Chapter 10
The Evaluation of Social Media Practice in Malaysia by Small and Medium Enterprises

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of social media by large businesses has influenced small medium enterprises (SMEs) to be part of this phenomenon. Evaluating the results of the online efforts is a prerequisite to the success of social media adoption. As more branding activities move online, marketers are faced with the realisation that brands and businesses are not always relevant in all the social media facets. The study is aimed at solving the question of how SMEs in Malaysia are evaluating their online marketing efforts. The quantitative survey was deployed across six states in Peninsular Malaysia to get feedback from 125 active firms from different size, sector, year of establishment, and period of use of social media. The pattern of all these participants conducting the evaluation phase on the social media platform is descriptively examined from quantitative findings. It is used to formulate new information into literature and body of knowledge. Research implications in the practical and social form are also discussed.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The online community-based sensitivity that relies heavily on reviews and recommendations for product use, as well as sharing experiences with the brand, increasingly focusing the firm's surveillance on social media gateways. Profitable firms keep track of the ongoing practice of enforcing the benefits of strategic management (Peters et al., 2013), firms' performance (Wang & Kim, 2017), online reputation firms (Garcia-Madariaga & Rodriguez-Rivera, 2017), and brand presence (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Further, in a strategic marketing plan, the brand will seek commercialization through a combination of

the evaluation process to the overall activities carried out through this growing channel. The majority of businesses, including small-scale ventures, are paying close attention to this practice (Doherty, 2015; Marzouk, 2016; Pan & You, 2017). As a consequence, a large number of marketers and executives has either began or increased the evaluation programmes in the space of their brand sites.

Recent studies have completed important business goals with social media evaluation. According to Keegan and Rowley (2017), social media evaluation is a process for measuring, clarifying and reporting on the success of social media initiatives beginning with identifying social media marketing objectives, managing the proper metrics selection, involving quantitative and qualitative data collection, and producing insights outlined into format reports to determine the success of coordination with a firm's business objectives, as well as corporate goals. When firms employ social media, basically they set up the marketing objective in accordance with the adoption. At that point, they should list the metrics to gauge all business-related activities via social media. To facilitate practitioners in managing a successful evaluation program, Lovett (2011) has classified a large number of metrics into four main categories: foundational metrics, business value metrics, outcome metrics and counting metrics. Each has a special function according to the usage boundaries. Some marketers recognize metrics as indicators. On one level, businesses are compulsory to employ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), high-level metrics that help firms understand how they are doing against their target objectives and are outcome-oriented. The stable KPIs signalize the properly aligned marketing strategies with the business mission and corporate goals (Sterne, 2010; Lovett, 2011; Jeffrey, 2013).

Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia were chosen to be subjects because of the appreciation on this group that continued to contribute significantly as a national economic player (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2018). They are supporter of large firms as suppliers and buyers of products in many service capacities, thereby enhancing the economic relationship between and within the industry. Despite the challenging environment, evidence shows that SMEs have continued to expand at a higher rate than large firms (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017).

SETTING THE STAGE

This study has captured four issues that accompany the practice of social media evaluation among SMEs. First, the existence of evaluation practices, the second is the proper stages on performing the evaluation, the third is whether the practices succeeded in achieving the objective of social media adoption, and lastly, whether it positively helped the management's decision in attaining business missions and corporate goals. This resulted in reviewing a number of publications in a well-positioned journal and scrutinized official reports issued by government agencies as well as by industry experts.

The initiative to evaluate the cyber activities usually raises questions about the extent to which they are effective and in line with the established business mission. Recent evidence found that social media was practiced without the establishment of a well-organized and good strategy (Effing & Spil, 2016). The majority of SMEs are still hesitant to launch marketing efforts in the online medium due to cost problems and lack of confidence to innovate (Digital News Asia, 2016; SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017). On the contrary, firms that have embraced digital marketing in promotional activities, are either trapped in deciding to extend or forward it with limited resources constraints. When further detailing the problem of social media evaluation, previous studies reported that businesses were impressed with

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