

## Chapter 4

# Entrepreneurship Embedding Social Network Capability as Best Practice for Small Firms: Some Evidence From a Small Sportswear Retailer in Italy

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### ABSTRACT

*The rapid development of information communication technology (ITC) has opened up potential new marketing channels, and the enterprises must keep abreast of the evolution of the context and start operating with a multichannel approach, that is, with the interaction of various different marketing channels. It is in this perspective that the work examines a small Italian sportswear retailer operating locally. Said retailer has achieved a very significant market position in its sector of expertise thanks to the use of the social networks. For this purpose, information will be acquired from questionnaires filled out by consumers in the aim of highlighting the marketing instruments and activities that give rise to adequate customer satisfaction. The analysis of the results will make it possible to identify the capabilities which, via appropriate integration of the tools made available by the internet, suggest the best practices for small businesses.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the digital world has forced businesses and consumers to face a new and complex challenge (Peretti, 2011).

As far as enterprises are concerned, this development of technologies has brought about a radical change in the paradigm of marketing and communications. In fact, many authors define this phase as the transition from traditional marketing, implemented through such means as television, printed media, radio, cinema, billboards, etc., to a digital type of marketing which has become possible thanks to the use of internet.

On the other hand instead, consumers have drastically changed their behaviour, and as a result, also their purchasing processes (Peretti, 2011).

Organisations now find themselves having to compete in a world where the role of the consumers has changed and where the digital media have taken over. This situation, as affirmed by numerous digital communication experts, has mainly been determined by the following four phenomena (Peretti, 2011):

- The evolution of Internet and its diffusion in terms of penetration;
- The explosion of the social networks;
- The decline in the traditional communication media;
- The changes in consumer behaviour.

As explained by previous authors, the concept of entrepreneurship is the process via which individuals pursue opportunities without considering the resources they are controlling at a given time (Song, 2015). The subjects at the head of an organisation may come up against obstacles when using their own resources which often prove to be insufficient for achieving their goal.

This shortcoming may be overcome, at least partially, by correct exploitation of the social networks. Nowadays, there is the widespread opinion that these digital instruments are largely linked to the success of entrepreneurs who, by making accurate use of the same, can acquire knowledge of relevant information which allows them to gain advantages over the competition while bearing costs that are almost equal to zero. (Olanrewaju, Hossain, Whiteside & Mercieca, 2020). These platforms are used above all by individuals and companies for interacting and maintaining and expanding their professional networks in order to build relationships for the exchange of information and work collaboration (Song, 2015).

The rapid development of Information Communication Technology (ITC) has opened up potential new marketing channels, and the enterprises must keep abreast of the evolution of the context and start operating with a multichannel approach, that is, with the interaction of various different marketing channels (Chen & Lamberti, 2016).

It is in this perspective that the present work examines a small Italian sportswear retailer operating locally. Said retailer has achieved a very significant market position in its sector of expertise thanks to the use of the social networks.

For this purpose, information will be acquired from questionnaires filled out by consumers in the aim of highlighting the marketing instruments and activities that give rise to adequate customer satisfaction.

The analysis of the results will make it possible to identify the capabilities which, via appropriate integration of the tools made available by the Internet, suggest the best practices for small businesses.

Indeed, a factor that has had a great influence in determining the current scenario is the change in the attitude of consumers who have become increasingly more demanding and unpredictable in their choices

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