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Editors

Social Media Marketing

Emerging Concepts and Applications

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PREFACE

Social media has emerged as the defining trend in the last decade and continues to restructure communication and interactions between individuals, communities, government and businesses. Researchers and marketers are grappling with the profound impact of the rapidly evolving social media on viral user-generated content, its impact on shaping consumer perceptions and the constantly changing landscape for developing business cases to proactively engage with stakeholders. The increasing opportunities to listen to customers on company managed channels as well as third party review sites, including social media pages, across the digital space are accompanied by the challenges of responding, real-time, to these conversations. This requires a huge shift in the way marketing functions engage and dialogue with customers.

Our book focuses on the role of social media as the next big game changer. We had hosted the first international conference on ‘Social Media Marketing in Emerging markets’ as a platform to bring together a distinguished panel of speakers from academia and the corporate world. The conference provided a forum for practitioners and researchers to discuss, debate and share their insights and research findings. This book is a collection of selected papers submitted by researchers and managers and offers additional inputs from corporate experts and business leaders who have shared case studies. It focuses on the impact of social media on marketing, from brand building, communications, and advertising to customization and customer engagement.

The book is divided into four sections.

PART I: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

This section charts the evolution of social media research and attempts to identify the underlying conceptual issues in social media. The section affords insight into how social media impacts marketing media, giving a peek at the future of marketing media and how social media is not just a platform but is transforming how businesses work. The collection of papers in this section is quite eclectic in subject matter, ranging from integrated marketing communication to a technology platform stack, legal aspects, and lifecycle of information the web. A model for developing an integrated perspective on communication through traditional and social media is proposed. The concept of an integrated stack of four technology service platforms—social, mobility, analytics and cloud (SMAC)—is an example of this new-age convergence. The section also includes discussions on the lifecycle of information in the context of social networks, covering key concepts including nodes, ties, triadic closure, bridge, strength of a tie, and diffusion. The last topic in this section emphasizes the dark side of using social media, which could have larger ramifications for stakeholders and hinder the peaceful co-evolution of professional and public good in this digital ecosystem. Hence it needs a deeper examination.

PART II: UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL CONSUMERS

This section attempts to understand the digital consumer and his/her influence in emerging markets. Consumer behaviour is a multidimensional facet and digital proliferation makes it more complex. The papers in this section focus on challenges and opportunities for marketers to ensure customer engagement by identifying determinants of customer engagement in social media and the impact of customer engagement on customer loyalty. The consumption value for digital devices like smartphones integrates concepts from literature outside the traditional marketing domain to develop a framework for user experience. The changes that have occurred in communication technologies have extensively affected how ‘digital natives’ receive and disseminate information. Having been born in the digital environment where the use of various social media platforms has proliferated, the section also emphasizes how the digital natives have become an important market segment.

The section presents an understanding how infusing innovative social media techniques is beneficial as compared to conventional media spend and also proposes a theoretical model for social media integration.

PART III: INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO MARKETING

This section highlights the role of social media in specific business areas including advertising, marketing communications, customer service and public relations. There is an increasing emphasis on opportunities available and challenges faced by marketers in adopting social networking sites for marketing, including the development of a cost-effective social media strategy for small businesses. Some of the critical issues discussed in this section are companies' understanding of the benefits to be derived from social media, focusing on the return on investment (ROI) of social media efforts. A good number of organizations are engaging customers in their new product development activities via social media platforms. The section also focuses on social change and the influence of social media on corporate social responsibility, relevant social media strategies for each social media tool, and identifying gaps, and provides recommendations for making future CSR attempts effective. The future of the world will drive us all to that economists' utopia of perfect competition, as everyone will soon have access to every bit of information. This is due to the scale of social media interventions which this section highlights. Another area focuses on the development of a conceptual framework that posits salespersons' use of social media as an antecedent to the creation of social capital. The goal is to provide a foundation for subsequent empirical investigation aimed at helping managers appreciate the use of social media in multinational organizations.

PART IV: SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND CASE STUDIES

The papers focus on the emergence and increasing use of social media across sectors and markets. This section highlights the adoption of social media in various industries such as health care, automobile, and so on. The emergence of social networking sites globally has brought in a paradigm shift in word-of-mouth communications, thus enabling users to observe, interact, and exchange information. The segment also attempts to examine the existing legal framework in the Indian context with respect to

information to be provided by online portals to their customers on their websites. Inference is also drawn from some of the international best practices adopted in upholding consumer trust and confidence in online shopping.

The case studies in this section explore how social media can be used to convey the responsible marketing intent and activities of companies through ongoing online conversations in real-time situations.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This book is intended for academicians, professionals and managers who wish to gain insights on the impact of social media marketing. It will be valuable to marketing practitioners and brand custodians as they explore social media outreach to their target customers and engage with individual customers and other stakeholders. Researchers and managers will find this book to be a handy reference on social media in emerging markets.

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