



Understanding Social Media Marketing: The Value of Consumer Engagement

Yilin Sun^(✉)

College of LSA, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA
yilinsun@umich.edu

Abstract. These days, consumer engagement is a hot topic. More and more studies have shown that consumer engagement is positively correlated with consumer satisfaction. This paper reviewed recent literature on consumer engagement and proposes a framework of how to use social media to improve consumer engagement for future research. The paper explores the literature on the use of social media with particular attention to consumer engagement which is the primary area of interest in this study. Articles will be sought from academic databases, and case studies will be used to demonstrate success and how this approach can yield results. The case of First Media and GoPro social media engagement strategies demonstrate the use of solid marketing strategies that have helped the organizations build their image and stamp their market presence, thus attracting even more customers to use their products. This study's findings would help firms make better decisions on enhancing their customer engagement on the social media platform.

Keywords: Consumer engagement · Social media platform · Social media marketing · Brand Awareness · Consumer Satisfaction

1 Introduction

The type of content used for marketing is critical in creating a stable consumer engagement [1]. Many believe that high consumer engagement helps advertise businesses, thus promoting sales. From a simple online platform where people only interacted with friends to maintain relationships, social media has transformed into a place where brands can build relationships with clients and engage them in a manner that yields meaningful results. The idea of social media engagement is built on the tenets that consumer tastes and preferences are dynamic, making it necessary to maintain close contact to get real-time feedback on their changing demands. Social media engagement uses features such as text, videos, images, likes, saves, emojis, comments, and replies. The way both companies and customers use these features reflects their type of relationship and can help identify areas that require action to improve a brand. One key attribute that makes social media engagement crucial for organizations is the customer feedback that demonstrates a high preference for social media platforms as their preferred channel through which they can interact with customer service providers. In a 2016 Twitter survey, for instance, nearly 35% of consumers on social media preferred to obtain customer support

on social media over other options such as email, live chat, calls, and physical help [2]. Given this rising demand for the support over social media platforms, companies must utilize the space to attain customer satisfaction, with customer engagement being part of the support strategies offered. Therefore, this paper draws attention to the consumer engagement tactics adopted by brands and the impact of these techniques on their business performance. To this end, this study analyzes consumer engagement content and the essence of organizations' consumer engagement in social media marketing to examine consumer engagement content adopted by organizations on social media and the essence of consumer engagement in social media marketing.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Engagement

Engagement is a broad area that estimates the level of relationship between brands and consumers. Schultz & Peltier consider this connection to be a function of relations constructs comprising various elements such as market orientation, brand loyalty, social networks, customer relationship management, and relationship marketing [3]. These relationship features must mirror the consumer's social, cognitive, and emotional behaviors to enable meaningful interactions that generate solid results [4]. This position suggests that consumer engagement is associated with how brands recognize customer experiences and lifestyles in their marketing options, an attribute that promotes deep connections between companies and their clients for an even stronger relationship. Meanwhile, Calder view consumer engagement as a psychological state created by specific focal objects within a dynamic context and conditions following a process whose relational concepts are either antecedents or consequences [5]. In view of the above observations, one might conclude that consumer engagement is a combination of relational constructs adopted by an organization through the lens of consumer lifestyles, feelings, and thoughts while observing the market dynamics as defined by changing consumer needs.

2.2 Social Media Platform

In the context of social media, consumer engagement has taken shape on multiple platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. According to Devereux, social media platforms such as Facebook, which enjoys the highest levels of engagement as compared to other sites, can benefit businesses including large and small enterprises to connect deeply with consumers through constant engagement [6]. Consumers can express themselves through their reactions to content being published on an entity's social media platforms, where they can use elements, such as likes, comments, shares, and emojis that help express various emotions. This kind of interaction can guide companies on their relationship with their consumers and gaps that might require fixing to maintain a healthy relationship.

In modern-day marketing, social media has become a central point of interaction between clients and companies that seek to provide outstanding customer experience

and grow sales. Valos argue that the integration of social media tools into marketing practices is on the rise despite not having fully established a remarkable presence [1]. In their study seeking to deepen the knowledge of social media applications in marketing, the authors explore the use of social media marketing in relation to communication methods and the effectiveness of these platforms in boosting performance. The research concluded that social media channels may yield massive benefits in terms of customer engagement performed through linking multiple companies' online platforms in a move that strives to create harmony across all management levels and maintain close links with consumers. Consumers are usually encouraged to share honest reviews to give companies an accurate picture of their products or services and the extent to which they are addressing their clients' needs. From this approach, one might argue that the growth of social media is a blessing to organizations in terms of their level of consumer engagement and real-time feedback on various products and services.

While the rise of social media has offered a new platform for brands to engage with their clients, advancements in social media marketing offer broader opportunities that create a demand for creative marketing techniques. According to Ashley & Tuten, brands on social media platforms have increased their creativity in marketing with an aim to improve their audience's motivation and ability to process the actual message relayed by an ad [7]. This means that the ad must use elements that trigger specific feelings and experiences that match the consumer's aspirations, creating an urge to desire a product or service. The central focus here is giving a brand a desirable image while mirroring the customer's life experiences in a way that they develop specific feelings like love, fear, guilt, joy, and sexual desire. If the content generated delivers this goal, then it is effective in meeting a brand's marketing objectives. Beyond the rational and emotional appeals identified above, creative social media content must yield unique benefits in line with a brand's unique selling proposition. Drawing on the above provisions, organizations might benefit from messaging and execution strategies that use psychological appeals and whose evaluation of creativity can be measured in relation to the brand outcomes recorded.

In addressing the impact of rational and cognitive aspects of consumer engagement marketing stated above, the idea of value and problem solving must be taken into consideration. For instance, Tuten observes that brand image marketing on social media delivers higher results when it is value-expressive for its audience [8]. Being a high-value product or service means it will solve consumers' problems fully, leaving them satisfied. Such an attractive feature elevates brand marketers and promotes more acceptable and engaging content for consumers. The effectiveness of marketing content is viewed in the spectrum of an individual's perceived relevance of an object and its ability to meet specific needs while observing their values and interests. Dessart also contribute to this discourse, reiterating that cognitive engagement is tied to cognitive engagement and orientation reaction [9]. The cognitive reaction is tied to logical and problematic situations, while the orientation reaction is emotional.

2.3 UGT Theory

Meanwhile, the use and gratification theory (UGT) has gained relevance in demystifying the idea of consumer engagement content in social media marketing, pointing to the

essence of a need-based marketing strategy. The theory holds that people use products and services to meet specific needs, meaning their choices are driven by their desires. In a study targeting Facebook consumers, Jahn and Kunz revealed that users' choices of participation in media consumption are driven by functional and hedonic content [10]. These findings create an impression that high levels of fulfillment are likely to attract many consumers since satisfaction is their primary source of inspiration. This theory is helpful in determining the factors that promote high consumer engagement in social media marketing, thus making it easier to create consumer-friendly content with a specific focus on their immediate needs and interests.

3 The Essence of Consumer Engagement on Social Media Platforms

In the wake of the internet and social media use across the globe, companies can no longer sustain the traditional communication techniques where engagements were kept private. Today, engaging publicly and responding to consumer queries on social media has become a norm that forces organizations to act tactically to build trust among their existing customers and potential clients [11]. Even though this trend mounts intense pressure on organizations to deliver excellent customer service and resolve customer problems promptly and thoroughly, it comes with great benefits in terms of the levels of engagement with consumers that give social proof of a business, increased brand awareness, and high rankings in social media algorithms. All of these are essential precursors for business success, making social media an essential channel in building a solid and profitable brand.

Social media engagement does not only involve online followers, but it also defines the general impression a business has among the public. Prospective clients are heavily influenced by the image portrayed by existing customers, making it a basis for brand selection. It is therefore essential to provide excellent customer service and high-level engagement on social media to gain the approval of clients and attract new users. Customers can demonstrate their approval by giving positive reviews, on which new buyers strongly rely to make purchase decisions. Social media engagement will increase the popularity of a brand based on the number of likes, shares, and comments, among other engagement features applicable to the social media space. The above assertions imply that companies must invest heavily in social media engagement by creating unique and influencing content that captures the customers' interest.

3.1 Consumer Engagement and Brand Awareness

Brands have an opportunity to create content that captures the attention of online users in a manner that others can take part in expanding the audience. Mulcahy observes humor marketing as one of the most popular techniques for creating viral content [12]. For instance, Metro Trains Melbourne's 2012 ad labeled "Dumb Ways to Die" featured humorous content that was termed a memorable and highly effective campaign video whose aim was to reduce accidents on the railway network. The ad topped the charts with over 1.5 million shares and over 20 million views [13]. Such humor content triggers

the mind of the consumers, who in turn share it widely to spread the fun. This success echoes the findings of Barry & Graca who maintain that integrating humor into marketing makes content more favorable to its consumers [14]. The researchers conducted a survey involving 2,911 videos from which they found humor triggers emotions of joy, giving consumers greater gratification, and increasing the rate of participation. Drawing on this massive success in humor content, it is possible to argue that humor is part of the most successful marketing tactics in the digital space, and organizations must promote its use to stamp their presence in the online space.

3.2 Social Media Engagement and Customer Satisfaction

Some of the most prominent arguments about customer experiences dwell on the level of customer engagement and buyer-seller relations, which have increased significantly in the wake of social media use. Sashi reveals that the opportunities presented by social media to organizations have made it possible to build solid buyer-seller relations due to increased engagement that promotes positive consumer experiences [15]. The study findings demonstrate that such engagements result in high customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and expanding fanbase. This gives the company a compelling image among its existing and potential customers. The outcome of such engagements is increased sales and expansion in terms of consumer base and penetration of new markets.

Moreover, engagement rates are essential due to increased direct engagement and real-time consumer feedback that helps organizations make sound decisions. Besides, customers are increasingly expressing preferences for customer service delivery through social media channels. In 2019, for example, a survey reported that over 60% of consumers expected companies to offer customer services over social media platforms for a better experience [11]. de Oliveira also complement these arguments through a meta-analytic research model, citing high levels of gratification and positive emotions as part of the predictors of high co-member engagement [16]. Meanwhile, the authors further observe that Twitter is the most preferred mode of customer engagement channel as compared to other social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram. The assertions above show that customers have increased the demand for service delivery and engagement through social media, which they associate with higher satisfaction rates.

3.3 Customer Engagement and Rankings in Social Media Algorithms

When an organization has high engagement levels on social media, it expands its visibility ratings based on data used to create algorithms for transmitting content. The metrics used in giving recommendations, for instance, rely on the level of engagement, giving new users options to try what many other users have found useful. While establishing the social media influencer index, Arora performed an analysis on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, utilizing machine learning algorithms used to estimate celebrity influence [17]. The findings reveal that engagement, sentiment, and outreach have a significant role in determining the influencer index. In addition, Treem & Leonardi found that increased social media engagement through social media technologies improves association and visibility during random searches by potential clients [18]. Therefore, one might argue that companies can reap benefits by increasing their social media engagement levels.

4 Case Studies

4.1 The Case of Blossom by First Media

Blossom by First Media posted an ad with an image of woman's underwear coupled with hacks for organizing clothes that made a significant impact on Facebook after going viral, gaining over 282 million views and over 12 million shares and featuring among the most viewed Facebook videos in history [19]. This massive influence was attributed to solid visual appeals that generate emotions among its audience while also including inspiring messages that viewers find worth sharing. The company noted that besides their strong visuals, they relied on data modeling techniques that track videos and determine the type of content that is most appealing to consumers. Their observations point to content that reflects people's social lives and lifestyles, coupled with recognition of the challenges clients face on a daily basis. These findings resonate with the arguments of Tuten who associate successful marketing with the identification of specific consumer problems whose solutions are being offered [8].

Following the surging viewership, First Media managed to attract many brand partners. Analysis of monthly viewership is determined by Tubular's V30, where the brand has demonstrated consistency in creative advertising techniques that have maintained its engagement levels at the peak [20]. As highlighted by Sashi, this kind of performance forms a basis for attracting new clients who are willing to invest based on the organization's performance and success [15].

4.2 GoPro Social Strategy of Engagement

GoPro is believed to be the world's most versatile camera. The brand has one of the most influential social media audiences among all users, with over 17 million Instagram followers, 2 million Twitter followers, and 10 million Facebook likes [21]. They share their engaging content using the hashtag #GoPro has influenced millions of customers. The company has achieved high success levels consistently for many years, placing it on the map of the strongest camera brands in the market through its innovative products. For instance, on YouTube, the feeling of "being there" helped shape the organization's success. Much of the videos featured climbing buildings, and skydiving with tags "I'd love to do that" using films shot with GoPro products [21]. The content shared on their social media platforms uses eye-catching films with unique effects and creative texts that engage people who express a positive attitude through likes, shares, and comments. This feeling of great moments shared by the company, coupled with prompt company support to customers, gives a feeling of fulfillment to consumers, which encourages them to share with peers. The outcome of this kind of marketing was paid sponsorships and increased sales, which translated to massive success in terms of customer base and profit margins [21]. The technique has also helped to enhance customer loyalty and attract new customers due to a high number of positive reviews.

4.3 Marketing Strategies on Social Media

Consumer engagement is a challenge for social media marketing because it is difficult and time-consuming. Communication on social media is a two-way street, so spending

time building a brand on social media platforms is an effective prerequisite, and content marketing strategies drive social media engagement. To increase consumer engagement, brands should first encourage dialogue and community management. Community management is an important part of a brand's online presence, including answering customers' questions and initiating new conversations. Being online at all times ensures that brands respond to customer questions in a timely manner and build stronger relationships with customers. Brands should focus on their target audience and what is relevant to them. At its core, a brand should provide value to its audience. Inducements and discounts may increase the number of followers in the short term, but they are not a long-term solution. Therefore, creating high-quality content is what really attracts customers.

5 Conclusion

Consumer engagement is an essential part of social media marketing for organizations. Successful marketing must target consumer lifestyles, feelings, and thoughts as informed by the market dynamics as defined by changing consumer needs. Some of the most promising strategies include the generation of value-driven and problem-oriented content embedded in elements of catchy texts and humor. These approaches benefit organizations in various ways, including promoting social proof, enhancing brand awareness, and achieving high customer satisfaction. It also improves visibility through higher rankings in social media algorithms, a set of data that determines rankings and suggestions to potential clients. The case of First Media and GoPro social media engagement strategies demonstrate the use of solid marketing strategies that have helped the organizations build their image and stamp their market presence, thus attracting even more customers to use their products. These illustrations give the impression that social media is a powerful tool that has granted an opportunity to organizations to create a stronger bond with their customers, leading to higher customer loyalty and sales that boost profits and enable companies to penetrate new markets.

This paper has some limitations: in the literature review part, there is a lack of effective data support. In addition, due to the length of the paper, the literature review is not comprehensive. Some ideas are more obscure.

Future research could supplement the data and uncover new insights. The progress report can also be made on literature according to the development of customer engagement.

References

1. Valos, M. J., Maplestone, V. L., Polonsky, M. J., & Ewing, M. (2017). Integrating social media within an integrated marketing communication decision-making framework. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(17-18), 1522–1558.
2. Picazo, S. (2016). Customer Service on Twitter and the impact on brands. Blog.twitter.com. Retrieved from https://blog.twitter.com/en_gb/a/en-gb/2016/customer-service-on-twitter-and-the-impact-on-brands.
3. Schultz, D. E., & Peltier, J. J. (2013). Social media's slippery slope: challenges, opportunities, and future research directions. *Journal of research in interactive marketing*.

4. Barger, V., Peltier, J. W., & Schultz, D. E. (2016). Social media and consumer engagement: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*.
5. Calder, B. J., Malthouse, E. C., & Maslowska, E. (2016). Brand marketing, big data, and social innovation as future research directions for engagement. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(5-6), 579–585.
6. Devereux, E., Grimmer, L., & Grimmer, M. (2020). Consumer engagement on social media: Evidence from small retailers. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 19(2), 151–159.
7. Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15–27.
8. Tuten, T. L. (2020). *Social media marketing*. Sage.
9. Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C., & Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015). Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.
10. Jahn, B., & Kunz, W. (2012). How to transform consumers into fans of your brand. *Journal of Service Management*.
11. Holtman, M. (2019). Why engagement rates are important on social media. The UK Domain. Retrieved from <https://www.theukdomain.uk/why-engagement-rates-are-important-on-social-media/>
12. Mulcahy, E. (2019). Humor marketing: five ads that got consumers laughing. The Drum. Retrieved from <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/06/27/humor-marketing-five-ads-got-consumers-laughing>.
13. Brazier, G. (2012). Campaign Viral Chart: ‘dumb ways to die’ tops chart with 1.5m shares. Campaignlive.co.uk. Retrieved 26 August 2021, from <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/campaign-viral-chart-dumb-ways-die-tops-chart-15m-shares/1161194>.
14. Barry, J. M., & Graça, S. S. (2018). Humor effectiveness in social video engagement. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(1–2), 158–180.
15. Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media. *Management decision*.
16. de Oliveira Santini, F., Ladeira, W. J., Pinto, D. C., Herter, M. M., Sampaio, C. H., & Babin, B. J. (2020). Customer engagement in social media: a framework and meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48, 1211–1228.
17. Arora, A., Bansal, S., Kandpal, C., Aswani, R., & Dwivedi, Y. (2019). Measuring social media influencer index insights from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49, 86–101.
18. Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 36(1), 143–189.
19. Paterik, S. (2017). How One Publisher Is Using Data to Make Insanely Viral Facebook Videos for Millennial Moms. Adweek.com. Retrieved from <https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/how-one-publisher-is-using-data-to-make-insanely-viral-facebook-videos-for-millennial-moms/>.
20. Customer Story: First Media (2021). Tubular Labs. Retrieved from <https://tubularlabs.com/customer-stories/first-media/>
21. GoPro and How it Gained Success (2020). Giraffe Social Media. Retrieved from <https://www.giraffesocialmedia.co.uk/what-is-gopro-and-how-did-it-become-so-successful/>.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

