

# Chapter 12

## Social Media and Its Implications for Marketing Communications

**Irina Yankova**

*London Metropolitan University, UK*

**Wilson Ozuem**

*University of Gloucestershire, UK*

### ABSTRACT

*The field of marketing communications studies is often called on to close the gap between marketing and computer-mediated studies. This chapter engages with the concept of social media in the design and implementation of marketing communication programmes, particularly in the UK Fashion sector. The chapter goes on to conclude, rather skeptically, that understandings of the various nuances of social media platforms could engender effective customer retention programmes. It also offers a new way of thinking about customer engagement, incorporating social media platforms.*

### INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In recent years, social media has emerged as a topic of great interest to scholars and practitioners alike (see for example Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Hoffman & Novak, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The tremendous success of social media has been witnessed in terms of adoption and usage, caused by a paradigm shift in the way people communicate, express ideas and thoughts, and even how they interact with companies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Traditionally, enterprises maintained control over relationship activities while customers were passive “receivers” (Christodoulides et al., 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Web 2.0 technologies have transferred power over brands directly to consumers, turning them into empowered, educated, technology-savvy and informed customers (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Constantinides, 2008). Thus, they have placed the consumer in the ‘driving seat’ and forced managers to concentrate their efforts on managing the dialogue, not the customer (Baird & Parasnis, 2011b). More importantly,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1793-1.ch012

the cultural shift in the customer-centric direction that has occurred (see Bernoff & Li, 2008; Peppers & Rogers, 2011; Sheth et al., 2000) has led to a transformation in organisational focus from transaction-orientated to relationship-orientated entities (Christopher et al., 2002; Egan, 2011; Godson, 2009; Gronroos, 1991; Gummesson, 2008).

This new marketing communication reality presents new challenges and opportunities for businesses which perceive of social media as a new tool for creating a better customer experience (Baird & Parasnis, 2011b; Palmer, 2010; Stone, 2011) and for increasing brand awareness through creating excitement and amplifying word-of-mouth (Brown et al., 2007; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Kozinets et al., 2010). It also represents a means for improving corporate search engine optimisation, increasing sales, and building, nurturing and maintaining lasting relationships with customers (Peppers & Rogers, 2011; Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

While the importance of social media is remarkable, a few studies to date have explored its role and impact on customer equity (Dann & Dann, 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012), purchase intention (Hutter et al., 2013; Kim & Ko, 2010), brand loyalty (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012; Laroche et al., 2013), and the customer-brand relationship (Baird & Parasnis, 2011b; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Jahn & Kunz, 2012). What these studies have in common is the assumption that social media are platforms, online applications and media-enabled venues for brand activities, facilitating not only consumer-to-consumer communications but brand-customer interactions as well. Furthermore, these studies tend to focus on customer retention to some degree. For instance, Laroche et al. (2013) provide a helpful discussion that reveals the importance of social media brand communities in fostering customer relationships and loyalty. They further note that “brand communities established on social media have positive effects on customer/product, customer/brand, customer/company, and customer/other customers relationships, which in turn have positive effects on brand trust, and trust has positive effects on brand loyalty” (p. 76). Kim and Ko’s (2012) work suggests that as effective marketing communication methods, social media activities “improve customer equity drivers by strengthening customer relationship and creating purchase intent” (p. 1484). These studies allude to the possibility of social media influencing customer retention as they have an impact on variables such as loyalty and customer equity, but they do not examine the effects of social media on customer retention. In contrast, Nitzan and Libai (2011) accomplish pioneering empirical research into the effects of social networks on customer retention. Looking at this from a customer’s perspective and focussing on the role of social media in mitigating consumer defection, they conclude that social environment has a considerable impact on customer retention. However, they do not investigate the ways in which social media could improve customer retention.

Nevertheless, the relationship outcomes of social media activities remain disputed amongst practitioners and scholars (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Despite such studies, the extent to which social media can influence customer retention in the fashion industry remains unknown. The fashion sector in the UK has changed significantly over the past decade. In trying to maintain closeness to customers, companies tend to rush to adopt an online presence, viewing social networks, online communities, microblogging and video sharing sites as compulsory elements of their marketing strategies. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) note, “the higher the social presence, the larger the social influence” on people’s behaviour (p. 61). Moreover, in this regard, Baird and Parasnis (2011a) state that “nearly 70 per cent of executives say their companies will be perceived as ‘out of touch’ if they don’t engage, and over half believe their competition is successfully reaching customers through social media” (p. 32).

With such increased use of social media amongst fashion retailers, an analysis of the effects of social media on retaining existing customers has become essential. This study, therefore, addresses this require-

18 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/social-media-and-its-implications-for-marketing-communications/175225](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/social-media-and-its-implications-for-marketing-communications/175225)

## Related Content

---

### Effect of Social Media Personalization on Brand Strength: A Study of the Brand Advertised on Facebook

Mahima Shukla and Rahul Gupta (2022). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 1-22).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/effect-of-social-media-personalization-on-brand-strength/299401](http://www.irma-international.org/article/effect-of-social-media-personalization-on-brand-strength/299401)

### The Perceived Risks Affecting Online Shopping Adoption in Jordan

Muhammed Alnsour, Nadar Ismael, Zaid Nsoor and Midhat Feidi (2019). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 1-12).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/the-perceived-risks-affecting-online-shopping-adoption-in-jordan/223877](http://www.irma-international.org/article/the-perceived-risks-affecting-online-shopping-adoption-in-jordan/223877)

### Investigating the Behaviors of Mobile Games and Online Streaming Users for Online Marketing Recommendations

Shu-hsien Liao and Wei-Lun Chiu (2021). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 39-61).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/investigating-the-behaviors-of-mobile-games-and-online-streaming-users-for-online-marketing-recommendations/268405](http://www.irma-international.org/article/investigating-the-behaviors-of-mobile-games-and-online-streaming-users-for-online-marketing-recommendations/268405)

### Clients' Perception, Extent of Adoption, and Level of Satisfaction With Multi-Platform Advertising Media Strategies (MuPAMS): Among Business Organisations in Ibadan, South-Western Nigeria

Adekunle Olusola Otunla and Oloruntobiloba T. Olatunji (2018). *Multi-Platform Advertising Strategies in the Global Marketplace* (pp. 54-80).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/clients-perception-extent-of-adoption-and-level-of-satisfaction-with-multi-platform-advertising-media-strategies-mupams/192588](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/clients-perception-extent-of-adoption-and-level-of-satisfaction-with-multi-platform-advertising-media-strategies-mupams/192588)

### Emergence and Acceptance of Sharing Economy in India: Understanding through the Case of Airbnb

Rasananda Panda, Surbhi Verma and Bijal Mehta (2015). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 1-17).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/emergence-and-acceptance-of-sharing-economy-in-india/141482](http://www.irma-international.org/article/emergence-and-acceptance-of-sharing-economy-in-india/141482)