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Social Media for Brand Building

Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Study

Organizations compete in a globally competitive market and must focus on developing methods of reaching customers that appeal to a new generation and utilize the advantages of mass media. Social networking, websites, text messaging, and online advertisements are amongst the most recent forms of brand building used by organizations to appeal to their consumer markets (). It is the responsibility of an organization to be available to their customers, and potential customers, in a place where these customers expect to find their information. Brand recognition meet these challenges, and the challenges of brand recognition by developing a presence in popular media channels that consumers in their markets use (Bisel 1).

Social media has transformed customer interaction into a project that can occur any time of the day, any day of the week, and every day of the year. Organizations have 24/7 access to their consumers even when they do not have a 24/7 staff. Nutley (2010) said “What we do now goes beyond the traditional launch that ramps up and tails off. It’s a 365-day approach and online facilitates that” (43). Branding and media projects had a short-lived lifespan, in some cases this was even true of media used for advertisements; however, using online sources like Facebook and Twitter can cost as little as nothing and include functionality that is easy to schedule and

change daily or even hourly as needed. Organizations benefit from reaching customers with messages that are updated, timely, and interesting, a process which benefits small businesses by providing simplified organizational autonomy for marketing, rather than trying to make changes with the bigger marketing organizations or local advertising resources.

However, while many organizations are quickly becoming part of the growing social media market, it is not very clear how useful this market really is for smaller businesses. Kraft can reach across the country, opening their arms to all cheese lovers through Facebook and Twitter, even if the message is creative or utilitarian, but a smaller local car repair shop may be challenged as what point this same tool would server for themselves – do people in California care about what car repair shop sales are in Idaho? Smaller organizations are geographically confined and evidence based research in social media is rarely relevant to their conditions and situations. Organizations have identified public relations and automation advantages and success with social media on a larger scale, such as with Apple or Starbucks, this research will be developed to identify small business applications.

Problem Statement

The problem is that while large organizations have developed teams or departments to manage brand name, and can afford the costs of social media, smaller organizations do not recognize the potential ROI available from social media and other current developing tools for communication, because cost and time involved cannot be verified as resulting in sales and increased consumer bases. In addition, many smaller organizations are niche market specific, including geographic, resulting in a difficult reach for their organization without incurring

expenses outside of their personal budgets. Finally, there is limited research dictating the true value of social media for an organization, particularly small niche market organizations.

Research Objectives

The following research questions will guide the study and literature review:

1. What are the perceived values and advantages of social media for organizational strategies of branding and marketing?
2. What are the documented advantages of social media within organizational branding or marketing strategies?
3. Are there structured strategy suggestions for smaller organizations developing social media strategies?
4. What documentation exists regarding the success of social media marketing, alone or with grassroots marketing efforts?

Rational of the Study

Brand marketing is determined to be an effective form of marketing, because consumers seek out brand names that represent how they themselves feel that brand will make them look and feel – either to themselves or to others. Big and small businesses alike enjoy the benefits of branding in social media, because branding means your customers are talking and even today grassroots marketing has the strongest impact on sales. A marketing team, driven to prove that social media can produce results, developed a 60 day project using social media and grassroots marketing to implement a strategy for a 50% increase in sales (Villano 2). A small business may not have the need to reach and affect an entire country, like organizations such as Kraft, but even

geographic specific organizations can reach their customers through Facebook and Twitter.

Starting with friends and family, most Facebook users tend to gain friends within their own network, creating circles that interact with each other's networks and engulf entire geographic areas prior to countries and the world.

Significance of the Study

The study will be infinitely important to the small organization, UmbraKittle, by providing evidence based information that includes the ability for the organization to hold the marketing team accountable for social media brand and communication based activities within reasonable budgets. Additionally, other organizations can use the information found in this research to determine if social media is the best choice for their company to implement at this time in their strategic growth. Marketing specialists such as Shih, Smith, and Andrew (2010) list recommended practices for organizations delving into social media, including codes of conducts for employees and periodic audits, but there is no roadmap into the world of social media. Creating guidelines and expectations or potential expectations allows a business to evaluate their success during the growth.

Cullers (2010) found that social media branding and strategies could be traced back to marketing strategies as early as 1913, with the Converse Catalog statement "Our company was organized in 1908 fully believing that there was an earnest demand from the retail shoe dealer for a rubber shoe company that would be independent enough not to follow every other company in everything they do" (1). This consumer minded strategy for development has not always been embraced by organizations; however, many studies and many theorists feel that the most effective way to reach any market is through clear and creative media and messages that appeal

to their target market – in mediums that the market expects them to be when needed. Social media is perceived as being that market, even Converse has a Facebook page; however, the true impact of this for small businesses who have often relied heavily on local advertisements and grassroots marketing, is unknown.

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