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Social Media Strategies for Effective Brand Management

¹Ugwu Jovita Nnenna and ²Akwagiobe Richard Akpanke

¹Department of Publication and Extension Kampala International University Uganda

²Faculty of Law Kampala International University Uganda

ABSTRACT

In the digital age, social media has become a pivotal tool in brand management, shifting the focus from functional branding to intentional branding. This study explores how social media marketing strategies emphasize the creation of an Online Consumer Community (OCC), fostering consumer-brand relationships (CBR) that drive brand loyalty and consumer engagement. The research highlights the importance of understanding the role of social media in shaping brand perception and the need for businesses to adapt their branding strategies to harness the power of these platforms effectively. By examining various case studies and analyzing the evolution of brand management in the digital era, the study provides insights into the key components of successful social media strategies that prioritize brand identity, value, and community-building over traditional awareness and recognition approaches.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Management, Intentional Branding, Functional Branding, Online Consumer Community (OCC).

INTRODUCTION

The study sought to determine whether social media marketing is more oriented towards intentional branding rather than functional branding. The results suggested that though both functional and intentional branding influence social media marketing strategies, social media marketing strategies tend to be more inclined towards intentional branding than functional branding. This finding suggests that through social media, the organization would be able to build a community for its brand as a consumer-brand relationship (CBR). This is called "Online Consumer Community (OCC)". The OCC is seen as a somewhat new concept, but the way it is used and operated still differs across studies. This is evidenced by many jargons that highlighted the role of social media in marketing. However, all of these terms refer to what Hsu and others defined as "A cyber space supported by information technology ... centered upon the communications and interactions of participants". Stephen drew the connection between the fact that marketing can be applied through social media and the fact that social media can alter customer behavior. According to the analysis of the study, social media tools as an approach to marketing appeared to enjoy a better influence in intentional branding compared to the functional branding. One of the most reasons behind such results is attributed to the fact that intentional branding is concerned with how the customers see the brand [1, 2, 3]. TT and CBR are the 2 main types of branding relationship that have been used to examine the branding strategies in overall marketing approaches. This model indicates that with any branding strategies the organization can utilize either one or both forms of branding relationship. Though functional branding is effective to consider how brand elements can tie up with attributes of the brand in delivering the promise to non-customers, intentional branding seems to provide

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behavioral considerations to focus more on the connectedness of the brand in contextual or social environments. More specifically, focusing on how the community and social interaction enhance the understanding of the brand is important to give insight for the development of intentional branding strategies. The finding that social media marketing strategies is more inclined towards intentional branding rather than functional branding indicated that using interactive marketing, the organization is embracing the social role of brand in marketing. Thus, more effort should be given to explore new avenues and an approach on how brand community can be developed in relation to social media marketing could be useful for developing intentional branding strategies [4, 5].

UNDERSTANDING BRAND MANAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Brand management has witnessed an evolution in its concept, perception, practice, and significance over the years. However, the emergence of various digital platforms in the past 20 years has transpired a paradigm shift in the way brands are managed. Businesses are required to manage brands not only internally, but also externally and outside the business enterprises. Social media platforms, internet marketing platforms, digital sponsorships, etc., can influence the consumer's experience of the brand and their decision regarding brand choice. The financial success of enterprises, sports teams, and organizations today is dependent on the brand management strategy deployed. Business enterprises, sports clubs, community based organizations, and even non-profit organizations are worried about their customers/fans and how their perception and behavior of a particular brand change. Brand management requires constant monitoring of how customers perceive the brand. There arises a need to explore the concept of brand management, its evolution, significance, and the manner of its management in the digital age [6, 7]. Unauthorized attempts by customers/sports fans to influence information regarding the brand are spread and control the conversations, using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, podcasts, etc.. These platforms aim to provide insights into the consumer's experience of the brand. Digitally managed independent brand perception can result in threat scenarios to the brand image, and hence managing the brand externally is of great relevance today. Organizations and brands are responding to this changed scenario by focusing on developing brand recognition, brand loyalty, brand reputation, and brand community. A thorough understanding of the perception of the brand image by consumers is conducted by business enterprises. Brands use this digitally available information to adapt their marketing strategies and other activities so as to attempt controlling the experience with the brand perceived by the consumers [8, 9].

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BRAND MANAGEMENT

Over the past few years, social media has gained huge importance in how brands operate on the internet. Focussing on one social media platform can be very risky, however, it is a good strategy as it allows the brands to operate using very economical and efficient means. Forming a bond with the consumers is more hard-hitting than broadcasting advertisements. A deep brand-consumer bond comprising similar values, opinions, and concepts can eventually result in brand attachment and loyalty. Furthermore, it permits more business prospects as high levels of interaction on social networks can create a snowball effect and create brand awareness, allowing the brand to prosper without any major monetary investments. With the coming of social media, communication tools have changed from unidirectional, company-led communication to a more interactive model in which consumers influence and co-create a brand's image. Social media's network effects produce small word-of-mouth bursts that grow exponentially over time. Network structure has important implications for the design of social marketing strategies, such as determining who should be the initial adopters associated with a product or service [10, 11]. Being part of a social media network is an important factor in understanding how many customers determine their intention to buy a certain brand. Consumers become more inclined to use a certain product when they are exposed to it on marketing computer networks. The rise of the internet, new technologies, telecommunications, and the developing economy have changed important aspects of contemporary businesses. One of the most controlling factors of how companies conduct their business is the consumer. This crucial shift in how companies relate to their customers has a major impact on the brand's marketing strategies and policies, consequently affecting the structure of the business as a whole [12, 13].

KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

As a result, engagement will shift away from a zeitgeist of brand-led conversation toward a parallel development of brand interest communities, where commercial activity will only be tolerated as a supporting activity to community-led conversations. A dilemma of commodifying engagement will straddle community management, managing media in the expectation of ROIs and extending a transient

ownership of brand interest over non-community spaces, which will ultimately not be maintained. A gradual improvement in gatekeeping within the organization will cause tensions regarding managing the corporate agenda and controlling the conversation while maintaining a genuine conversational tone regarding putting the community first [14, 15]. More specifically, it shows how branding marketing strategies through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, or combination, are more inclined to be branding strategies focusing on brand identity, brand value, brand image, and brand personality rather than branding strategies focusing on brand awareness, brand recall, brand recognition, and brand knowledge. This finding indicates that through the social media, the organization would be able to build a community for its brand, which is known as consumer-brand relationship (CBR). Specifically, this kind of community is built on this social media outlet, creating a new concept: Online Consumer Community (OCC). The OCC is a matter of somewhat a new concept, but the way it operates differs among studies. This is evidenced by various terms that highlight the role of social media in the marketing, such as online product communities, online brand communities, and virtual communities, etc. Nevertheless, all of these terms refer to a cyberspace supported by the information technology that centers on the communications and interactions of the participants to generate knowledge and perform common functions [16, 17].

CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL BRAND MANAGEMENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has changed the way organizations communicate with their stakeholders and offer news and information on their brands and services. This communication allows expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction, rejoicing and complaining about a brand in an immediate and almost social way. The web allows consumers to go public with their wants and needs, looking to influence not only the producers of goods and services, but also other consumers. Social media has also led organizations and brands to change how they identify and attain a target market. All these changes imply a shift in the power balance of the organizations-consumers relationship [18, 19, 20]. In summary, the importance of social media is growing in the daily lives of society. The challenge is how to manage and utilize this wealth of information in order to extract useful information for strategic decisions. The competitions problem is how to use social media as an opportunity while avoiding its threats. These issues and challenges are particularly important for brands as they are the asset of a company in a competitive environment. However, social media offers a chance to brand management no less remarkable than any possible risk it poses [21, 22].

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the transformative impact of social media on brand management. As brands navigate the complexities of the digital landscape, it is clear that intentional branding, which focuses on consumer engagement and community-building, is more effectively supported by social media than traditional functional branding approaches. The development of Online Consumer Communities (OCCs) enables brands to foster deeper connections with consumers, thereby enhancing brand loyalty and perception. To capitalize on these opportunities, businesses must prioritize strategies that leverage the interactive and networked nature of social media, aligning their branding efforts with the expectations and behaviors of modern consumers. As the digital age continues to evolve, the ability to manage and utilize social media effectively will remain a critical factor in the success of brand management.

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