



MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING PRACTICES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FIRMS

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Abstract:

This paper examines the key variances in application and strategy between different social media management strategies and its effective marketing. Social media firms have shown a great ability to control the stages in their product life cycles. These practices lead to managers in these firms overachieving on their respective KPIs and garnering industry attention. An analysis of social media management firms practice shows those high participatory-decisions and intellectual and manual skills contributed to these organizations' successes. A close look at Chinese companies' social media activities and its relevance to Chinese social media consumers is reviewed. Other factors like introducing the 'Like' button and various innovations are observed to have improved consumers' attitudes towards the social media brand. Customer engagement and content enrichment are proven to be driving forces in how online consumers perceive the social media brand. Consumers are demonstrated to be the main means of continuous sustainability and growth for these social media businesses. Thus, there is a ripple effect across all industries to vie for social media presence and validity.

Keywords: customer relationship management, social media marketing, business management, product lifecycle, marketing management, consumer marketing

1. Introduction

1.1 Management Theory and Practice related to social media firm

It is without a doubt that social media practices and content have taken the world by storm (Pan and Crotts, 2012). With the inception of social media, consumers are

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responding to its call by engaging in social network sites. Online customers are also taking part in microblogging, as well as indulging in the download of applications that can be used in their social lives by enhancement of sharing activities (Andzulis, Panagopoulos, and Rapp, 2012). The most interesting bit as presented by Divol, Edelman, and Sarrazin (2012) is that if Facebook users, a leading social networking site, constituted a country, they would, in fact, be considered to rank as the third in the number of “citizens” after the populous China and India. Application of social media in a vast number of sectors seems to be taking effect.

A majority of businesses are incorporating the social media tools in their marketing strategies among many other activities that the media is applied. Social media takes note of mobile and technology that is web-based, to come up with platforms that are very interactive (Zhang and Sarvary, 2011). Social media has generated what can be said to be a new communication landscape. The development of this communication landscape began many years back. Currently, the social media ecology constitutes a diverse pool of sites. These sites are different regarding their functionality, scope and focus (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

A recap of the functionality and focus of some of the social media sites is that some are meant for the general public, some are more of professional networking purposes, some are meant for sharing with a bias to photos and videos. For these social media firms to thrive as quite some of them have been noted to, certain theoretical models and frameworks are in place to ensure that they are properly managed (Kietzmann et al., 2011). It is critical to note that theorists have for a long time tried to identify the most suitable management tool when it comes to dealing with people. The theories in management that have been determined by the said theorists, as mentioned by Business.com (2014), are aimed at bringing out the best of the personnel in organizations. Managers may incorporate bits of the management theories that are in place; however, understanding of the application of the said theories is critical.

Social media is a very powerful tool and its management ought to be powerful as well. Management theories are aimed at enhancing the quality of the product and services that organizations offer as well as increasing the productivity of the said organizations as noted by Hawthorne (n.d). One management theory that applies to the management of social media firms is the Y theory. This Management Theory is also referred to as the Human resources management theory. The factors that are attributed to this theory include the fact that people have the desire to work and that they have some sense of responsibilities and objectives that ought to meet. The theory further holds that these people would want to acquire success in what they do when they are aware of their place in the organizational structure (Dininni, 2011).

The theory Y is at times considered to be a motivational theory as noted by Dininni (2011). The theory views individuals as being independent and is quite the opposite from theory X which employs the rules of autocracy in the management of the

organization. The application of theory Y managers, to their subjects promotes the active participation of other staff (See Appendix 1 for the differences between theory X and Y). According to Lowe and Brown (2016), when looking at this kind of management theory, certain factors come in handy for managers to understand and which they ought to embrace in their day to day management activities. These factors include knowledge of intellectual perspectives, manual skills, and the interaction of the social aspects as well as skills in problem-solving. It is the embrace of such like factors, by the managers of social media firms that are attributed to the growth which is noted in these companies.

Social media companies that apply the above practices are bound to achieve outstanding performances not only for the company but at a personal level, as depicted by Lowe and Brown (2016). Management that is deemed to be participative is considered to be the best option for social media companies. This is critical when making participatory decisions that are aimed for the benefit of the company, especially with the incorporation of input from the competent task force who were molded by the effective leadership present in the respective company.

Identification of the components of theory Y is important, especially for the understanding of its application in the organizational setting, in this case, social media firms. According to Friesen (2014), some pointers are crucial to understanding the application of theory Y. Having a vision is critical where expectations for the future are noted. In this component, strategic planning may be applied in the bid to realize the vision of the company. Leadership that is effective is paramount where in this case; reduction in the gap between the management and the staff is advised. Thirdly, planning activities and decision-making ought to go hand in hand. Participative leadership is imperative to uphold in this sense.

Communication that is free of errors is crucial where honesty, simplicity, positivity and good listening skills are necessary. The control that is administered by the management ought to be reasonable where over-controlling instances are eliminated. Promotion of trust will facilitate the control that is administered to the employees. Recognition is the other component that is mandatory to emphasize and here, both formal and informal recognitions can be offered to the employees in the hunt to garner maximization in motivation.

After having noted the above factors that pertain to theory Y, and looking at the application of the theory in social media firms and further narrowing down to the most successful firms, it is evident that the theory is deeply rooted in these companies. For these businesses to thrive, the management practices have incorporated the components of the theory Y. The success that is noted in Facebook is attributed to the productivity of the employees who are in a position to work in a motivating environment that they are subjected. The employees have been part of the team that has churned out products and services that are gaining user popularity by the day and are as a result producing

revenue for the company. Facebook, according to Wilson, Gosling and Graham (2012), is integrated with applications and websites in the range of millions a scenario that adds to the productivity of the company. The outcome of the integration is consumer traffic. These consumers are interested in the content available on the social site. The user traffic that is evident on Twitter and Facebook sites, for instance, are a clear depiction of the success of companies that are both very productive and fruitful.

2. Methodology

2.1 Social media firms in the efficient management of the products lifecycle

Using secondary sources and data, analysis was conducted to examine motivational, participational, operational and contextual factors to aid in the research. Before looking at the management of the product's lifecycle, it is critical to note the stages that are present in any given product's lifecycle. It is notable that a product lifecycle consists of five stages which include; product development, introduction, growth, maturity and finally, the decline stage (Claessens, 2015). It is critical to note that not all stages of the product lifecycle apply to all products; the strategies that are employed in the lifecycle are what make the difference.

Social media products like applications and platforms are creating a buzz in the technology platform, a phenomenon that calls for product awareness, a critical function for the introductory phase of a lifecycle. Social media engagement is essential at this stage, and this has facilitated the effectiveness of the said social sites. YouTube, Facebook, blogs, and widgets have been noted to engage the consumers quite well. The customer traffic pointed out in these sites is a real testimony of their engagement ability.

Social media firms have been effective in the management of the growth and maturity stages of their PLC. The development of products and services that are new, by the companies dealing with social media have facilitated the amassing of a high number of users that are massive in numbers. These companies have as a result been able to grow with every developmental step that they make and by the time a product or service hits the decline stage, a new product is already introduced or modified which further increases the attention of their users. Social media companies have been able to record a high number of users because of the attitudes that they convey to the consumers. The attitudes expressed by these firms, to their customers, affect the consumer behavior. This information is covered in the section below.

2.2 Attitudes towards the consumer that the social media companies convey:

As noted by Ioanăș, and Stoica (2014), the media has got a huge influence on the perception that its users have. The users can air their criticisms based on the information that is presented on the social media sites. Having an understanding of the consumer behavior on the online platform is critical given the statistics that is present

concerning worldwide online users (Schivinski, and Dabrowski, 2016). The number of online consumers has been noted to be growing worldwide as mentioned by Schivinski, and Dabrowski, (2016), and this calls for the need for understanding consumer behavior as mentioned earlier.

Social network sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, provide avenues for promoting their brand awareness because of the products and services that they offer. These sites have visitors on a daily basis who reach to the tune of five million users, and this occurrence makes them the best shot when it comes to marketing. Social media communication has a potential effect on the consumer by the promotion of the following aspects; brand equity, brand attitude as well as the purchasing intention (Schivinski, and Dabrowski, 2016). It is essential to note at this juncture that social media communication has transformed the one-way communication that is traditional in nature. The communication that is promoted by social media is one that is said to be multidimensional and two-way (Schivinski, and Dabrowski, 2016).

Social media has been noted to influence consumer behavior by affecting the perception of the consumer. Provision of content and information that is deemed to be relevant is critical in this respect. Consumer participation in the social media is also likely to promote the perception of the customer. According to Naidoo (2011), to determine the influence that is present on a given brand, using social media, consideration must be offered to the content source, source authority, and the content.

Social media companies promote beliefs in their brands. The views that an individual may have about a product can be either positive or negative. Social media companies, attempt to influence the positive opinions of a consumer and mask the negative ones. Social media users, based on their beliefs will tend to be affected given the feelings that they hold. It is critical to note that some feelings that the consumer develops regarding a particular brand, product or service may be free from the beliefs that they hold, rather, the feelings may be attributed to other circumstances. After the customer is affected by either beliefs or other conditions, their intention to purchase will ensue from the developed brand attitude, as noted by (Schivinski, and Dabrowski, 2016).

The attitudes that social media companies convey are facilitated by factors like the promotion of consumer engagement, building of brand attitudes that are deemed to be very positive, as well as through customer relationship management enhancement as noted by Naidoo (2011). The means through which social media companies utilize the above factors distinguish the sites that are very popular. The section below will expound more on the above factors and thus explain why one social media version tends to be more popular compared to the others.

3. Findings

3.1 The reason why one version of social media may be more popular or more successful than others

Research has proven that among the many social media sites that are available, Facebook tops the list. Facebook is an example of the social networking sites, which is a component of the larger social media. Other versions of social media include; microblogging sites, blogs, podcasts, forums, wikis, and content communities (Yudhokesumo, 2011). The success and popularity of social networking sites are subject to debate. Social networking sites are more popular, in as far as the number of users is concerned as well as the brand names that are present under the heading (Helmrich, 2016). This social networking site is noted to have active users that total over 1 billion, on the global platform. This platform is used to connect individuals in personal as well as in business perspectives. This site is noted to be very versatile, and it connects people in different aspects.

Multiple options are available on Facebook which facilitates its usage. Depending on the industry that an individual is noted to be part of, Facebook meets a majority of the needs. Facebook, as noted by Helmrich (2016), as compared to other social sites, tend to have low maintenance. The element of low maintenance is attributed to the difference that exists, regarding the fans of an individual, when one posts many or few updates in a day. In summary, Facebook has seen its success because the site is easy to use, has features that are very accessible and its name that is noted to be very memorable (Shah, 2016). It is also clear that Facebook's success is connoted to the fact that the site promotes both openness and honesty. The meaning of this is that people desire to be themselves and so Facebook comes in handy to offer a platform where people can, in fact, be themselves (Shah, 2016).

Facebook has grown tremendously since its inception, and is just but an example of a social networking site, a version of social media that is seen to have thrived globally. Some factors have been attributed to its growth in as far as popularity and success are concerned. These factors will be addressed in the section below.

3.2 Factors that lead to the success and popularity of Social Networking sites

As mentioned earlier, Facebook has grown over the years since it was introduced back in 2004 (Maina, 2016). The factors that have placed Facebook in its number one position in the area of the leading social media sites in the world are as follows:

3.2.1 Innovativeness and smart actions

Social networking sites are considered to be very innovative with a good example being Facebook. Facebook is one of the most innovative companies on the web which is noted to make very smart moves as far as product development is concerned. These smart

moves are the ones that differentiate this site from other sites in social networking. Ever since the company's inception back in 2004, Facebook has introduced some innovative products that include the Facebook platform which boasts many apps that have gained the attention of the users in the global arena (See Appendix 3 for review of Facebook). These Facebook apps prompted the inception of the Facebook Application store where the organization of information would be facilitated (Shah, 2016). The introduction of this display brought attention to Facebook which further brought its success.

3.2.2 "Like button"

Facebook was one of the first social media sites that introduced its famous "like button" (Shah, 2016). This button allowed users to enhance the power associated with social networking by the creation of impressions and other users enjoying the positive content that is displayed by others (Chou, and Edge, 2012). Other social networking sites followed suit with the incorporation of the "like button." Google was one of the companies that embraced the leadership of Facebook and it in fact gained in the number of people that visited the site on a daily basis. This service allowed Facebook to gain more visits by new users and within a short while, many visitors indulged in the now famous, "liking" trend.

3.2.3 Ability to induce positivity

Social networking sites have been noted to cause positive reactions among its users, and it is for this reason that they tend to be very successful (Mauri et al., 2011). Some social networking sites, like Facebook, have been noted to induce positive emotions on the users an occurrence that further promotes the discovery of creative and novel actions as well as the discovery of social bonds and ideas. The outcome of the above discoveries is the development of personal resources that are relevant to an individual for survival purposes (Mauri et al., 2011). It is this reason that prompts users to be hooked to a Social Networking site and such people will tend to be active on these sites.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Most valuable resource for social media firm management

In social media firm management, the most important resource is the consumer. Some differences exist when looking at the traditional and social media spending (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). The similarity, however, is that the spending places the consumer at the focal point of the activities of the firm. The management of a social media company, therefore, ought to address the issues that surround the customer. The term "social" in social media sheds light on the social aspect, and it is this component that brings in the perspective of the consumer. It is critical to understand that social media, as pointed out by Weinberg, and Pehlivan, (2011), is not a substitute for the traditional

media, in the sense that social media can be used even with the incorporation of the traditional media perspectives.

A social approach is critical when dealing with consumers given the digital age that is currently in place. Social media can offer empowerment to consumers and thus allow them to garner influence which in turn creates a relationship that is enabling, between individuals and the respective organizations. The management of social media companies should. Therefore, address matters revolving around the consumers given that it is the consumer traffic that will ensure that these sites are successful and are popular at the end of the day. The management of these companies can promote their spending in this area by making sure that the following areas are addressed in their strategic planning procedures, engagement, conversation, human voice, sharing, collaboration and openness (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011) (See Appendix 2). In summary, control centers for social media will promote consumer evangelism which would further boost consumer traffic and which ensures success for a given social media site.

Sound management functionality in a social media firm will, therefore, look into the consumer resource in its management procedures, a phenomenon dubbed as customer relationship management. Companies ought to embrace this new form of strategy that shifts from managing customers, but instead, looks at the collaborations that can be done with the consumers. Getting closer to customers should be the priority of the management of social media firms if they are to offer to value to the consumers, which is tangible and as a result gain from the consumer's time, money, attention, information and endorsement (Heller Baird, and Parasnis, 2011).

4.2 Social media firms from USA, China, and their effect on customer loyalty

It is critical to note that the US and China are part of the biggest consumers of social media with China topping the list of the said customers. The information presented below provides insights of the social media firms in China and the US.

According to the information presented by Olivier (2015), 91% of the people that use online facilities have active social media accounts. The amount spent on the internet on a daily basis, among the Chinese consumers is 46 minutes, and part of this time is spent navigating through eight popular brands where choices that pertain to marketing are made (Olivier, 2015). The choices are made regarding the recommendations that are placed on these social media sites. It is, therefore, imperative for marketers to increase their brand presence by being very active on the social media sites.

According to Olivier (2015), online discussions that the Chinese consumers indulge in, concerning product brands, are capable of directly affecting the businesses in question. Companies that market their brands online in China have resorted to standing out from others in the industry by being conversant with what consumers feel about products. The fast changing consumer market in China requires the exploitations

of five trends that are paramount for the success of businesses. Decision-making, social media, innovation, loyalty and setting of high expectations are part of the trends that are critical for businesses to exploit (Chan, Chen, and Ying, 2012). The patterns as mentioned earlier have the capability to enforce a marketing strategy that is deemed to be unique, promote a customer enabling environment as well as promote customer retention activities. Businesses that have the ability to see success in their endeavors are the ones that pursue the trends as presented above (Chan, Chen, and Ying, 2012).

Social media in the US on the other hand is well established and is one of the biggest markets in the Western world. According to Burkhalter, and Wood (2015), as of 2012, the number of adult online subscribers in the US was at 69%. Out of the 69%, Facebook was utilized by two-thirds of the proportion; LinkedIn was used by 20%, while 16% of the proportion self-reported to be using Twitter (Burkhalter, and Wood, 2015). Almost all age groups were noted to have used social networking sites in the US, at some points of their lives. The average age of consumers who utilize social media in the US is 40 years old (Burkhalter, and Wood, 2015). The American social media companies have gained popularity overseas, in particular with the presence of loyalty from these foreign groups (Burkhalter, and Wood, 2015).

4.3 Consumers

Social media in China is influenced by word of mouth that spreads concerning brands that are marketed. Opinions from colleagues, family members and friends concerning products are treasured in China as noted by Chan, Chen, and Ying (2012). Other Chinese consumers made their marketing choices based on the information presented in social media by strangers as well. It is because of the online market in China that social media sites are noted to have multiple reviews and views on an annual basis with a good example being the Shanghai city guide referred to as the www.dianping.com. In the site as mentioned earlier, consumers rate both restaurants and merchants that are present in Chinese cities. The meaning of the above occurrence is that for companies to appeal to the Chinese markets, they ought to employ the usage of distribution channels that are aimed at delivering an experience that is consistent. With the consistency, the companies will have news concerning the compelling experiences they offer, spread by consumers in social media and this would, in turn, spark the development of the companies and in the case of poor reviews, such businesses can engage in continuous improvement techniques.

The majority of Chinese online market consumers tend to share their impressions concerning the products that they have used. Chinese consumers use social media sites as well as blogging sites for the purpose of gaining insights on products and services that are offered. SinaWeibo is an example of a microblogging site where consumer traffic is evident. The site is visited by more than half of Chinese internet users who follow brands that were referred to them by other consumers. Research has revealed

that Chinese consumers believe that social media has promoted their engagement with popular brands. The users are also aware of the fact that their indulgent in social media has promoted the fact that they are aware of the providers of certain services and products which they were not aware. Their decision-making processes influence the consumers in the Chinese market, who use social media in their decision-making by the remarks indicated in the sites concerning products and services. For companies to reap full benefits from the services that they offer, in the Chinese market particularly, they ought to identify ways of engaging the Chinese consumers by social media usage. Interaction in the setting of social networks is critical in the Chinese market where consumers will view businesses that are active in social media as being favorable.

Customer experiences are essential in creating impressions. A negative customer experience is likely to undermine customer relationships. Undermining customer relations will tend to have an effect on customer loyalty. It is rather hard to maintain customer relationships, as mentioned by Chan, Chen, and Ying (2012), particularly in the Chinese market. The reason for this occurrence is because a good proportion of Chinese consumers report bad customer experiences, a good number of these clients post about the negative experiences that they have had. Chan, Chen, and Ying (2012), however, mentioned concerning the presence of customer loyalty programs that are available in China, which are aimed at combating adverse experiences that consumers face. The programs use mobile platforms as well as programs provided by both the internet service providers and the banks. Here, consumers are urged to maintain their service providers in the relevant industries.

These programs are seen to be fruitful in persuading consumers to observe their loyalty with their providers. The very presence of these programs shows that Chinese consumers are critical when it comes to impression and that a single ill experience can, in fact, go viral and thus affect the development of “culprit companies” associated with negative experiences. It was noted by Chan, Chen and Ying (2012) that customer loyalty for the Chinese consumers was more than financial incentives. Other factors played a critical role in customer loyalty and these include; CSR, communication that is both honest and truthful as well as the avenues for consumers to engage in activities that pertain to improvement in the design of products and services that are offered by companies. These factors ought to be addressed by companies that utilize social media in their business activities.

Chinese consumers expect service acquisition that is not barred by hassles. These consumers expect customer service speed, product knowledge by the provider as well as the ease in acquisition of information concerning a product or service. Companies in China, through social media, struggle to ensure that negative customer experience is avoided by providing the consumers with what they require. Businesses, as a result, become well-positioned for the provision of customer experience that is said to be holistic where an improvement in customer service is notable. Companies,

therefore, distinguish themselves from competition that is available in the social media industry.

Consumers may be the source of innovation because they provide feedback on products and services that they find to be very innovative. They also portray their preferences and behavior regarding a particular product, and the outcome is that the information garnered can be used in innovation activities. Consumers in the Chinese markets are very adventurous and will, as a result, seek to identify new experiences that aid customers in the launching of new products and services. With the technology craze that has set roots in the Chinese social media market, the young, as well as the population that is connected, tends to engage in innovation programs that are technology based. The average age of the social media consumers in China are of the mean age of 28 years, and these consumers are well educated (Burkhalter, and Wood, 2015). The outcome is that innovation becomes promoted in the Chinese companies through social media.

The customers in the US that use social media do not rely on referrals like their Chinese consumers. They, in fact, are not swayed by social media to make purchases like their Chinese counterparts (Swift, 2014). The percentage of individuals who heed the opinion of their referrals in the US is at 38% compared to the Chinese counterparts who almost double the consumers in the US market, at 66% (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). Social media in the US, among its customers, is not a large occurrence or phenomenon like it is in China (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). On the contrary, the social media consumers in China provide feedback on innovative products, expect accessible services that are available through social media, and worry about impression creation, sharing impression by offering referrals (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). This shows that the Chinese consumers consider social media to be a significant phenomenon in their lives (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). Social media users in the US tend to prefer easy navigation tools showing that the social media culture in the US is less technical (Lee, 2014).

5. Content

Social media in China is highly competitive in nature. This competitive market has sparked the inception of writers who are artificial (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The writers have the intention of identifying positive feedback for the companies that they work for, and at the same time, they use negative news to attack competitors and their products (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The development of microblogs was aimed at addressing such negative reports by competitors whose names have been at the point of being tarnished. Biased views concerning consumer behavior and preferences may be present in the cases where countermeasures aimed at addressing social media crises are not utilized very well (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The content that is mostly shared

in China's social media is one that constitutes retweets, images, videos and jokes (Yu, Asur, and Huberman, 2011).

Social media in the US is competitive similarly to China. The content in Twitter revolves around current trends that are present in the current world as well as stories that pertain to news (Yu, Asur, and Huberman, 2011).

5.1 Social media platforms

Twitter, according to Burkhalter, and Wood (2015), is the leading microblogging site in the US. The other social media site that is very popular in the US is Facebook as noted by Burkhalter, and Wood (2015). These sites, in the bid to gain customer loyalty, employ the usage of the following characteristics; authenticity, accessibility, and interactivity (Burkhalter, and Wood, 2015). Social media tools in the US are less developed compared to the explosive development in China (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). Twitter, for instance, set foot in the US eighteen months after social media content began to embed the users in China (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012).

Chinese social media does not have shared sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, instead, the sector boasts of local sites which have employed a strategy that is, in fact, winning the heart of the social media market in the country (Chan, Chen, and Ying, 2012). The social media in China is characterized by having the most active pool or rather, environment for consumers (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The social media scene in China began back in 1994, eighteen months before its adoption began in the US (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The explosive growth of sites Dianping (review site), blogging sites, Renren (site in social networking), SinaWeibo and Jiebang, over a span of almost two decades, is part of the reason why the Chinese social media market is unique.

China's social media platforms tend to be not only local, as earlier mentioned, but they are also fragmented as noted by Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, (2012). Platforms in social media and e-commerce have key players. These are as follows; in microblogging, there is the TencentWeibo and SinaWeibo (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). In social networking, there is the Kaixin001 and Renren (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). It is critical to note that these social media sites have differences in the areas of expertise, strengths, focus and priorities of the geographical perspectives (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The fragmentation present in China's social media enhances complexity in the sector which in turn requires expertise and resources for proper monitoring and development the key players and platforms in the industry (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012).

5.2 Management practices and theories from social media firms that are most effective for the industry players

When narrowing down to the practicality of the social media companies, certain practices are adopted in the bid to garner strategies that provide winning results. The strategies that are employed have seen the success of social media companies in countries like China and the US. The management theories that are practiced in the social media companies facilitate the adoption of practices that ensure that they are successful. The adoption of theory Y has resulted in the productivity of employees who come up with creative materials that promote consumer engagement. The most successful companies in social media are known to have content that is authentic which in turn engage the customers. In their social media efforts, these firms embrace brand goals. Information regarding the management practices is as mentioned below.

5.3 Authenticity of content as well as flexibility

The incorporation of content authenticity in social media has set companies apart from their competitors, and as a result, seen companies enjoy success in their endeavors. In China, the launch of Clinique's drama series, *Sufeí's Diary*, was met by success given that the product was marketed on a daily basis via a dedicated website. As part of the content of the drama was a storyline in skin care and products. The series was advertised in segments and could be viewed in monitors displayed on transport media like trains, buses, and planes. The outcome was that the product received multiple views that resulted in an increment in Clinique's online brand awareness compared to competitors who utilize traditional marketing approaches (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012).

QZone is a successful networking site in China which is noted to be attractive because of its flexibility. This site allows for content customization which allows the user to acquire new and original experiences for the consumers (Olivier, 2015).

WeChat, a social network site in China practices strategies that are involved in the provision of content that is unique, to its consumers. Customer loyalty and brand reputation of the site has seen a positive impact where tremendous growth has been promoted in the social site (Olivier, 2015).

5.4 Testing and learning approach

The list of examples of companies that have seen social media success is long, with an example of Dove China which employed the testing and learning approach. In this example, Dove China, in the bid to market beauty product lines among women, the company collaborated with a Chinese version of *Ugly Betty* dubbed as *Ugly Wudi*, in the effort to pass beauty messages to the target market. Blogs, initiatives, and chats (online) sparked an increment in the searches related to the product as well as blogs and usage of the Dove line of goods by the time the show was coming to an end of its first

season. 44% of brand awareness was achieved among the target population with an increment in profitability from the usage of the Dove product lines (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). The profitability was much higher as opposed to when the usage of television marketing media is applied.

6. Conclusion

Some businesses have employed this form of company approach in China. In this method, companies ensure consistency in the promotion of messages that pertain to quality, social responsibility, and community development, in the online platform as well as in the in the stores (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012). This technique has been applied by Starbucks in China as well as Durex. Durex, has, in fact, employed the usage of the services of SinaWeibo, where the marketing executives that are on standby monitoring the comments that are presented online and as a result respond by the incorporation of content which consumers will find to be funny. This approach is involved with the creation of an interactive platform which is aimed at gaining customer engagement, which further builds brand loyalty (Chiu, Ip, and Silverman, 2012).

SinaWeibo is a company that benefits from acquiring feedback from consumers. This site is concerned with customer engagement activities. From such engagement, the site has been able to grow to become one of the leading social media sites in China.

Twitter and Facebook, are the largest social media sites in the West, in particular among the young population. These social media consumers follow brands online, and they, as a result, end up spending a lot of time in the sites as mentioned earlier. Twitter is being utilized in Corporates for communication as well as for enhancing consumer engagement as noted by Burkhalter, and Wood (2015). Corporations are paying significant attention to the younger generation (Generation Y), even as they work to make sure that this generation is reached and as a result, promote brand engagement.

It would be appropriate action for a company to take on social media presences in different markets if they are multi-targeting consumers. Research has proved that the management practices of social media firms have been adopted into other industries to gain further penetration into the customer wallet by increasing brand awareness, loyalty, and spend. This indicated that the management practices of social media firms have stood their ground and should be assimilated by companies in other industries if they are to reach connect to and reach a larger audience on a more personal level.

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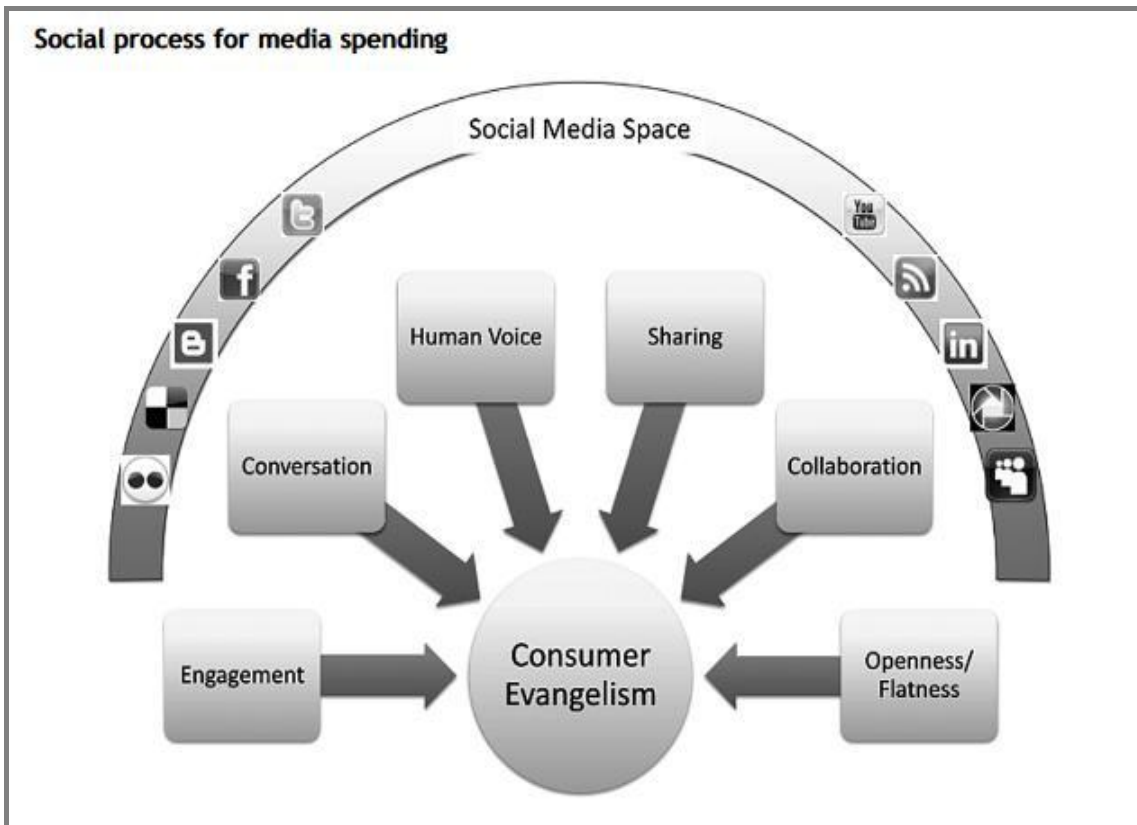
APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Comparison between Theory X and Theory Y	
Theory X	Theory Y
1. Inherent dislike for work.	Work is natural like rest or play.
2. Unambitious and prefer to be directed by others.	Ambitious and capable of directing their own behaviour.
3. Avoid responsibility.	Accept and seek responsibility under proper conditions.
4. Lack creativity and resist change.	Creativity widely spread.
5. Focus on lower-level (physiological and safety) needs to motivate workers.	Both lower-level and higher-order needs like social, esteem and self-actualisation are sources of motivation.
6. External control and close supervision required to achieve organisational objectives.	Self-direction and self-control.
7. Centralisation of authority and autocratic leadership.	Decentralisation and participation in decision-making. Democratic leadership.
8. People lack self-motivation.	People are self-motivated.

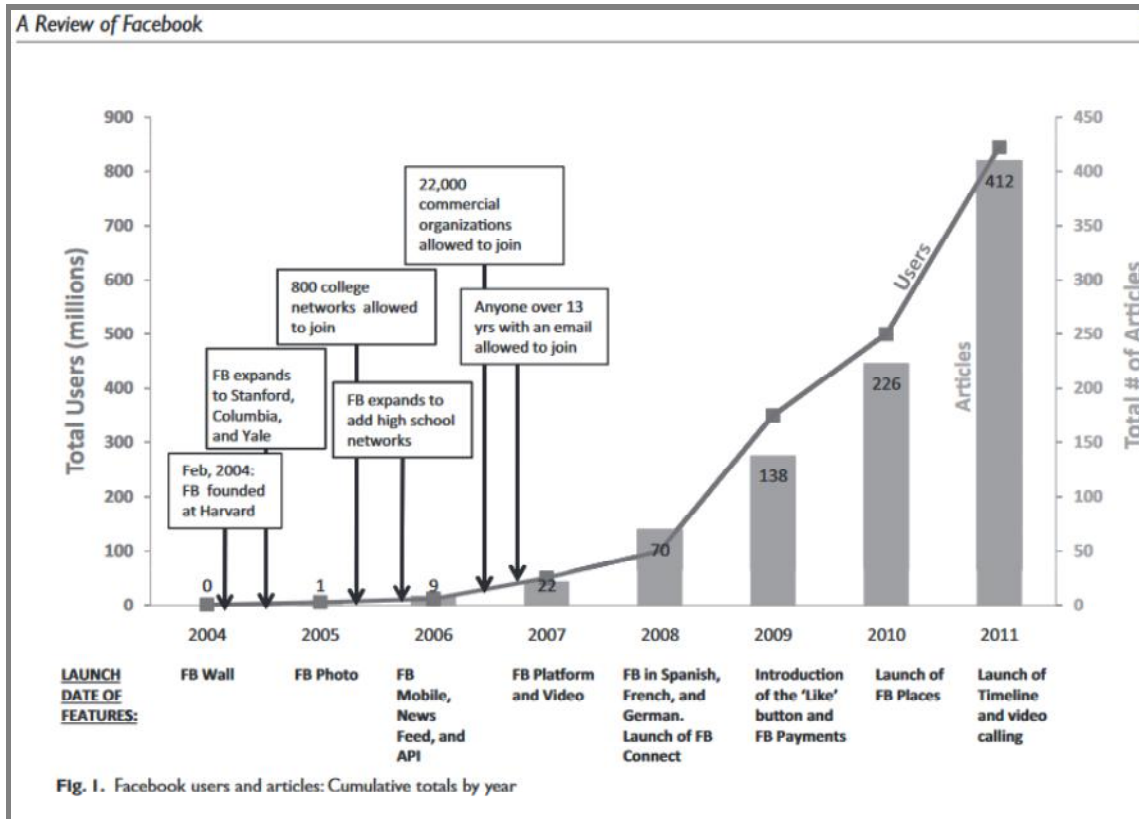
Source Lowe and Brown (2016)

Appendix 2



Source: Shah (2016)

Appendix 3



Source: Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011

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