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NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BUSINESS

NEGATYWNY WPŁYW SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETINGU NA PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWO

Summary

The research presents the negative impact of social media marketing on business. The author explains the social media phenomenon, reason for its popularity, the social media marketing (SMM) phenomenon, and ways of using it for advertising. The (research) author focuses on the negative aspects of social media which contribute to the destruction of a good brand name and loss of as enterprise profit and provides some examples of such cases. As the conclusion, the author states that SMM marketing does not only provide positive effect on business profit and also states that there is no way to use particular strategy to avoid consequences of bad e-commerce.

Streszczenie

Artykuł opisuje negatywny wpływ marketingu w mediach społecznościowych, tzw. social media marketingu (SMM) na przedsiębiorstwa. Autor definiuje social media, podaje przykłady platform oraz opisuje zjawisko popularyzacji mediów społecznościowych. Kolejnym przedstawionym przez autora zjawiskiem jest social media marketing (SMM) oraz narzędzia pokrewne, niezbędne do budowania dobrego imienia firmy w mediach społecznościowych, promowania produktów i nawiązania kontaktów z klientami oraz podaje przykłady ich użycia. Artykuł skupia się przede wszystkim na uwydatnieniu negatywnych cech SMM, które wpływają destruktywnie na opinię firmy oraz jej przychody. Autor podaje możli-

we powody oraz przykłady destruktywnych zjawisk i aktywności związanych z SMM. W podsumowaniu, autor stwierdza, iż na ten moment nie ma efektywnego sposobu na uniknięcie krzywdzących skutków nieumiejętnego e-marketingu.

Introduction

Social media marketing has become popular along with the emergence of the great corporations, which disrupted the market of social media networks, like Facebook and Instagram. There are over 2.20 billion people using Facebook on a daily basis [www1], and the number is still growing. Along with the technological development and the growing popularity of the internet worldwide, many aspects of daily life have changed and had to adjust to the surrounding technologies.

The contemporary generations communicate without any effort by using instant messengers – real-time messages available immediately after sending to the recipient's screen [www2]. This technology made communication and at the same time decision-making much easier, faster and more efficient. We no longer need to wait long for the response of the recipient, which has improved many aspects of daily life. Instant messengers are strictly related to the social media – it is actually an essential part of every platform of social media networks. We can share important events from our life without any barriers and follow what happens in the lives of others. Neither distance nor time are not a disturbance of any kind. This easiness of communication is the reason for the (ever-growing) popularity of social networks. To understand how social media marketing works, it is needed to discover its phenomenon.

1. Social media phenomenon

There are many definitions of social media. According to Kim & Ko [2011] "*Social media are online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content. They take*

a variety of forms, including weblogs, social blogs, micro-blogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking." [Management Association, Information Resources, 2014] As we can see in this explanation, every activity through which the message is conveyed might be understood as social media. Knowing that nowadays internet is a commonly used tool for communication, not only can it be used for conveying some information about our interests or private life but also it can be applied to get the important information concerning a number of issues.

1.1. Social media marketing

Social media does not only connect people, but also creates images of brands worldwide. This possibility of such promotion has created the phenomenon of social media marketing. The easiest way to describe social media marketing is: "*it is the use of social media websites and social networks to market a company's products and services.*" [www3] SMM, also known as "digital marketing" or "e-marketing" is based on a strategy of sharing. The recipient shares the created, mostly targeted message with their family and friends and makes the information widespread within communities. There are numerous advantages of such a way of sharing; the message comes from the person whom we trust and reaches the unreachable potential costumer. SMM tries to attract the users' attention by creating encouraging content which influences the user to perform an action of desiring or purchasing the product.

One of the essential parts of bounding through e-marketing is building trust. In the digital reality, we are not able to connect with the customer directly by the face-to-face contact and neither are we able to perform any body language, which is a crucial factor while bounding with the costumer face-to-face. These factors are the reason for appearing of e-trust – phenomenon that emerged from the lack of direct physical contact. In e-trust the interactions are performed by using digital devices and they do substitute the natural human interaction tools [Mesquita, 2011, p.27]. This facilitates the business to connect with a costumer on a different level and build the interaction which is more natural.

By using social media, companies are able to interact with the potential clients and get acquainted with their needs and their daily life, which is essential to advertise the product and adjust it to particulate recipients. The components posted online encourage people to gain more information about the product which was intentionally advertised for a specific buyer. Thanks to

social media its easier for companies all around the world to find a costumer [Saravanakumar, SuganthaLakshmi, 2012, p. 4445].

and find a target recipient for a particular product. Social media lets the sellers influence the purchasing behaviour of potential consumers and at the same time increase the sales. Companies use influencers and hire popular bloggers who advertise products online on different social media and in this way - they make a product not only popular, but also desirable. Moreover, social media are used to gain more followers by sharing free products or announcing contests, which gives an effect with increased sales.

Table 1. Commonly Used Social Media Marketing Tools

Facebook 92%	Twitter 84%	LinkedIn 71%
Blogs 68%	Youtube 56%	Forums 24%
Foursquare 17%	MySpace 6%	Social BookMarking 26%

Źródło: M. Saravanakumar , T.SuganthaLakshmi [2012]

Diverse audiences use social media, which gives an opportunity for companies to deliver their products to a wider range of customers. Nowadays, if a person needs to find a content which lies in the person's interests, it's easier to look for it within social media that even, as it was popular before, google it. By using a sign "#", called *hashtag* (a metadata tag which allows users of social media to find messages with a specific theme or content) [www4] companies might not only share the item with interested clients but also easily find a new customers.

2. Negative aspects of SMM

Needless to say, the great discovery of social media has not only influenced the companies in a positive way. With the increased number of transactions, sellers have to expect more unsatisfied clients and negative opinions. This led to the emergence of affiliate product review sites [Saravanakumar, SuganthaLakshmi, 2012, p. 4448] on which customers communicate exchanging the information about their shopping activities. Thanks to many reviews posted online, a customer can get to know if the product which they are interested in will meet their expectations. It also delivers some information

if the product is consistent with the description or a feedback how the company treats clients, operates on its guarantee and returns.

However, its highly possible that the dishonest business owners use this websites to promote their products and pay other companies which deal with negative opinions by writing additional, fake, positive ones. This makes people feel antipathetic about the brand and leads to decreasing tendency towards company's interests.

Social media is also a reason for a phenomenon called *online firestorms*. Online firestorms are "*sudden discharge of large quantities of messages containing negative Word-of-Mouth and complaint behaviour against a person, company, or group in social media networks*' [www5]. This phenomenon might be extremely destructive for a company. In 2012, McDonalds decided to introduce a hashtag #McDStories to engage customers in social media to their brand. Unfortunately, for the company, the hashtag started to be used with a wrong purpose - as a mark for negative opinion about the company and its product quality. This is an accurate example of how social media may cause the destruction of the good name of a brand within a few hours. The hashtag #McDStories is still being used today, which is also a long-lasting effect of negative social network influence.

As mentioned before, social media creates a brand's image. Considering that, it is worth mentioning that the good name of the company is not always built only by the owner or marketing specialists, but also by workers from different areas, not associated with the marketing departments. If we enter the a (chain) shop of a famous brand, we expect to be taken care of and treated with respect. The same applies when we use online stores or when we are served by online helplines. What we also expect is that the workers of the company have decent work conditions and salaries. Employers are not able to control all of their employees, and at the same time, they don't know what is shared by them on social media [www6]. A negative opinion of employee on the company's management or different unit or an aspect of a brand might also cause a serious problem with the image of the employer/brand. In 2016, Talia Jane, a worker of Yelp wrote an official letter to the CEO of the company on Facebook, complaining about low salary rate. Jeremy Stoppelmann, the CEO, replied that living in San Francisco demands high costs, which effected in a massive attack on the CEO and negative response towards company policy [www7].

With the growing popularity of SMM a lot of companies had to change their strategy of marketing their products. Although SMM give more possibilities to communicate with the client, it also changes the "*nature of business communication, favouring personal engagement and visual content over traditional marketing copy*" [www8] which means that, unlike traditional marketing, modern way of advertising focuses more on product culture than its description, which accumulates costs for a company related to the long-lasting and difficult modification of the strategy, and do not mean to always guarantee a success.

With using social media, there is a great risk of privacy deviation. Accounts on social media are not properly protected and it is easy to get an access for not even a very experienced hacker. This action is also dangerous in a way that the data of the customers might be stolen and used by somebody for abusive purposes or be sold to a different company.

Another serious issue related to the account hacking is high possibility that the data of the customers might be stolen. Every enterprise is obliged to meet special conditions concerning data safety and inform the client about the way of the data storage. In the case of a consumer's data leak, the company must bear the consequences of such an event, which often involves high costs, a law suit at the court, which mostly results in the scandal in media and affects the company's position. İn 2016 British company called Cambridge Analytica illegally collected and sold the data of over 50 million Facebook users. This led to the massive removal of users account on Facebook and started a worldwide discussion about the data safety in a virtual reality [www9].

Another consequence of such an event is loss of trust among customers or users of particular platform. What is more, sponsors and contractors may also resign from cooperation. Rebuilding of confidence is a long-lasting process which may last years and accumulate additional loses for company and lead to eventual bankruptcy. The same applies when a company tries to avoid additional costs. In 2014 Reserved and other brands of LPP relocated the company's license for trademarks to Cyprus to avoid taxes. This action made customers create a fan-page: "I do not buy from tax evaders" which collected over 10 thousand fans. The company stated that even though during the crisis, it gained rather than lost but the statistics showed that company stock prices dropped at some point during the crisis [www10].

Return on investment (ROİ) is a term used in measurement of efficiency of an investment or comparing the efficiency of number of different investments.

"*ROI measures the amount of return on an investment, relative to the investment's cost.*" [www11] While using social media for advertising the company's product, it is difficult to measure the ROİ correctly which does not provide the proper information of what kind of profit this media contribute. The study presents that only 37% of digital marketers (are able to) measure the ROİ correctly and that 35% of are not sure and 28% is not familiar with the ROİ at all [www12].

SMM is also time-consuming. The researches show that average time spent on SMM by digital marketers is 6 hour, where 37% of them spend on SMM even 11 hours [www12]. The problem appears when the time engaged in this activity does not lead to any positive results like sales and incomes. This simply means that the company's investments in salaries for digital marketers do not bring any profit but cause some significant loss for the business.

With over 50 million small business using social media to promote [www13] there is a great competition. İt means that a company needs to use some creative ideas that not only will attract the client's attention but also will not duplicate an idea used before. This means that a company must follow the newest trends and adjust to them. The study shows that visual content is 40 times more likely to be shared by the social media users [www13], than texts which accumulates additional costs connected with hiring graphics and people responsible for graphic design as well us buying promotional images.

3. Conclusion

Along with the modernisation and technological revolution a lot of aspects of daily life have changed. Many of these changes have influenced also the business environment. Nowadays, when some technologies undergo rapid modernisations, to stay valid one must follow the changes and adjust to them to prevent from staying behind. Thanks to the popularization of social networks, many businesses have an opportunity to develop a new type of bond with their costumer by reaching the client directly, by using devices that have became essential part of a daily life of an average citizen. Creating an innovative way of communications and reaching the targeted audience makes business activities easier and more efficient but along with modernisation and simplification of usual schemes come some new issues which instead of making things easier, do totally the opposite, and complicate the tasks.

SMM in most cases causes issues connected with brand's image. The good name of a company is its biggest value and when this value decreases, the

company might simply collapse. The strong bond with the costumer is based on trust and by even a simple mistake, this trust might be lost. This requires digital marketers to be precise and extremely careful with what they post online. Considering all, we can simply state that there are no simple solution to avoid the danger of SMM. Although the phenomenon brings a number of benefits, it also causes additional costs, consumes time and does not guarantee success. These negative factors increase along with new technologies and modernisations. Since the SM are still undergoing the processes of development and change, it becomes impossible to determine whether it is possible to avoid the consequences of some improper e-marketing.

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