

Aaron made another point that I really liked: he said that as a community manager, he knows the pulse of his community, what people think of the brand, what content they want, and how to reach and talk with fans. At EA, Aaron had a tremendous amount of success building a community around *Command and Conquer*. He organized conventions, asked players for feedback on the game, and established a monthly online TV show that became a key community-marketing vehicle. Most importantly, Aaron built genuine relationships with fans in ways that EA had only dreamed.

This genuine approach that Aaron used to connect with fans at EA Sports led him to success with THQ as he worked on WWE games and the UFC franchise, where Aaron learned that genuine relationships as well as consistent and frequent content would have a great impact on the number of followers in any social media channel.

What really defines Aaron and his strategy, however, is the game *God of War*. Aaron explained to us how this particular game was the story of "you" as a warrior. By focusing on each individual (a form of direct marketing), Aaron successfully sent people from the game's website to social media channels, and back to the website. He said that this digital marketing strategy touched all of the marketing pillars. By collaborating with several departments at PlayStation and taking seriously his interaction with the gaming community, Aaron proves that strategic social media interactions lead to tangible results.

Perhaps the most critical component of this social media strategy, however, is that Aaron implements it whether he is trying to sell a product or not. He confessed to us that he was ashamed of PlayStation's response to the community when servers went down for three days. According to Aaron, the letter of apology was heavily crafted by PR and not "humanized" enough. Aaron compared this outcome to a time when he had to deal with the implications of saying a game had no DRM when it did. Instead of trying to craft a response carefully, Aaron admitted to his mistake and quickly won back support from those customers who were upset with his statements.

Finally, Aaron described how he would implement his approach in the most practical application: getting users to make purchases after visiting his social media channels. He explained that marketers have, on average, six second to get someone's attention on social media. Since fans are always scrolling, it's paradigm to use imagery as a tool for "buy now" campaigns. Staying consistent with his human view on social media, Aaron would not inundate users with "buy now" on social media channels. However, once users decide to click on a link, this link would take them directly to the

purchase point with as few clicks as possible. In all these examples, Aaron demonstrates how it's possible to be human and genuine while still driving a marketing strategy on social media. After hearing him speak about his experiences, I am inspired to find new ways to use social media as I get into the business world and interact with my own communities.

Pinky Gonzales – Linked In

I learned so much about Linked In after hearing Pinky Gonzales talk about his experiences using the site to network with others. Gonzales explained that in the last 20 years, the Internet has evolved to the point that if it were to shut down tonight, the world would explode into chaos. Although many social media sites exist, Gonzales declared that Linked In is different from other social media sites like Facebook because it involves professional networking in a business-to-business context. Although Linked In has a billion fewer active users than Facebook, the site is a powerful networking tool because most of its activity is based in the United States. Therefore, students such as me can use Linked In to network with others from particular backgrounds, industries, and specific locations in the United States. If you like or comment on something on Linked In, it becomes your status update. Once you're connected with someone on Linked In, liking their posts is an easy way to get on their radar. According to Gonzales, however, even highly successful people on Linked In don't know how it works. Many users fall victim to "click bait" - they click on a post that seems interesting and genuine only to discover it is an advertisement in disguise. For example, Upworthy watches for things that are trending, embeds the YouTube video into advertising, and makes money. To

truly be successful on Linked In, therefore, Gonzales said it takes critical thinking to look at different networks and also courage to take advantage of connection opportunities. Gonzales first explained the four most important components of a great Linked In profile, and then described how to use Linked In to identify and "destroy" networking targets.

According to Gonzales, the first and most important piece of a great Linked In profile is the photo, which should be a headshot. He stated that the photo should not be cropped, and that it should be taken in front of a non-distracting background. Since Linked In is used for professional networking in a business-to-business context, it is critical to have a professional photo when engaging with others on Linked In. Another important component is the personal summary. Gonzales explained that this should have a maximum length of about 3 paragraphs (on his Linked In personal summary, 3 paragraphs sums up 15 years of experience). Gonzales also said that the personal summary is your opening statement, and it's primarily used to describe what motivates you to do what you do. In other words, the personal statement describes your purpose.

While having a professional headshot and concise personal summary are key, a great Linked In profile is not complete without two more important components – experience and detail. Gonzales' definition of experience is stating where you work and what you do there. The purpose of the Experience section on Linked In is therefore to let people know what you do and who you work for. One paragraph should be about the company itself – for example, someone who works for Nike might have a paragraph saying "Nike is *this* and my job at Nike is *that*. Then, the Nike employee would write a one-sentence description of what they did for the company, all written in first person.

What I found really interesting about Gonzales' approach to the Experience section is that he encouraged University of Oregon students to all use the same description of the university, and to copy this directly from the university's website. Even though this may seem "unoriginal", Gonzales stated that doing that is the best way to appear professional and leverage the power of the University of Oregon brand. Gonzales further emphasized that it's important to make sure you use detail when writing about what you do or did for the company you work for, since the context and detail of the Experience section are highly general (could be the same description of University of Oreogn for anyone who went there). A comprehensive paragraph about the company where you also list *your* specialty is the best way to present your strengths and how you differ from others with similar backgrounds.

Perhaps the reason why many people give up on Linked In, even if they have a great profile, is because they don't understand how to network on the site. Gonzales explained the biggest advantage of Linked In is the ability to find specific people. For example, you could use Linked In to specifically search for someone who graduated from University of Oregon, went to a particular fraternity, and lives in Portland, Oregon. Gonzales cautioned students that it's critical to look for areas of common interest like this example because that will lead to more successful networking. When sending a connection request, Gonzales will always say that he is a "friend", and will then proceed to write a detailed message using 250 characters of less. Almost always, the purpose of this message is to schedule a phone call or coffee meeting, and it works especially well for students because working professionals want to help students be like them. Even if not yet connected with someone on Linked In, it is almost always

possible to view their profile because of social engineering – Linked In wants you to click on more people so that they can make money from advertising. If someone's profile is not showing up, Gonzales explained that you simply click on the name of someone who viewed their profile (shown in a list) and navigate back to the profile you wish to see. Using these tools and tricks, Linked In becomes a powerful networking opportunity for people at all levels. After learning all about Linked In from Pinky Gonzales, I plan to explore Linked In further and look for new networking opportunities as I leave University of Oregon and begin my career.

While social media have proved successful for early majority adopters in the United States, it's important to remember that social media strategies must be globally impactful yet locally responsive. In the next section, I address some of these issues. Late majority adopters must be aware of cross-cultural dynamics before pursuing social media strategies they observe among the early majority.

Recommendations

Similar to traditional marketing, late majority entrants into the social media realm should approach social media by looking at target markets. While each company may focus on different target markets and demographics, the different social media platforms will likely do the same. To be strategic and align marketing actions with marketing objectives, companies must first align social media platforms with their respective target audience.

An example of social media platform differentiation is Facebook vs. Snapchat. It is common knowledge that younger demographics are now moving away from Facebook to simpler and newer platforms like Snapchat. Suppose that I am a Willy Wonka marketer and want to target tweens and teens ages 12 to 15. I would likely allocate my resources to Snapchat or Instagram rather than Facebook. By aligning my target audience with the appropriate platform, it will be more likely that my target audience receives my marketing messages.

Another important factor to consider is time of posting. Just like it is important to match your social media platforms to your desired target audience, it is also important to match the time of posting content to your target audience. For example, tweens and teens might be in school for most of the day with limited access to cell phones. If you send "snaps" (Snapchat messages) to this demographic in the morning, they will likely not respond. Even if they see your snaps, those messages quickly disappear. The tween or teen you are targeting will likely see your message, not have time to respond, and then forget about it later.

The simple solution to this issue is: send snaps to tweens and teens in the afternoon, right after school ends, or in the evening. The benefit of marketing to this demographic in the afternoon is that they will likely have a chance think about your brand in the afternoon, and possibly make a purchase before they go home. The disadvantage of marketing to this demographic in the afternoon is that they might be stressed out from school, and see your message as an annoying marketing effort. Perhaps they even have several other messages waiting on their phones – from family, friends, or other marketers. The likelihood that they will appreciate the full value of your marketing message is slim.

In order to be welcome among this demographic, you must communicate, communicate, and communicate! Interact with this demographic casually during hours when they are not busy, and get to know their preferences and attitudes. Find out what makes them happy, so that you know what type of content they would enjoy the most, and when. Most importantly, never send a direct marketing message unless it is perceived as a direct benefit to your demographic. Nobody wants to build a sales relationship in a social setting, so make the conversation more genuine.

By focusing on target markets and ideal platforms, late majority marketers will be able to approach social media strategically and achieve the sophisticated usage that the early majority have already established. Late majority markets should explore social media calendars, social media strategy wheels, and social media audits as well. And all of these components should be outlined in a social media marketing plan. With a plan, late majority marketers can expect to see results as they leverage the power of social media, and benefit from all that is the Internet.

Method

Academic Research:

Most of my analysis stems from traditional academic research – reading news articles, investigating various social media theorists, and reading books about social media.

Interviews and Insights:

A secondary component of my research is speaking with various social media professionals to gain insights into trends and feelings about social media networks.

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