

PARTICULARS OF PROMOTING IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract:

The classical promotional media, especially the television, have been often criticized for the contradictory effects that they have on the consumers. Compared to those, the Internet and social networks that support them represent an interactive environment, because consumers have more time and space to evaluate the products compared with the traditional seconds or tens of seconds of the TV spots or the few printed lines in newspapers.

The promotion on the web and social media have an important role in consumers' informing, by providing the data they need for the purchasing decision, by providing feedback from others etc. For example, in the discussion groups and social networking sites, such products/services and software news are discussed and carefully evaluated by a permanent feedback from users, their responses being made posted on the internet.

Keywords: *promoting, consumers, social media, network, internet.*

JEL Classification: M37, L82

1. Introduction

As a means of universal communication, the Internet and social networks focus all of the traditional media, being rapidly adopted as advertising support. Moreover, it offers – unlike the traditional media - two-way communication, from one to one and from one to many, so that not only the organization can send messages containing advertising, but consumers can get involved. The Internet has an agent effect in a unique way in relation to the other medium, being a communication channel used to transform, change, correct, attack or support a message in unique way (Gregory, 2009).

However, the Internet and new sophisticated communication technologies make possible a different approach, completely different from the traditional advertising by permission marketing (Petre, Nicola, 2009), which identifies the advertisement message and brings in front the consumer' interests.

2. Reasons for online and social media promotion

It becomes increasingly evident that many organizations are looking for new uses of the Internet, discovering social media for promotion. The social networks, blogs and microblogging services have until recently a restricted public and were not relevant to the particular business, but in recent years the situation has changed, the number of companies interested to promote in this environment and the dedicated budgets increasing rapidly (Arsene-Bărbulescu, 2011).

An important reason for this development is that the online use, as mentioned above, a different strategy - consumers seeking information from organizations and expects a quick response, looking organization details through their own (data, images, testimonials etc.) that they comment with other users. The information are quickly distributed because they are supported by local social networks in connection with the remote ones, being used technologies that facilitate instant communication at a multiple scale (Green, 2009).

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The internet promotion is successful because of the rich content of information that it provides, enjoying the fact that the cyberspace is less expensive. Organizations that have had, so far, to compress messages on a particular area of the newspaper page considers the freedom of expression that it provides the internet space.

An online communication campaign on social networks can address to a group of acquaintances, so, there is a chance that the target audience can be approached from several directions. This ensures that the message is credible ("if so many people accept a product / service it means that is good") and can be repeated, being able to remind to the public members (Green, 2009). Another advantage is the fact that the organization can easily find out the people interest counting the hits to their website and can provide information to strengthen the already existing relationships with customers.

The online broadcasting strategy for the promotional messages can be accurately projected because the profile of a site user is easy to achieve, so that the message goes straight to the targeted audience. Moreover, it can be easily measured the campaign effects during the course of it, it can be changed certain actions, and the costs are lower compared to other promotional media (Zbucnea, Pinzaru and Galalae, 2009).

3. Planning and implementing a social media promotion

As a rule, after the organization's management has decided to promote on the Internet it will decide on the amount available to be spent and, of course, on the methods to be used. In most cases, for social media promotion it will be defined a coherent strategy and a long term vision, including them in the overall thinking, involving a mix of promotional media to be used by the organization.

Especially the small organizations start from the existence of a website and a blog to support basic communication and continue with the presence in social media as more of the major social networks - inexpensive actions, which may establish communication with current and potential customers, but it isn't done the promotion itself. For this latter objective the organization can appeal to a specialized agency.

In the recent years, the methods of promotion on social networks were diversified, starting from the creation of interactive applications to promote a product and continuing with competitions, pages specially designed to motivate consumers to begin discussions about a brand or different actions (online paid content delivery etc.).

In the social media, social networks become the more effective, gaining many supporters and potential customers, with a cost equivalent to other forms of promotion. For example, in the case of a small organization, traditional advertising strategy can be completed with the online presence by creating a website and a blog that start the communication and then, with the involvement in many important social networks, actions with reduced costs. Basically, it's a concept that involves social media relations and defines the establishing of a communication relation with customers.

At a larger scale, international studies show that a brand name will become known among a double number of people in a social network than any other site, while intention to buy the advertised products and services can be four times higher. In social media matters the positive references made by users to friends on blogs and social networks, they getting to be worth more than traditional commercials on the internet (Arsene-Bărbulescu, 2011).

According to ExactTarget 2013 Study - Marketers from Mars, conducted on the United States consumers, come out that the e-mail and Facebook are the most common medium through which users come into contact with brands and companies they trust. Email is used by 45% of marketers, 36% of consumers with smartphone and 49% of consumers without smartphones, and the Facebook is used by 21% of the marketers, 31% of consumers with smartphone and 26% of those without a smartphone (Crăciunescu, 2013).

A method used for social media promotion is the one that involves using the discount coupons websites, which are accessed by small organizations to attract customers. Even if there isn't a proper promotion environment, offering coupons seeks quickly customers' action motivating to reduce periods when sales are low.

Especially youth of today are different from those of previous generations by the fact that they belong to the digital world, whose technologies influence the brain, thing explained by Nicholas Carr in the book "Superficialii" (Carr, 2012): the users in this age segment accesses search engines for research, so they consider relevant the most popular items, reducing the total number of used sources; when they have to document from the existing virtual materials the youth must choose content from various hyperlinks; the same thing is happening by developing social networks that provide updated information.

To be marketing successful, especially in the social media, organizations need to create messages for the communication campaigns, taking into consideration some aspects (Furtună, 2012): to be based on simplicity, easy to understand messages being easily accepted; to draw attention from the start, because the users, especially the young ones, tend to keep their focus on a subject for a little while; to be offered an interesting to distribute content in the social networks, using the same language. These requirements are particularly important as 85% of Facebook users are content creators, regardless of its quality, and brands should see it as an opportunity.

Sometimes there is a marketers misunderstanding about the reasons why a consumer appreciates a brand in social media. On the one hand, experts believe that attracting customers appears by publishing an agreeable content, including detailed information about the brand or products. In turn, consumers give "Like" on Facebook to brands for games, contests and promotions, to find out about new products and show to their friends that are brand' fans. As far as the Internet makes information available and social media makes it easier to communicate, the friends of Facebook fans are top consumers, so that brands should not overlook them in a campaign.

In the current period, the online presence reduce and even canceled distances between individuals and groups through applications like Skype or Messenger, which allows initiating and maintaining dialogue through live sound and image with people all over the world, intermediates watching videos from a global perspective. It also notes that many of the discussions about the products can be found in social media, in private profiles and not on the organizations official websites or on their dedicated websites, which means the shift to such sources of information, where consumers express their opinions and form opinion trends.

If many organizations are concerned with finding those customers attraction reasons mainly related to their work (eg.: Sign up and you get a voucher/discount/prize), it is necessary to create those excuses to coincide with proper interests (the community of travel enthusiasts and the community of parents) because the messages are more relevant to consumers.

It is also important that the actions of public communication, especially with youth - always connected to the Internet, to be constantly made, avoiding the situation of developing it for a limited period, after which the contact stops, waiting to is back with a message during other campaigns. However, what the companies declare when they communicate with younger people must, also, realize through BTL, which offers more interaction and involvement and translates the brand values into the real life. It is reached the situation that companies offer, through brands, an example and values to be adopted by the young people, revealing, thus, their personality.

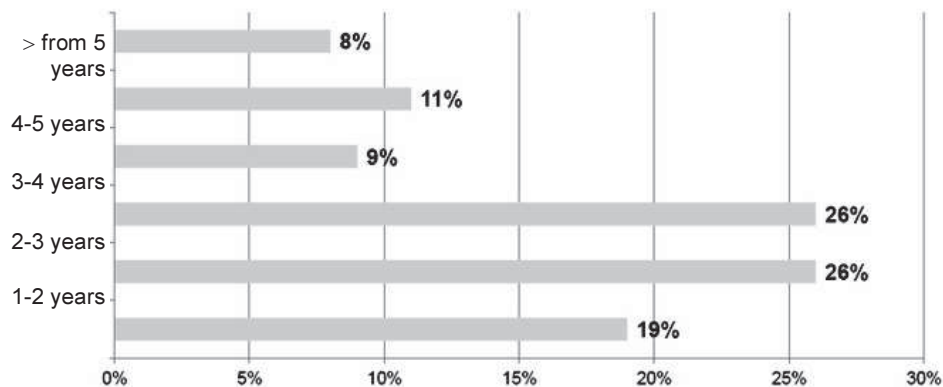
4. Experiences of promotion in social media

Internationally, the money spent on social media promotion exceeds several billion euros, up exponentially from year to year. This growing of different sizes organizations interest is obvious, reaching that the dissemination of advertising messages on social networks becomes one of the commonly used forms of promotion on the Internet, with a market of over four billion euros worldwide and two million euros in Romania in 2012. The largest contribution to this expansion has Facebook, which has over 600 million users worldwide, in which over 6 million in our country, being considered "the industry motor" (Arsene-Bărbulescu, 2011).

A strong presence on the national online advertising market have blogs and microblogging platform Twitter, which has become lately a support for advertising in the form of published messages or other networks such as Hi5.com, Youtube, Tpu.ro, Neogen ș.a.

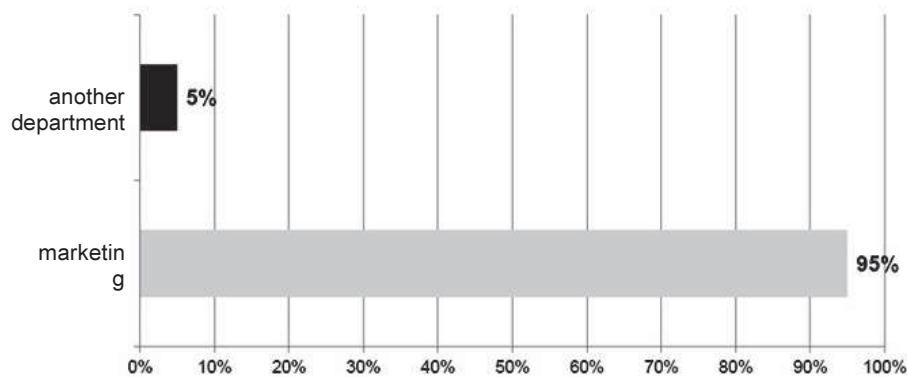
The most important advertising investors from our country have been targeted and continue to be concerned with social media promotion strategies. Be it about mobile telecommunications companies, manufacturers and car dealers, the suppliers of financial services and banking, all these organizations have tighter sized promotion budgets and have turned to social media for reasons of cost, positive impact on the public, diversification of the ways in which they get to be known and to persuade the consumers.

According to a study conducted from August to October 2013 that analyzes the responses of 173 representatives of organizations from various industries (of which 79% are organizations with annual revenues exceeding 10 million euro), called "Social Media and Romanian business "(performed by EY Romania and taken from www.businesscover.ro), in Romania four of five companies use social networks for advertising, particularly Facebook, followed by YouTube and LinkedIn. This, while 97% of global companies are present on social networks (Zamfir, 2013).



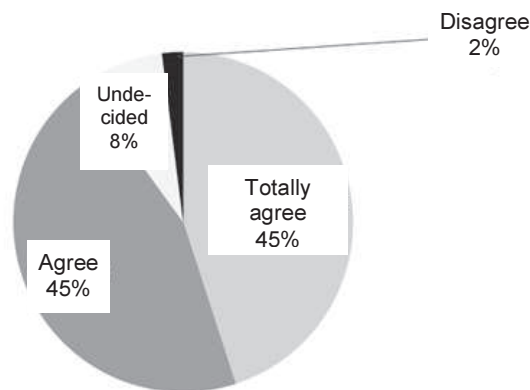
Graphic no. 1. Do you use marketing on social networks? Since when?

Over half of the representatives of the companies said they use social media marketing for 1-3 years (the most used network is Facebook with 93% utilization rate, YouTube with 43% and LinkedIn with 43%), showing a quick orientation to social media to promote their offers, while only 39% having a specialized department. On the other hand, almost all respondents use social networks associated with the marketing department.



Graphic no. 2. What department of your company dealing with social media?

An important category of respondents (45%) use social networks for recruiting and 18% say they will use this way in the future. Half of the companies post announcements daily, 15% once every 2-3 days, 21% weekly, 6% monthly and 9% every few months.

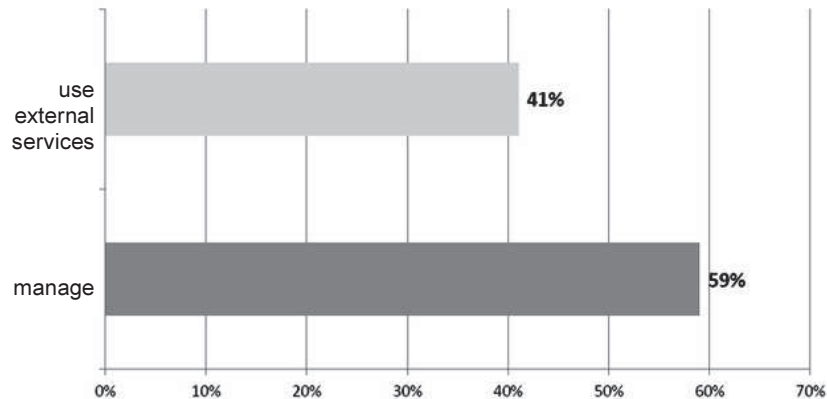


Graphic no. 3. The marketing through social media is important for your company?

Regarding the results of using the social networks, representatives of companies believes that it be reached: the increase of market exposure (83%), the increase of company notoriety (79%), the customer loyalty (52%), and the increase of customer traffic (52%), the sales increase (46%), and the decrease of marketing expenses (37%), the developing of business partnerships (13%).

The campaigns administrated on their own on the social networks are performed by 59% of companies surveyed, while 41% use external services for this purpose.

We complete the above analysis with a profile of beneficiaries, through social media, of the results of involvement in promotional online activities of the national organizations. This profile resulted from "Digital Barometer - Exactly Research and Consulting" conducted online on a panel of 600 urban respondents, both men and women, aged between 15 and 49 years (Crăciunescu, 2013).



Graphic no. 4. Do you manage on your own the company' campaigns on social networks or use external services (specialized agencies)?

Of the more than 2.4 million women in our country, who are enclosed in the study respondent profile, 1,630,000 make online purchases; almost all of them have a Facebook account, 83% are accessing the social network daily and 45% are using smartphones to browse the Internet every day.

Women are very much concerned about finding and connecting with old friends, 70% stated that they use social networking for this purpose, give "Like" more often (40%) and traditional media are a source of information about the brand.

For men it is important to make new friends on Facebook (36%) and to promote themselves (28%), and to learn about the brands they prefer to access the discussion forums.

Regarding the relationship with brands in online domain, over 60% of men and women are fans of brand pages, but the reasons why they choose to follow it on Facebook are different: women - to read other people's opinions about the brand, because they find opportunities for online shopping, discounts, coupons and special offers; men - to show everyone that prefers to feel part of the brand community, because it provides them a certain social status and because the Facebook brand's page has games and applications, most of the time. Overall, nearly half of women are more decided to buy directly from Facebook, while for men the share is about a third.

5. Conclusions

Starting as an experiment, promotional communication on social networks has now become one of the most fashionable forms of communication with the purpose of promoting on the Internet. Even if the time when begin to see the first results is high, this form of promotion is on the rise, especially since the social media campaign costs very little compared to one from outdoor or television.

In Romania, social media is still underdeveloped, so the amounts involved are not yet very large, some organizations being still retained to assign a significant part of the available budgets for promotion.

Although, from the whole market of Internet advertising, social media continues to be a quite low part, the opening to this segment begins to be increasingly higher, which is a step forward.

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