



Understanding Social Media Marketing

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Abstract

Social media and social media marketing are sometimes used interchangeably, but two indeed are different. The purpose of this research paper is to revisit the literature on both concepts and correlates them in technical terminologies. Literature available on Social media has been studied first and then the basic functionalities of it were identified which helped us in identifying its dimensions. At the end , a correlation is drawn between the two concepts and further redefined social media marketing in technical terms.

Keywords: Social media, social media marketing,

Introduction

Today almost every internet user is familiar with these two words irrespective of their profession, nationality, culture, race or religion etc. This concept is only a decade old but has reached every social and economic class of our society. Blackshaw&Nazzaro (2004) have beautifully defined social media in the beginning of the era of social media, as the new source of online information, where the information itself is – created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers for the purpose of educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues. According to Chi (2011, 46), social media marketing is a connection between the brands and consumers, that offers a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction.

The way of communication has changed with the evolution of social media, and every business irrespective of its size has a presence on social media. This review examines current literature on social media and social media marketing. The focus of this research is to understand the relationship between the two concepts and finally reach to certain conclusion. For the purpose of this research we have examined the literature available on social media and its functional blocks in the beginning of the paper and then



we have studied the dimension social media marketing tools. The purpose is to study the relationship between the functionalities of the social media and the dimension of the social media marketing in order to redefine the concept.

Literature Review

Hensel and Deis (2010) bring to the fore the pluses and minuses of using social media. They suggest for businesses and entrepreneurs to be fully informed by being up to date with their presence over social media. They also suggest for businesses to be constantly monitoring the same to learn from consumer feedback, and at the same time to ensure that no third party is attempting to bring them defamation. Ramsay (2012), on the other hand, picks on the etiquettes to be followed on social media. They suggest the general dos and don'ts for the active users of social media and lay out custom specific etiquettes for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn users. Carmichael and Cleave (2012) advertised on Facebook and monitored two advertisements to capture the user-advert interaction and its effectiveness for small businesses. For the amount a small business would invest in such social media advertising, they found that this form of advertising could substantially improve the visibility of such businesses and easily redirect consumer traffic to the advertised business page.

Hoffman and Fodor (2010) list and talk about the importance of many social metrics across brand awareness and engagements that typically capture the brand-specific behaviours (posts/tweets) on social media; they link the use of such social metrics with the marketers becoming capable of putting desirable cost-effective strategies sufficient to attract handsome returns on their investments. Lugmayr (2012) discuss the general role of social media in advertising and promotion, narrowing it down to its application as a financial product, particularly for share trading in the stock exchange market. They place special emphasis on the timely distribution of information being the remarkable quality of social media in comparison to the other traditional forms. In an alternate type of study, Kumar and Mirchandani (2012) propose a seven steps method for SMM to increase the returns on investment. They developed metrics such as customer influence effect and customer influence value to assist effective SMM that can reveal important information at organization and consumer levels. Kumar and Sundaram (2012) evaluate and recommend regulated SMM where an encouraging environment is created, where users feel motivated to share information on businesses within their social networks. They suggest for this type of SMM to be fitting where flexible marketing and higher returns on investments are desired. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2013) demonstrated use of social media for generating growth in sales, return on investments, and positive word of mouth.

Defining SocialMedia

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content.” According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) web 2.0 is a platform where content is continuously altered by all operators in a sharing and collaborative way. Web 2.0 is a web based technology which helps to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss and modify user –generated content. Social media are the websites which are build

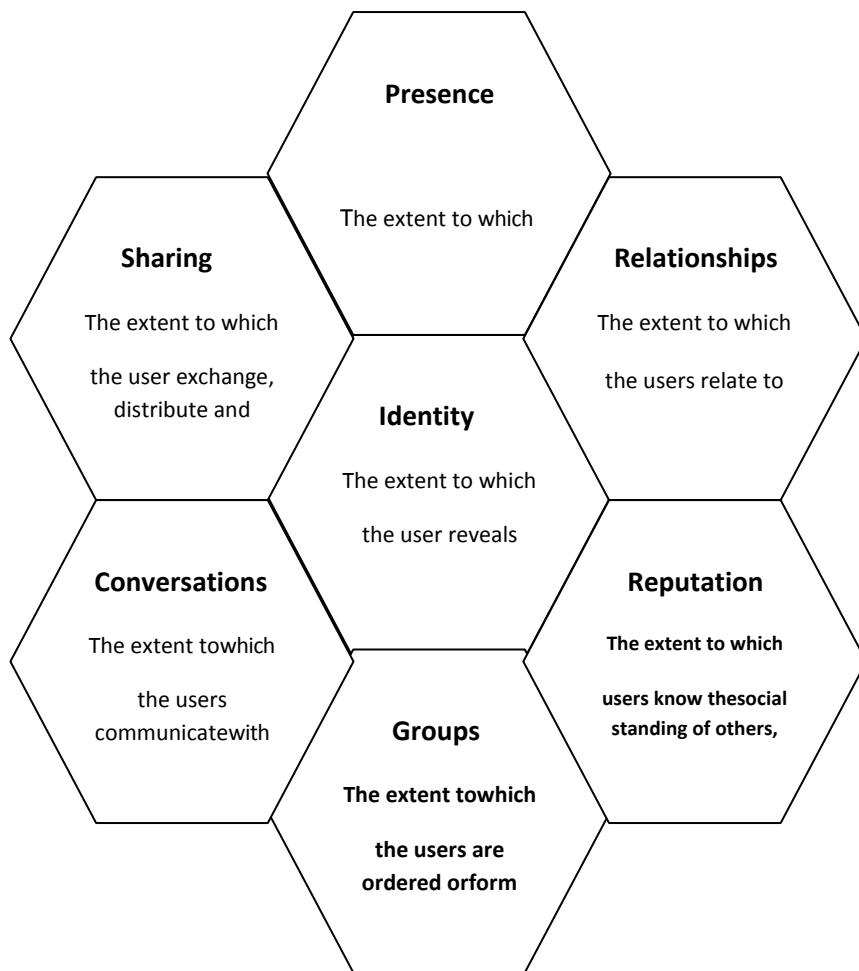


upon the technological foundations of web 2.0 that help a user to create user generated contents that can be shared. This technology allows a user to create and publish the content on the social media networks. This information can be shared with other members of the social media website, who are connected with the user. This process is interactive where other members can also respond in different ways.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) describe —social media as the set of online word of mouth forums which includes blogs, discussion boards, forums or social networks to name a few. Using all mobile and web-based technologies, social media creates highly interactive platforms by bringing together individuals and creating communities. Internet has a lot of websites; each of them has different functional attributes and caters to different sections of society. Websites like facebook are for general masses but LinkedIn is focused on professional networking. Media sharing sites (i.e. YouTube, Picassa and Flickr) or blogging platforms (i.e. blogspot, wordpress) are also members of this ecosystem called social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011).Social media has equipped the organization to establish an direct relationship with the consumers. Both of the organizations and consumers are free to generate content on the web pages, which further leads to conversations and discussion. Organization on one end are provided with an opportunity to share their information with a large base of customers and on the other end consumers are also free to publish any content whether positive or negative regarding the information.

Honeycomb Model

Honeycomb model of Smith (2007) identifies seven functional blocks of social media websites: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups.



Each block allows us to understand the structure of the social media site based on the facilities it provides to its users. This study attempts to understand the functions of the social media websites and their role in social media marketing. These building blocks are not mutually exclusive and also they are not part of every social media site. These building blocks are the constructs which helps us to understand how different levels of social media functionality can be configured.

Identity

The identity dimension is about the extent to which individuals or organizations make their identity public by disclosing personal or corporate information (i.e. name, age, gender, profession, location) in a social media setting. Individuals also tend to reveal other information – consciously or unconsciously – about themselves that makes them portrayed in certain ways through self-disclosure, of subjective information such as thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Conversation

The conversations dimension of the Honeycomb Model is about the extent to which each individual communicate with one another in a social media setting. Most



social media sites,,primarily purpose is to facilitate conversation among individuals and interest groups (Kietzmann et al.,2011).

Sharing

The sharing dimension is about the extent to which an individual ex-changes, distributes and receives content in a social media setting. As the term „social„,implies, exchange between individuals is a crucial functionality on social media sites. At the end of the day, social media is about people sharing their identities and lives by sharing relevant content (i.e. groups, text, videos, pictures, audio, links) (Kietzmann et al.,2011).

Presence

The presence dimension is about the extent to which an individual can know whether his/her peers are available online. Presence dimension includes information as to where each-individual-in-one„s-network is in the virtual world and/or in the real world. In a way presence dimension functions as a bridge that connects the real and the virtual realities (Kietzmann et al.,2011).

Relationships

The relationships dimension is about the extent to which each individual can be related to other individuals in a social media setting. The word relate,, is used to indicate the type of association formed between individuals (i.e. befriending, joining groups, co-presence on a social media site) which in turn may lead to conversation and shares (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Reputation

The reputation dimension is about the extent to which each individual is able to identify one„s relative position (including one„s own position) in the society in a social media setting. In social media, reputation is not something granted to people through their disclosed identities but it is something that can be earned through shared content, expressed thoughts, likes and dislikes. The same is true for organizations seeking to build or strengthen their reputation through implementing social media strategies (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Groups

The Groups dimension is about the extent to which each individual can form communities and sub- communities in a social media setting. The more social„a network is, the higher the number of groups, communities, followers and contacts (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Social MediaMarketing

Social media marketing is a new marketing strategy which almost every business is adopting to reach their consumers on the virtual networks. If you have an idea and you want it to reach millions, at a very little cost, then social media is the only way-out. Entertainment companies were the first to adopt the social media as a promotional tool. Weinberg (2009) has defined social media marketing as the process that empowers



individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels. So if we keep it simple, social media marketing is the process where organizations use social media websites to build rush on their company official websites. It does not stop here but organizations also inform the potential customers of happenings in the organization, launch of the new model or product and latest news about the organization through social media applications.

Gordhamer (2009) has related social media marketing to the relationship marketing where firms need to shift from “trying to sell” to “making connections” with the consumers. This explanations of social media marketing takes us to the other side of marketing, where building relations with the potential consumers is the key to repeated purchases and enhanced brand loyalty. Social Media is an innovative tool that organizations use for creating a very strong public relation with the customers on the virtual networks (Jan & Khan, 2014). Maintaining public relations through social media has become easy because a large number of potential consumers are available on the virtual networks. And making connection with consumers using social media is only some clicks away. Today’s customers are more powerful and busy; therefore, companies should be reachable and available in every social media communication channel such as Face book, Twitter, Blogs, Forums at any time (Gordhamer, 2009). Exploiting the opportunities provided by the social media communication channels is important for everyorganization.

Dimension of the Social media marketing (Asa’ad, & Anas,2014)

There are five dimension of the social media marketing, which means these five things are required to create connections with consumers or to building traffic to company websites.

Online Communities: A company or business can use the social media to build a community around its products/business. Vibrant communities create loyalty and encourage discussions, which can contribute towards business development and improvement. (Taprial, & Kanwar,2012).

Interaction: A Facebook page or Twitter account can notify all its followers of specific subject quickly and simultaneously (Berselli, Burger, & Close, 2012). Social networking sites enable greater interaction with the online community through broadcasting up-to-date, consumer relevant information. (Fischer, &Reuber, 2011)

Sharing of Content: The sharing dimension is about the extent to which an individual exchanges, distributes and receives content in a social media setting. (Babac,2011)

Accessibility: The social media is easily accessible and takes minimal or no costs to use. Social media is easy to use and does not require any special skills, knowledge to use. (Taprial, & Kanwar,2012)

Credibility: It is all about delivering your message clearly to the people, establishing credibility for what you say or do, connecting emotionally with your target audience,



motivating the buyer and generating loyal customers. The social media provides a very good platform for all businesses (big or small) to network and reach out to their target audience, connect with them directly and generate trust by listening to what they have to say. (Taprial, & Kanwar,2012).

Correlation Between The Two Concepts

When we study honey comb model of smith (2007) and simultaneously look at the five dimensions of the social media marketing we can easily figure out that the seven functionalities of social media websites form the basis for social media marketing. These seven functional blocks are the pillars on which a firm can establish the structure of its social media marketing strategy. We have generalized the above theories on social media marketing and social media as follows:

- Group functionality and relationship functionality of the social media leads to OnlineCommunities.
- Conversation functionality of social media leads to Interaction.
- Sharing functionality of social media leads to sharing of the content.
- Presence and identity functionality of social media leads to Accessibility.
- Reputation functionality of social media leads to credibility.

Conclusion

In this paper we made an effort to understand the concepts of social media and social media marketing. We studied the literature of the social media first and analyzed the honey comb model which explains the seven basic functionalities of any social media website. Our literature review of the social media marketing led us to identify the five major dimensions of the social media marketing. When we try to correlate the functionalities of the social media and dimensions of social media marketing we reach to a conclusion where we can identify that the seven functionalities of social media supports all the five dimensions of the social media marketing. This finally leads us to redefine the Social media marketing on the basis of functional block of the social media websites. “Social media marketing is a process where seven functional blocks (identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationship, reputation and groups) of a social media website are utilized for promotion of a brand, organization, political party, a personality, an idea or an event.” So when we use social media for promotion of an idea or a product that is social media marketing.

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