A Study on Effective Communication Strategy in Developing Brand Communication: Analysis of Social Networking Site

Tina Vukasović, Rok Strašek

***Abstract* -** **Innovation in social networking media has revolutionized the world in 21st Century. Social networking media presents potentially opportunities for new forms of communication and commerce between marketers and consumers. Objective of the study is to analyze the effective communication strategy through social networking media. Survey was conducted randomly among Facebook user community, by sending questionnaire through online to collect the individual opinion from the respondents. The total population is social networking user community, but to collect the effective data the sampling is constrained to the target population like young adults, graduates within the age of 18 years to 55 years. The sampling size is two hundred. The paper presents research results and internet marketing activities that have contributed to building a relationship with the brand. It is necessary to study the effectiveness of brand communication strategy followed in social networking media which are mainly accessed by European Union users. This study would help the advertisers to understand the effective communication strategy to communicate their brand among the users. This study would help to know the effectiveness of communication and strategy done through social networking media which make the target audience to participate in this kind of advertising.**

Index Terms: Internet, Social networking media, Fast Moving Consumer Goods, Brand, European Union (EU)

I.   INTRODUCTION

A. The Evolution of Internet and Social Media

The Internet is transforming the business environment, creating new challenges and opportunities. This chapter provides an overview of the Internet and its defining characteristics, highlighting the key developments that have contributed to its explosive growth and its impact on the business environment.

In its current form, internet is primarily a source of communication, information and entertainment, but increasingly, it also acts as a vehicle for commercial transactions. Since the explosion of the web as a business medium, one of its primary uses has been for marketing.

Soon, the web could become a critical distribution channel for the majority of successful enterprises. One among them is marketing and spreading brand communication through Social networking sites (Thompson, 2002). The Internet provides the opportunity for companies to reach a wider audience and create compelling value propositions never before possible (e.g. Amazon.com's range of 4.5 million book titles), while providing new tools for promotion, interaction and relationship building. It is empowering customers with more options and more information to make informed decisions. The Internet also represents a fundamental shift in how buyers and sellers interact, as they face each other through an electronic connection, and its interactivity provides the opportunity for brands to establish a dialogue with customers in a one-to-one setting. As such, the Internet is changing fundamentals about customers, relationships, service and brands, and is triggering the need for new brand-building strategies and tools (Cleland, 2000). The Internet brings new usability. Therefore, companies must also constantly updated to follow the trend and make better exploit opportunities posed by the Internet, mobility and new technologies. The Internet became a visual and audio multimedia attractive of communication in the business world and in everyday life. The distinctive characteristics of the Internet can be summarised in three key points (Cleland 2000, 35):

- *It Dramatically Reduces Information Costs* - the cost of searching for information and the cost of the information itself is significantly reduced (and in many cases is free).
- *It Allows for Two-way Communication and Interactivity* - this radically alters the process of interaction between communicating parties, allowing both parties to identify each other and build one-to-one relationships - not previously available with mass medium forms of communication.
- *It Overcomes the Barriers of Time and Space* - The Internet is a global network and can be reached from everywhere, regardless of where the computer or Internet access device is physically located. The Internet can also be accessed at any time - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These qualities eliminate the barriers of time and space that exist in the physical world.

These characteristics combine to create a very powerful medium. By allowing for direct, ubiquitous links to anyone, anywhere, the Internet lets individuals and companies build

interactive relationships with customers and suppliers, and deliver new products and services at low cost. These defining characteristics have fuelled its explosive growth.

B. The Social Media

Over the last decade, social networks have changed communications, shifting the way we consume, produce and interact with information, based on explosive migration to the web. Social media websites like Facebook (FB), Twitter etc. have created huge impetus on the communication platform with the end customers of different products and services that was lacking in the traditional medium. Social networking sites are used as marketing tool by marketers in creating brand relationship. Huge growth of customer base enables marketers to explore social media networking sites as new medium of promoting products and services and resulting in reduction in clutter of traditional medium advertising of reaching the mass customers and not realizing the actual ROI. Social networking sites are more collaborative and interactive in comparison to traditional media followed by marketers.

Social media advertising is a paid form of brand, service or business promotion and requires a proper and planned communicative message and budget. Advertising is customer centric in nature. Customers play an important role in any major or minor communication because they are the one who are going to decide the fate of the advertising communication. Some benefits of social network advertising include (Jothi et al., 2011):

1. Popularizing your brand, idea or service to the target group.

2. Informing target audience about your brand or service's presence in the market.

3. Encouraging healthy competition in the market.

4. Providing social benefits for the brand.

5. Making the audience to interact and keep them intact with the brand.

Advertising on internet provides a major contribution to brand competition in the market. Advertising here not only provides information about a product or service but also promotes innovation. Besides it also facilitates customer satisfaction. Big and small companies, individuals of all walks of life, major and minor events, concepts, etc., nowadays lay their base on social network advertising to get recognized in the market (Zarrella, 2010).

Facebook, Twitter etc. have become a personal, product and corporate branding hub in the world. Every brand that exists on social networking sites has the same core features and benefits, such as the ability to create a page, share resources, add multimedia and much more (Eric, 2008). The effective brand communication strategies are analyzed to find the impact among the users.

II. USING SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA TO BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BRAND

A. The case study of brand in fast moving consumer goods category on EU market

Food industry in European Union is one of the most competitive international branches and is in its mature stage of development. In order to maintain their competitive position on the market, companies have to constantly prove themselves by providing supplies of innovative products and processes. New products and strong brand play a very important role in this industry. It is large and competitive industry with many active companies. The producers of high-volume products are aware that a company's leading role on the market is ensured through strong and established brands and loyal consumers. Today, the labelling with brands is such a strong factor that there are hardly any products without a brand. Various literatures provide tons of advices and rules on how to create or shape a successful brand. On the other hand, decisions regarding the policy of brands are far from being straight-forward and require numerous researches and considerations (Vukasović, 2010, 2012).

Objective of the study in this paper is to analyze the effective communication strategy through social networking media. It is important to study the effective way of communication in branding the product in social networking media and analyze its reach among the consumers. The paper explores the consumer engagement practices adopted by social networking media for building the brand.

B. Trends in Social media in European Union

Today Internet is widely spreading as a communication media in European Union. Emergence of the information super highway has revolutionized the way media is created and consumed. Previously media used to be created by media firms who are the content generators as well as the content owners. And the content used to broadcast to the consumers by the media. This concept has undergone an elementary change, now anyone can create content best known as User Generated content and share it with others using platforms like Blogging, Social Networks, YouTube etc. Now the consumers of the media have converted into media creators and the content also distributed on the internet through social networking and people connect with this content through comments. Social networking has become more popular among everyone. Consumers are getting more connected and communicative with their networks and technology allows them to voice their opinions rapidly.

Internet has proved to be more than just emails and Google search. With the advent of networking media, broadband and Web 2.0 now many people are joining the social networks like Facebook, Twitter and thus it is easier for the marketers to spread the word about them over the network. To bridge the gap between the consumers, organization, marketing and media planning people there is the need of uniformity and trust in the social media. Social media, community networking, blogging, twitting, etc. were beyond anticipation for large mass of people. E- Shopping and E- bookings, E-learning and online dating have achieved good heights and became popular among European Union consumers (Vukasović, 2013).

Another area of opportunity for building brand is Viral marketing. Viral marketing, also known as word-of-mouth (WOM) or "buzz marketing", is the tactic of creating a process where interested people can market to each other (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). Implementing an

effective viral marketing strategy is a good way to get people talking about your business. A successful viral marketing campaign can be developed through social networking media like Twitter, Facebook etc. With the information available on online network the marketers have the knowledge of the needs and wants of different level of customers. Word-of-mouth is a particularly powerful medium, as it carries the implied endorsement from a friend. The Internet, with its e-mail lists, web sites, chat rooms and bulletin boards, makes communication tighter, and word-of-mouth even more effective. As a result, viral marketing is an effective tool in getting a message out fast, with a minimal budget and maximum effect. If a company can provide a strong enough incentive for customers to share their lists of personal contacts, whether for communications or community, they will have a powerful viral opportunity at their disposal. A good virus will look for prolific hosts (such as students) and tie into their high frequency social interactions (such as e-mail and messaging) (Vukasović, 2013).

Next chapter provides some information about brand in the category of fast moving consumer goods. Chapter also provides a mix of activities that have been carried out as part of marketing campaign by using social networking media.

C. Social media and its implications for building brand relationship

Due to data protection and providing discreet company for analyzed brand we used in this paper instead of brand name label X. So Brand X is brand in the category of fast moving consumer goods. Brand X stands for values like trust, safety, quality and loyalty.

Basic guideline of the market communication campaign was the orientation towards consumers and their benefits. The next guideline was the creativity as the most powerful marketing tool to create a brand. After defining the marketing and communicative goals and target group to which the message is intended, what followed was the stage of defining the implementation of the creative strategy.

Advertising was spread across web site for brand X, internet media with web advertising such a Facebook.com, YouTube.com.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Methods of data collection and sample

Survey was conducted randomly among e-mail European Union user community, by sending questionnaire through online to collect the individual opinion from the respondents.

Non probability sampling technique is used to collect the opinion from the online respondents within the age of 18 years to 55 years. The sampling size is two hundred.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From this result, it is observed that nearly 95% of the internet users are aware of social networking sites and only 5% of them are clueless. Although the concept of computer-based communities dates back to the early days of computer

networks, only some years after the advent of the internet online social networks have met public and commercial in a successive manner. At the most basic level, an online social network is an internet community where individuals interact, often through profiles that represent their selves to others (Donath and Boyd, 2004). Social networks have grown rapidly, and some like Facebook, Youtube, have achieved the mass market and penetrated in a few months since their inception, such applications have infringed their users in different strategy to interact with more people (Jothi et al. 2011). Also from this results it is observed that nearly 93% of the internet users are aware of internet marketing campaign for brand X. More than 72% of young population (between 18 and 35 years old) had high level of awareness about internet marketing campaign for brand X.

Only 3% of the total samples say that they have never accessed or shown interest to the ads displayed in social networking sites for brand X. 87% of the respondents use to access often and were interested to listen to the advertisements for brand X, 10% of the respondents use to access somethimes and were interested to listen to the advertisements for brand X (Table I). Today's customers want to be engaged differently than in years past and many traditional marketing tactics simply do not work anymore. Social media marketing is a revolutionary way to build solid relationships with customers long before first contact with fun, attractive messages and interactions (Borges, 2009).

TABLE I
ACCESSIBILITY OF ADS IN INTERNET MARKETING
CAMPAIGN FOR BRAND X

Accessibility of ads in internet marketing campaign for brand X	%
Often	87
Sometimes	10
Never	3

Interactive fan page for brand X attracts 45% of users. 35% of users are pulled their interests towards game for brand X and 15% of users listened to viral video ads, 5% of users are interested to traditional banner ads. Most of the social networking websites are enabling brands to engage the right people in the right conversation at right time (Shih, 2009). Nowadays communication on branding in social networking sites is more personal, contentious, fascinating and influencing among the user community (Table II).

TABLE II
BRAND COMMUNICATION THAT ATTRACTS THE USERS

Brand communication that attracts the users	%
Interactive fan FB page for brand X	45
Banner ads for brand X	5
Web game for brand X	35
VIDEO ads for brand X	15

According to the respondents, 87% of user agreed that the communication strategy used in brand X communication creates impact on brand effectively and also which could help it to recall the same often and interactively. The remaining respondents almost 13%, says that it does not create much impact on brand relationship but still effective for other communication purpose like sharing and chatting information (Table III). Based on research results the target

group for brand X is young population, between 18 and 35 years old.

TABLE III
IMPACT ON BUILDING BRAND RELATIONSHIP WITH TARGET
GROUP

Impact on building brand relationship with target group	%
Agree	87
Disagree	13

V.   CONCLUSIONS

The finding of the study states that the internet marketing campaign for brand X was effective and resulted in the process of building a relationship with the brand. The awareness of internet marketing campaign for brand X was 93%, so the campaign for brand X has been recognized. Our study could easily be replicated in other countries and other brands, to assess the generalisability of the results. The results of our study are very similar to the results of the market research carried out in Slovenia by Vukasovič 2013.

Every brand that exists on social networking sites has the same core features and benefits, such as the ability to create a page, share resources, add multimedia and much more. Social networking sites are filled with potential users who are mainly young adults. They spend more time in these networking sites due to heavy commercial contents, entertainment and social gathering. So, product or service communicators throng their ads in these areas with more and more interactive and with fascinating factors so that their brand identity is developed among the right choice of focused audience. Advertisers and brands uses social networking sites as the major resource for their promotion and developing brand identity among the focused market.

REFERENCES

[1]   B. Borges, ″Marketing 2.0: Bridging the Gap between Seller and Buyer through Social Media Marketing″, *Wheat mark*, pp. 45-63, 2009.

[2]   R. S. Cleland, ″Building successful brands on the internet″. A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), University of Cambridge, 2000.

[3]   J. Donath and D. Boyd ″Public displays of connection″, *BT Technol*. J., vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 71-82, 2004.

[4]   E. Eric, 2008 ″Growth Puts Facebook In Better Position to Make Money″.   http://venturebeat.com/2008/12/18/2008-growth-puts-facebook-in-better-position-to-make money, 2008.

[5]   Internet: Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, YouTube.com Analytics.

[6]   P. S. Jothi, M. Neelamalar and R. Shakthi Prasad, ″Analysis of social networking sites: A study on effective communication strategy in developing brand communication″, *Journal of Media and Communication Studies,* vol. 3, no. 7, pp. 234-242, July 2011.

[7]   Nielsen, Panel trgovin. Research report, 2012.

[8]   C. Shih, ″The Facebook Era. Tapping online social networks to build better products, reach new audiences and selling more stuff″. Prentice Hall Publication, pp. 85-128, 2009.

[9]   M.R Subramani and B.Rajagopalan, "Knowledge-sharing and influence in online social networks via viral marketing", *Communications of the ACM*, vol. 46, no. 12, pp. 300-307, 2013.

[10] S. H. T. Thompson, ″Attitudes toward online shopping and the internet″, *Behaviour and Information Technology*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 259-271, 2002.

[11] T. Vukasović, ″Buying decision-making process for poultry meat″, *British Food Journal*, vol. 112, no. 2, pp. 125-139, 2010.

[12] T. Vukasović, ″Searching for competitive advantage with the brand extension process″, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, vol. 21, no. 7, 492 – 498, 2012.

[13] T. Vukasović, "Building successful brand by using social networking media", *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, vol. 5, no. 6, 56-63, 2013.

[14] D. Zarrella, ″The Social media marketing″. O'Reilly Media. 2010.