

## The Transformative Role of Social Media on Modern Marketing

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### *Abstract*

*This conceptual paper attempts to elucidate the meaning, significance, and increasing importance of social media marketing. Secondary data and a literature review were conducted. It describes the various social media platforms accessible to businesses looking to connect with their target audience. The differences between this new media and traditional media have been explained. Businesses are using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to draw in and serve clients and establish enduring relationships with them. Finally, a list of the difficulties faced by social media marketing is provided.*

**Keywords:** Social media marketing, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Microblogs, Social Networks.

### **Introduction to Social Media:**

The Internet was mostly a static environment at first, but everything changed when Web 2.0 was introduced. The web has become more adaptable, and user-generated material has become more prevalent. Since we can now communicate with one other, the Internet has evolved into a social medium. Contrary to popular belief, social media has much deeper roots. Facebook-type websites are the natural outcome of centuries of social media evolution, even though they seem like a relatively new trend. Social media refers to the collective intelligence of Internet users, the communities and online places they visit, and the content and interactions that arise from these interactions (Kemp, 2015).

Humans have long participated in social networking. Our social standing, religious convictions, friendships, and families can all play a role in their formation. Information shared with our social network through social networking websites or services is referred to as social media. Examples include status updates, blogs, forums, images, audio, and user profiles (Eley & Tilley, 2009). Because of its significance for advertising outcomes and their ability to influence their creation and implementation, marketers continue to be highly interested in message strategy (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Message strategy has provided a helpful template for analyzing and categorizing advertising content into broad typologies.

Through social media, anyone can rapidly post and share content globally without any specific knowledge. Social networking has grown in popularity over the past several years, with hundreds of millions of users worldwide. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are currently the main social media sharing sites (Eley & Tilley, 2009, p. 78). Marketers increasingly use social media to locate and establish connections with clients and followers (Berthon et al., 2012).

These new websites are not only useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, but they are also a powerful new marketing tool. A place where customers set the rules and word of mouth makes or breaks the product. With social media, marketing is a two-way communication, rather than the one-way communication used in traditional marketing (Eley & Tilley, 2009, p. 79). While these social networks may have started as the typical geek hangout, just like the Internet did in the 90s, they have now become mainstream. Everyone, from college students to business people to celebrities to politicians, has embraced this new channel (Eley & Tilley, 2009, p. 79)

Social media is a collection of technologies that record material, conversations, and other interactions between people, their friends, and their social networks. Social media platforms facilitate social engagement through scalable and easily available communication methods. The use of mobile and web-based technology to transform communication into interactive discourse is known as social media. In contrast to traditional media, which disseminates information without enabling readers, viewers, or listeners to contribute to its creation or evolution, social media is an online medium that accelerates discourse. Social media is the infrastructure that enables users to publish material that interests them and their connections.

According to Jon Rones, "Social media essentially is a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing, networking, and bookmarking online." Social media has shot to the forefront of people's attention because it is fun. Thanks to social media, it is easy to share your ideas, photos, videos, likes, and dislikes with the world at large and find out what they think of them. Cohen (2014) and Bullas (2015) observed that social media marketing tapped into a growing segment by actively engaging with the audience for the purpose of delivering positive returns.

You can find friends and business contacts and become part of a community or a bunch of different communities. Social media gives you what TV never could: a chance to be engaged and engage others. Therefore, social media is of particular interest to businesses. Currently, businesses of all sizes are experimenting with social media marketing and grappling with the question of how to use it in the most productive way.

As Okazaki and Taylor (2013) observed, due to information overload, many consumers are skeptical about listening to traditional marketing messages. According to Jin (2012), monitoring social media is an important part of brand management as it aids in understanding how supporters of a brand talk about the business. Social media has permitted building associations with customers (Sandler, 2015), learning from them, becoming friends, and ultimately extending the relationship with them. It is a fact that social media marketing is an exceptional in addition to almost every business where personal affiliation with customers and buzz plays a vital role. The reason for prioritizing the importance of social media marketing is its constantly growing platform that attracts a large audience and engages in meaningful dialogue and content.

### **Advantages of Social Media**

**Lower Costs:** It Online social networking strategies are significantly cheaper than advertising. When you socialize, you can pre-screen potential customers. You learn what your prospects like and dislike. The personal relationship you gain when you connect with your potential customer is more valuable than what you would get if you advertised. Advertising is impersonal: the "one size fits all" concept does not seem to work anymore (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011).

**Credibility and Trust:** Connecting with prospects on a personal level builds trust and credibility. A general rule of thumb is to offer your services, expertise, or help before you ask for it. It is acceptable to promote services when asked (Vivian & Pasi, 2017). If you are not careful, your attempts could be considered spam. Instead, wait for opportunities to present themselves instead of forcing a situation.

**Reach:** Both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and can reach a global audience. Industrial media, however, typically use a centralized framework for organization, production, and dissemination, whereas social media are, by their very nature, more decentralized, less hierarchical, and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility (Fuller & Roy-Chowdhuri, 2018).

**Accessibility:** The means of production for industrial media are typically government and/or privately owned, whereas social media tools are generally available to the public at little or no cost (Carr & Hayes, 2015).

**Usability and simple setup:** Industrial media production typically requires specialized skills and training. Conversely, most social media production does not require specialized skills and training or requires only modest reinterpretation of existing skills; in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production (Lacka & Chong, 2016). A profile can be created with minimal time and effort. For less web-savvy individuals, most sites provide straightforward instructions and a general template to make page construction simple.

**Conveys Information about the Business:** Many sites allow you to post bulletins or blogs for friends (people who have requested to connect with you on your site). This gives businesses a chance to advertise their weekly specials, sales, or new products/services. For many, the web is one of the first places they visit to search for information. An online presence helps ensure that a business is one of the first to come across in a search (Osatuyi, 2013).

**Buzz Generation:** When someone adds a business profile as a "friend," the profile appears on that person's friends list. This means that other people will see and perhaps visit the profile, thus increasing awareness about the business (Henn & Bathelt, 2018).

**Allows for Customer Feedback:** Social networking sites serve as an outlet for companies to explore the possibilities of reaching out to customers and asking for feedback (Carlson et al., 2018). Entertainment venues and restaurants may ask connected customers to post pictures and comments about their experiences.

**Immediacy:** The time lag between communications produced by industrial media can be long (days, weeks, or even months) compared to social media (which can be capable of virtually instantaneous responses; only the participants determine any delay in response). However, as industrial media begin adopting aspects of production normally associated with social media tools, this feature may not prove to be distinctive over time (Barassi, 2015).

**Permanence:** Industrial media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed, changes cannot be made to that same article), whereas social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing. (Pesce & Noto, 2016)

## **Types of Social Media:**

**Blogs:** A frequent chronological publication of personal thoughts and web links. A blog is often a mixture of what is happening in a person's life and what is happening on the Web, a kind of hybrid diary/guide site, although there are as many unique types of blogs as there are people. People maintained blogs long before the term was coined, but the trend gained momentum with the introduction of automated publishing systems, most notably Blogger at blogger.com. Thousands of people use services such as bloggers to simplify and accelerate the publishing process. Blogs are alternatively called web logs or weblogs. However, "blog" seems less likely to cause confusion, as "web log" can also refer to a server's log files.

A *blog* is a type of content management system (CMS) that makes it easy for anyone to publish short articles, called *posts*. Blog software provides a variety of social features, including comments, blogrolls, trackbacks, and subscriptions that make it perfect for marketing purposes. Blogs make great hubs for social media marketing efforts, as they can be need to have a blog that speaks to its current and potential customers as real people (Pinjamaa & Cheshire, 2016).

Blogs are not the right place for corporate-speak press releases; they should be conversational in tone. Every time a company does something new or cool, a quick post can be posted. Blogs about the organization's take on news that affects your industry can be written. If a related blog post something you think is particularly interesting or incorrect, links to it and organizations response must be added. With the help of social media, students can easily communicate or share information quickly with each other through various social sites like Facebook, Orkut, and Instagram (Kalia, 2013). It is also important for students to engage in practical work instead of paperwork. They can also write blogs for Teachers as well as for themselves to enhance their knowledge skills

The most popular blog sites are WordPress, Blogger, and Typepad. To succeed in blogging, you need to have great content. The content should be interesting and relevant to your target market. Good blog content could include articles, product updates, interviews, and personal insights into topics (Gehi, 2006). Furthermore, you need to update your blog regularly. If you post often, people will come back for more. Regularly adding fresh content will also boost search engine rankings (Gehi, 2006). To be among the first hits in a search engine is much more effective than pay-per-click advertising (Cass, 2007, p. 50). A blog is not a place for formality or corporate speak. It is more similar to a forum where ideas flourish and current interests can be debated. Furthermore, it is not very important to be a great writer; you just need to give your audience good content (Gehi, 2006). Blogging is about informal conversations, building relationships, and creating goodwill that establishes credibility. To discuss every side of an argument gives you credibility, while interrupting and grabbing attention lessens your credibility. Therefore, you should aim to not interrupt other bloggers (Cass, 2007 p. 41). It is also important to provide fair and comprehensive information. You should test the accuracy of the information you post to maintain your credibility; corporate blogger should strive for thoroughness and honesty and be aware of other people's integrity. You should correct mistakes made in the past and ensure that the views presented on the blog represent those of the company (Cass, 2007 p. 59).

### **Microblogs:**

Microblogging is a form of blog. A microblog differs from a traditional blog in that its content is typically much smaller in both actual size and aggregate file size. A microblog entry can consist of nothing but a short sentence fragment, an image, or an embedded video. Among the many social media platforms, microblogs are one of the fastest-growing categories, similar to blogs, and are utilized for posting brief updates, ideas, or quick reflections (Ebner & Schiefner, 2008; Burkhalter & Wood, 2015). Their popularity has increased among several customers and has made them very attractive for companies in order to reach business objectives (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009)

Among the most notable services are Twitter, Tumblr, whatyadoin.com, Plurk, Emote.in, PingGadget, Beeing, Jaiku, and identi.ca. Recently, various services and software with microblogging features have been developed. Plurk has a timeline view that integrates video and picture sharing. Flipster uses microblogging as a platform for people to post topics and gather audience opinions. Emote.in has a concept of sharing emotions, built over microblogging, with a timeline. PingGadget is a location-based microblogging service. Pownce, developed by Digg founder Kevin Rose among others, integrated microblogging with file sharing and event invitations. Pownce was merged into SixApart in 2008.

Other leading social networking websites, such as Facebook, My Space, LinkedIn, JudgIt, and XING, also have their own microblogging features, better known as status updates. With the growth of microblogging, many users want to maintain their presence on more than one social network. Services such as Life stream and Profilactic aggregate microblogs from multiple social networks into a single list, while other services, such as Ping.fm, send out microblogs to multiple social networks.

Twitter is the most popular microblogging site. It is easy to be on Twitter, requires very little investment of time, and can quickly prove worthwhile in terms of increased buzz, sales, and consumer insight. Twitter can be used to announce offers or events, promote new blog posts, or keep readers in the know with links to important news stories (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2018).

### **Social Networking:**

A social network is a website where people connect with friends, both those they know offline and those they know online. Social networking sites are a hot topic for marketers as they present a number of opportunities for interacting with customers, including via plug-in applications, groups, and fan pages.

The roots of online social networking can be traced to the 1980s bulletin board systems (BBSs). These systems allowed users to log in through very slow connections to share software and data, send private messages, and post to public message boards. Due to the high cost of long-distance calls required to access BBSs in other parts of the world, most of these were very local communities.

The modern era of social networks began in 2002 when Jonathan Abrams launched Friendster. Inspired by Match.com, Abrams wanted Friendster to be a dating site for platonic relationships. In 2003, several employees of a marketing company, now known as Intermix Media, duplicated the core functionality of Friendster and launched MySpace. It quickly became a leader among social networking sites.

In October 2003, a Harvard sophomore named Mark Zuckerberg hacked into the university's private dorm ID database and created Facemash, a site that let students compare two ID photos to select the more attractive one. Narrowly avoiding legal action, Zuckerberg went on to create "The Facebook," a social network that began as an exclusive site for Harvard students. Slowly, the site allowed other colleges to join -initially only Ivy League schools, then other colleges, and eventually, high schools. Finally, in 2006, anyone with an email address could sign up for the registry.

Currently, Facebook is the dominant social networking site and has the most features useful to social media marketers. It began in universities, so Facebook boasts a commanding percentage of college student members. Recently, however, its fastest-growing segment has been users older than 35, and recent data suggest that the 35–54 age group has become larger than the 18–24 age group. For these older users, Facebook presents a middle ground between the stuffiness of LinkedIn and the adolescent playground of MySpace and is a fun but easily navigable place where they can reconnect with old friends. Facebook allows businesses to create public profiles with many of the same features as a user's profile (Ray, 2013). Users can connect with a page and become fans of it. Pages can have public messaging walls, events, photos and custom applications.

LinkedIn, a social networking site for business professionals, is the most restrictive social network in terms of customization and integration. It does not include any photo-sharing features and was the last major social networking site to allow users to post photos of themselves on their profiles. The core function of LinkedIn is professional networking; therefore, it is heavily used by job seekers and recruiters. LinkedIn restricts contact between members so that only individuals who are directly contacted can message one another. The LinkedIn features that are most useful to marketers are Groups and Answers.



## **Media Sharing**

Media-sharing sites allow users to create and upload multimedia content, sometimes called user-generated content (UGC). With the advent of easy-to-use digital cameras, camcorders, and high-speed Internet connections, media-sharing sites have become extremely popular. Marketers can create videos with very little expertise and upload them to YouTube to reach millions of users worldwide. Although these sites include social features for members, most users of media-sharing sites are not members but merely view the sites' content.

YouTube was started in 2005 by three PayPal employees and funded to the tune of \$11.5 million by the respected venture capital fund Sequoia Capital. YouTube is currently the largest video-sharing site on the Web and the third most visited site on the Internet. It has changed the face of the Web, and there is hardly a marketing campaign that would not find value in a presence on YouTube. It allows organizations to create channels for themselves, which may be subscribed to by viewers. The videos uploaded must be interesting, and the links to them must be on the company's website, blog, Twitter, and Facebook profile. Flickr is the most popular photo-sharing site. Flickr offers two types of accounts: Free and Pro. Free account users are allowed to upload 300 MB of images a month and two videos. In addition, if a free user has more than 200 photos on the site, they will only be able to see the most recent 200 in their photostream. The other photos that were uploaded are still stored on the site, and links to these images in blog posts remain active. Free users can also contribute to a maximum of 10 photo pools. For a free account, no one (including the account owner) can access the original files. If the account is upgraded to a pro account, the original files are available for download. Pro accounts allow users to upload an unlimited number of images and videos every month and receive unlimited bandwidth and storage space. Photos may be placed in up to 60 group pools, and pro account users receive ad-free browsing and have access to account statistics. Flickr also has a slideshow feature that allows users to put a group of photos into an interactive block that users can scroll through. You can create a slideshow from sets, tagged pages, or search results. They are also a great addition to blog posts.

## **Business use of Blogs/Twitter/Facebook**

The three services studied in this paper differ in terms of how they are used. Below, we discuss some concrete, but still general, possible uses.



## **Blogs**

The most important thing to remember when corporate blogging is to maintain a personal and informal style, and not trying to oversell your products (Cass, 2007; Gehi, 2006). It is also important that the information you share is accurate and relevant to your target audience. The blog should not be neglected for long periods of time; it should be updated regularly with quality content, making visitors come back for more and develop positive associations with the brand (Gehi, 2006). The content should, of course, focus on things in your industry, which both Saltå Kvarn and Binero do, but you have the chance to be more personal, for example, by posting photos from a company event. The advantage of blogs is that messages can also be spread through word of mouth via other blogs (Lopez & Sicilia, 2014).

By using social bookmarking services (Warr, 2008; Eley & Tilley, 2009), such as Delicious, your post can reach more readers. You should try to reach out to other bloggers and engage in healthy conversations and debates. Similar to media relations, it is important to maintain good blogger relations. Some bloggers are more important than others; try to get the influential bloggers on your side, and others will follow you. Use the methods available to become among the top-ranked sites regarding search engine hits, which will give you more visitors (Gehi, 2006). A quite common term is “search engine optimization,” which is about building websites correctly to get a better search engine rank; both the technology behind the website and the content affect this. It is important that you follow company guidelines and that your posts represent the company’s views. Preferably, the blogger should have proper authority and be able to post without having to check everything with superiors in management.

## **Twitter**

Even if blogs and microblogs are quite similar in the way they work technically (May"eld, 2008), the way you should use them requires a lot of things. Twitter has a built-in limit of 140 characters per tweet (Twitter, 2009). This means that microblogging is more intense; each post is smaller, but the frequency must be much higher. You are expected to post new information several times a day (Jantsch, 2009). There are a few things you can do to get more followers and reach more people. Retweeting what popular users say might help you reach existing opinion leaders. There are two reasons to retweet: to help spread a good message and/or acknowledge the original tweeter, giving him more publicity and thus strengthening his or her relationship with you. But be careful not to spam or be annoying, the key is to be helpful towards the community (Tang & Hew, 2017).

You also want others to be able to retweet your tweets, so others can help by spreading your message; aim for 120 characters (Jantsch, 2009). Although it is debatable whether more followers are what you should strive for. Of course, the more followers one has, the more exposure one gets. However, in social media, it is more about having the right followers, which in business terms means potential customers and partners. Be helpful, and when appropriate, do not hesitate to join conversations. This will only demonstrate your knowledge, expertise, and willingness to help. One should not interrupt people with traditional commercial messages, as this will only weaken the relationship and status. The goal is to build your brand reputation without acting like a salesman. So, how should the distribution between tweets, replies, and retweets look? You should tweet because you want to spread your own messages, but not too much.

Microblogs are social media channels, which means they are about two-way communication. Replies come quite naturally; they are used to answer and ask questions or comment on statements (Mcivor, 2009). Retweet when you see an interesting tweet. There is no golden rule on how much you should do of each. It is important that you do not neglect these functions and use the media primarily as a social tool. The most important factor that applies to all services is to monitor the brand, products, and services (Jantsch, 2009). Use Twitter Search, or similar, to find out if your brand is mentioned. Perhaps, not everyone knows that you use Twitter and therefore do not ask you directly. Do not forget that There are many available Twitter clients that increase the usability of Twitter (Lehutjo, 2013).

## **Facebook**

Facebook offers users the benefit of having their messages mixed in with their friends' updates in their news feed if they become fans. Their regular Facebook life will be intermingled with your message (Facebook, 2009a). Facebook is arguably the greatest tool for reaching a large audience, regardless of demographics, because of its large number of active users. Like any other social media platform, Facebook should be used with the same mindset. However, it is even more crucial to be personal and avoid acting like a business on Facebook. Facebook was initially created primarily for private users to stay in touch with friends and other acquaintances.

Companies' activity on Facebook is a relatively new phenomenon. Therefore, you should try to act as a part of the group. Facebook users expect a more friendly and personal behavior than on traditional websites (Brown, 2009). Before you try to "sell" your product/service on Facebook, you should converse with the audience; traditional ad campaigns and promotions should not be forced. Like any other Social

Media service, it is important to listen before acting (Social Media Optimization, 2007). Companies should take advantage of the "Fan Page" that Facebook has and build a community around the company and its products (Brown, 2009). Both Facebook community and buying experiences have social elements. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor these behaviors on Facebook or other networks to understand social network users and, as a result, develop marketing and communication strategies to turn fans into customers (Pereira & Garcia, 2014).

### **The challenges faced by businesses in the field of social media marketing**

According to the literature analysis and preceding debate, social media is indispensable; nonetheless, numerous hurdles exist for organizations eager to leverage it for their advantage. Some of the distinctive challenges posed by social media marketing include:

1. Some people, especially those who run small firms, are still not convinced of its efficacy.
2. Compared to direct marketing strategies, the results may be slower.
3. Devising strategies to draw visitors to your website, blog, or page may not be simple. Perhaps the secret lies in inventiveness and creativity itself.
4. Rather than producing leads, social media cultivates groups and followers. How can followers be converted into paying customers?
5. An excessive amount of social media contact from a business can be interpreted as spam.
6. The question of what proportion of the advertising budget should go to this media is a conundrum.
7. Some view social media as a passing trend that may not endure.
8. Social media is rapidly changing and is a dynamic target.
9. Techniques for gauging social media effectiveness are constantly being developed.
10. If not managed appropriately, social media can be detrimental to a brand.

### **Conclusion**

Social media has transformed the marketing landscape, transitioning it from a one-directional, firm-controlled communication stream to a multidirectional, consumer-driven engagement ecosystem. This study highlights the multifaceted nature of social media by exploring its evolution, utility, and significance as a powerful marketing platform. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and microblogs have redefined the parameters of customer engagement, branding and communication. Businesses are no longer merely advertisers; they are active participants in dynamic dialogue with their audiences.

The interactive, user-generated, and real-time nature of social media offers unmatched advantages, including cost efficiency, global reach, enhanced customer feedback mechanisms, and personalization of marketing strategies. However, these advantages are accompanied by considerable challenges, such as managing content saturation, quantifying effectiveness, avoiding the perception of spam, and staying current with evolving platforms and audience preferences.

Social media marketing is not just a passing trend; it is a structural shift in how organizations connect with their stakeholders. Effective utilization requires creativity, strategic planning, and ongoing commitment to understanding the preferences and behaviors of digital consumers.

### **Scope for Further Research**

Although this study presents a comprehensive overview of the impact of social media on marketing practices, several avenues remain open for future academic inquiry.

#### **Measurement of ROI in Social Media Marketing**

More rigorous empirical studies are needed to develop reliable frameworks for measuring the return on investment (ROI) of social media campaigns. This includes exploring metrics beyond likes and shares to assess the long-term business impact.

#### **Consumer Behavior and Social Media Influence**

Future research should explore how social media influences different demographic groups' decision-making processes, trust development, and brand loyalty in varying cultural and socio-economic contexts.

#### **Comparative Platform Analysis**

There is scope to compare the effectiveness of various social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn, in achieving different marketing objectives (e.g., B2B vs. B2C marketing).

#### **Crisis Management and Brand Reputation**

Investigating the role of social media in managing corporate crises and maintaining brand reputation in the face of public scrutiny is a promising research area.

#### **Regulatory and Ethical Considerations**

Given the rising concerns about privacy, data misuse, and misinformation, research on the ethical implications and regulatory frameworks governing social media marketing is becoming increasingly vital.

#### **Influencer Marketing and Credibility**

The growing trend of influencer marketing raises questions about authenticity, credibility, and the real impact on consumer behavior—topics that deserve deeper academic attention.

## **SME Engagement Strategies**

Future studies can investigate how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can best leverage social media despite resource constraints and what best practices can be adopted across industries.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to refining marketing strategies, optimizing engagement techniques, and establishing a more robust theoretical foundation for social media marketing in the digital age.

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