How to Achieve and Measure Success in Social Media Marketing

İbrahim Sarper Karakadilar
Nişantaşı University, Turkey

Ç. Gizem Göğüş
Bilkent University, Turkey

H. Erkan Ozkaya
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA

INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the 21st century, the new generation of web technology fueled the social commerce phenomenon and significantly affected online business models. In today's business world the use of the Internet and social media has become a part of many marketing strategies. Therefore, companies have adapted their marketing strategies as a result of this new e-commerce medium. Web 2.0 is a powerful medium to locate key consumers and brand advocates in this online community. Social media has become a new marketing channel to effectively interact with customers. Furthermore, companies can use social media as one of the most profitable tools to attract a target audience. Specifically, social media allows the diversification of the brands' marketing messages through viral advertisement applications. This is one of the main advantages of Internet-based marketing tools.

The emergence of social media as a communication tool in marketing operations has established it as an important part of e-commerce practices in this era of new technology. In the context of social media, e-commerce companies should establish specific brand communities, listen to the desires of these communities, and create special promotional programs according to customers' requests or expectations based on community feedback. Overall, Internet use has empowered promotional activities that have led to the development of direct marketing, mass customization, and interactive communication with both current and prospective customers. Consequently, interactive marketing endeavors should be included in traditional promotional strategies. However, it is important to make the right decisions in terms of social media marketing strategies. Social media marketing involves viral consumer-to-consumer communication, maintaining public relations activities, and conducting marketing research on social networking sites (Pentina, Koh, & Le, 2012). This new marketing concept raises a critical question for e-commerce companies: how can a company promote its products in a more controllable and cost effective way to support the purchasing behavior of customers via social media?

In this new channel of interaction via the Internet and social media, customers search for product-related information, and access product reviews from experienced consumers, as well as industry experts. The inherently uncontrollable nature of social media makes it more difficult for marketing managers to harness customer feedback via these channels. Participation in social media is no longer enough. Instead, in this information rich environment, companies aim to increase the amount of positive customer comments via social media. Generally, companies attempt to create positive customer responses using corporate marketing activities in a social media environment.

In this dynamic environment, companies should clearly measure their social media marketing efforts and revisit them regularly. Companies should explicitly decide their social media objectives from the outset. For e-commerce companies, it is a crucial mistake to utilize a social media medium without defining performance objectives and measurement criteria. These objectives contain different social media-related marketing efforts such as:

- Measuring the effectiveness of:
  ◦ Reaching a target audience;
  ◦ Engagement on social media;
  ◦ Social influencers in the brand community.
- Defining metrics for advertising campaign success, which is conducted through social media channels;
- Measuring the contribution of social media marketing efforts on sales revenue and return-on-investment (ROI).

Indeed, a company must be proactive in order to achieve a certain degree of control over social media activities. Hence, it is not enough to merely be on social media in order to achieve a company's marketing goals of company. E-commerce companies should focus on their social media marketing efforts, such as providing reasons for customers to be part of the company's social media community. For example, companies should encourage loyal customers to share their positive experiences on social media platforms. However, companies would also be wise to categorize followers based on their social media characteristics when encouraging customers to post positive experiences on social media. While some participants prefer to be active by posting comments and creating content on social media, others prefer to be reticent (Miller & Lammas, 2010). Overall, e-commerce companies should know the individual characteristics of their online followers to formulate successful social media marketing campaigns.

The main objective of this paper is to provide suggestions to improve the success of social media marketing activities. To achieve this goal, the importance of social media and measurement of social media performance are discussed in the following sections. First the social media environment is described, with a focus on the remarkable features of these new interaction channels. This overview is important to understand the nature of social media as an effective strategic marketing tool. By using social media, e-commerce companies can affect their customers' purchasing decisions and improve their business models via social media marketing activities. There are various social media channel types, but only the most important channel types (i.e. online discussion forums and social networking sites) are considered in this paper. The scope of this study is to explain the importance of building one on one relationship with customers using social media channels. Additionally, this paper discusses the measurement criteria to evaluate social media marketing efforts. Because there are several measurement areas, this study focuses on the most important types of coherent metrics of communication. These metrics are:

1. Engagement metrics for enhancing awareness and interest of community about the brand; and
2. Sentiment metrics for improving good reputation and positive image of company.

Finally, social media marketing strategies are discussed to increase the success of the social media marketing campaigns.

8 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/how-to-achieve-and-measure-success-in-social-media-marketing/149095

Related Content

An Exploratory Study on Small Business Website Creation and Usage
Chuleeporn Changchitand Tim Klaus (2015). *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations (pp. 1-14).*
www.irma-international.org/article/an-exploratory-study-on-small-business-website-creation-and-usage/131466

Supporting Communities of Practice in the Electronic Commerce World
Charlene A. Dykman (2008). *Electronic Commerce: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1224-1231).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/supporting-communities-practice-electronic-commerce/9546

An Empirical Study on the Relationship Between Economic Growth and E-Commerce
Asuman Koc Yurtkurand Bersu Bahtiyar (2020). *Tools and Techniques for Implementing International E-Trading Tactics for Competitive Advantage (pp. 71-86).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-empirical-study-on-the-relationship-between-economic-growth-and-e-commerce/235897

Internet Search Engines
Vijay Kasiand Radhika Jain (2006). *Encyclopedia of E-Commerce, E-Government, and Mobile Commerce (pp. 672-677).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/internet-search-engines/12612

The Affective and Cognitive Impacts of Perceived Touch on Online Customers' Intention to Return in the Web-based eCRM Environment
Hong-Mei Chen, Qimei Chenand Rick Kazman (2007). *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations (pp. 69-91).*
www.irma-international.org/article/affective-cognitive-impacts-perceived-touch/3488