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The Impact of Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM) towards Brand Health

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Abstract

The emergence of Web 2.0 has created the new phenomenon in business strategies as it allowed two-way communications between companies and the consumers. Nowadays, the business practitioners tend to use the social media marketing to create awareness and promote their brands to the customers. Nevertheless, the main point in sharing the information through the social media is about the content itself to attract more consumers engage with the brands. Social media content marketing (SMCM) also plays an important role in conveying effective information to the consumers thus attract them to keep engaging with the brands. Meanwhile, brand health is the evaluation from digital audiences about the brands and products. It measures the awareness of the brand for long-term period thus develop the brand equity. There are few indicators in measuring the brand health such as time on site, repeat visitors, social likes, subscriptions, and bounce rates. There are still limited studies on the impact of social media content marketing (SMCM) towards brand health. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of SMCM in increasing the brand health score

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the present, the social media has become an important link to connect the people all over the world. They use the social media to connect and share something with their friends through the conversation. According to Evans (2008), social media relates to a self-generated, authentic conversation between people about a particular subject of mutual interest, built on the thoughts and experiences of the participant. Otherwise, Touchette and Schanski (2015) defined social media as the ways of communication that involves two parties consist of users and web publishers that provide a space in which information is collaborative, and users can interact and participate collectively. Thus, the main function of social media is to link with others through the internet connection.

The evolutions in the business world have manipulated the functions of social media to become as one of the vital tools for marketing strategy especially in brand health and brand development. In the past era, the business practitioners only adopt the traditional marketing like brick and mortar concept as well as using the Web 1.0 that more functioning for shopping carts and only presenting the static web. So, it is difficult for the business practitioners to measure their brand health through the engagement and audience growth. By now, the emergence of the Web 2.0 gives a big blast for the business world especially in marketing and make easier for the companies to measure their brand health through the social media platforms. For example, with the favor of Web 2.0, it creates two ways communication between the customers and business communities thus provide the active interaction among them. According to Constantinides* (2014), Web 2.0 is a set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the Internet. Besides that, other sets are more mature, distinctive medium characterized by user participation, openness, and network effects. So, by having Web 2.0 the companies can monitor their customers awareness and preference about the brands by measuring their involvement in social media.

Even that so, social media marketing cannot function well without content as the content itself is something that the companies can share and post to the customers. A good and valuable content can help to drive the engagement on the social media, and it is vital for the social media marketing campaign. There are still many contradictions and intentions that are not strong on the definition of content marketing itself. The definitions of content marketing come from the business practitioners who have done many pieces of research and have the experience in creating the content marketing for their business. According to Content Marketing Institute (2015), content marketing is a strategic marketing approach that focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience to gain profit. Steimle (2014) also defined content marketing as a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

In the meantime, Kilgour, Sasser and Larke (2015) said that content marketing is the active role of consumer participation for sharing and participate in media space that becomes their interest. So, it is clear that the main point of creating the content marketing is to distribute valuable and the consistency of the content itself to the target audience to drive the profitable customer action. Hence, Blank (2014) stated that content marketing is engaging with the community around by sharing information, ideas and experiences that benefit others without asking anything in returns. The content marketing is sharing the information regarding the products and brands to attract others to participate in purchasing activities that create the engagement relationship between consumers and the companies. At the same time, good content marketing also can drive good brand health environment for the companies.

2.0 BRAND HEALTH

The brand is very important for the company as it depicts the identity and the image of the company itself. Before the companies can achieve the brand equity level or want to sustain their brand equity, it is crucial for them to consider about the brand health. Brand health is very important to determine the performance of the companies in terms of sales and demand from the consumers. Berg, Matthews, and O'Hare (2007) stated that brand health linked to current and future value with consumers. Besides that, brand health also has a competitive position and it is tangible as well as important in managing brands and business performance on a forward-looking basis.

Brand health is something new in business achievement measurement, and not all the companies alert with this matter. Besides that, brand health level is such an indicator for the companies to measure their brand awareness among the consumers instead of showing the successfulness of the companies itself. According to Heaton (2015), a healthy brand is the hallmark of a company or nonprofit that is prepared to prosper. In reality, nowadays the companies should consider about their brand health to sustain or create the brand equity as both of it has much related.

The brand health is determined by the interaction and the response from the consumers. In brand health, some business practitioners measured it through the Resilience and the responsiveness of the consumers. According to Stutzman (2011), there are four elements of digital influence in brand health that consist of volume, velocity, visibility and the volatility. Nevertheless, the other business practitioners more emphasis on brand audit as a key in determining the brand health. There are few close examinations in brand audit for brand health that encompassing the internal and external stakeholders, competitors, brand positioning, brand identity, brand equities, brand architecture, communication, and budgeting. Based on Dawson (2011), a comprehensive brand audit will often reveal new grow opportunities for brands. It creates new ways to make the brand resonate with a new generation of target customers who will represent the brand's bigger future.

There is still few study that emphasis on brand health and it seems that the companies still have to do a lot of research and experiment on how to measure the brand health specifically. Brand health is very important to monitor the brand development and to measure the response from the consumers about products thus provide the solution or enhance the quality of the brands production.

3.0 THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT MARKETING (SMCM) ON BRAND HEALTH



Fig.1: SMCM Framework

Social media content marketing (SMCM) play an important role in brand health as it is the medium for the consumers to gain the information about the brands. Figure 1 indicates social media content marketing (SMCM) that affect the brand health. A good SMCM can increase the brand health score. In the present, the business practitioners tend to use social media marketing to create the awareness about their brands to the consumers. Through the social media platforms, they engaged with their consumers and built active interaction among them. Hence, it is crucial for the companies to have good content marketing to attract more customers to visit their page, follow the update news and finally repeat the purchase.

According to Kilgour, Sasser and Larke (2015) content marketing is the active role of consumer participation for sharing and active in media space that become their interest. So, the main point of creating content marketing is to distribute valuable and the consistency of the content itself to the target audience to drive the profitable customer action. Baer (2013) urges that content marketing is a device used by companies to educate, inform or entertain customers or prospects by creating attention or causing behavior that results in leads, sales or advocacy. Otherwise, social media is used by customers and prospects to communicate among themselves, and occasionally with companies. There are many platforms of social media marketing that can be adopted by the business practitioners to promote their brands. According to Edwards (2013) he stated that social media include networks (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn), wikis (e.g., Wikipedia), multimedia sharing sites (e.g., YouTube and Flickr), bookmarking sites (e.g., Del.icio.us and Digg), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and rating sites (e.g. Yelp). Thus, the main functions of all these platforms are to interact with each other and to share the information about the products and the brands. Those platforms are tools to facilitate and encourage buzz and viral the campaign.

Whereas brand health is how the companies' digital audiences evaluate the brands and product. For instance, the audiences might use the tagging, hashtag, tweeting and liking all the content provided by the companies as their

respond towards the information. Besides that, in focusing the measurement of engagement and awareness for brand health, there are some indicators that need to be considered. Based on Bedor (2015), the engagement and audience growth can be measured by time on site, repeat visitors, social likes, subscriptions, and bounce rates. So, to attract more consumers visiting the website, for instance, the companies should provide the content that encourages them to participate more in the website.

In measuring the brand health, content marketing plays a big role in attracting consumers to visit the page, how much they are spending time on the page and the number of viewed page they visit. Lastly, buy the products and repeat purchase. It is important for the business practitioners to provide an effective and interesting content marketing for the consumers thus encourage them to repeat purchase or visit the sites regularly instead of to educate them about the brands. Below is a diagram that shows how content marketing lead to the brand health;

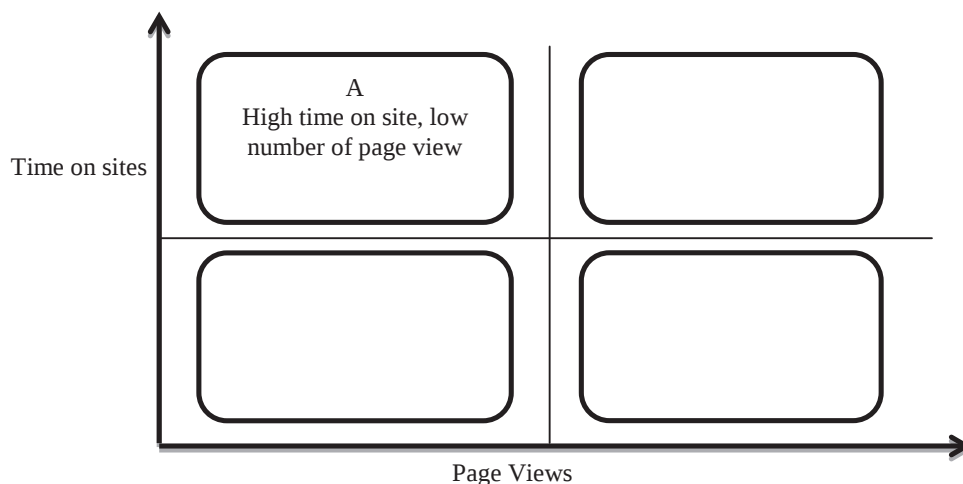


Fig. 2: Time on Site. Sources from Bedor (2015),

The Figure 2 shows four categories of the users visiting the sites. Firstly, the users spend high time on site, but a low number of page views. This type of site can be good as it requires users to spend more time reading and understand the content. However, there is a low number of page impressions or probably have negative advertising related to the site. Second, users spend high time on site and high number of page views. This condition indicates a high level of interest and involvement about the site. Meantime, it also could indicate users are frustrating of difficulties in navigating the site to find out what they are looking for. Whereas the third circumstance happens when the users spend low time on site as well as, have a low number of page views. Usually, this site only provides a simple response or quick answers, and this will lead to lost the interest to visit more on the site and also a signal that all the content of that site is very poor. The last circumstance is when the users spend low time on site but the high number of page views. It indicates that the site requires the visitors to complete tasks quickly, or probably the visitors lost in the site.

Therefore, it is important for the companies to create good content marketing as it can help them to spend more time visiting the site and encourage them to know more information about the brand. Finally, they purchase the products. According to Demers (2014) in solving problems, making it easy to access information, showing off how much the companies knows about the consumers is a way that helpful and productive as well as the content connects with people in search of the information. In delivering the content marketing, the companies should provide the content that can answer all the consumers' queries in very attractive and creative ways to avoid the disinterest of consumers in visiting the site regularly which can ruin the brand health performance.

Moreover, content marketing also is one of the vital weapons to make sure that the brand health is in top condition. Besides that, by having a high quality of content marketing it also can help the companies to have more repeat visitors thus increase the brand health scores. Vidal (2015) insists that quality content attracts visitors to

return as it proves that companies are knowledgeable and have a credible source of information that makes the website more believable and more reliable. Meanwhile, Hannon Hill (n.d) found that creating and promoting high caliber and relevant content that benefits the audience is the best thing to include in Search Engine Optimization (SEO). It proves that content marketing gives effect to the brand health score in determining the number of visitors to the companies' sites.

In this new era of the business evolution, it forced the business practitioners to have very aggressive strategies in promoting their brands. The strategies include the way of creating the content marketing to enhance their brand health. For example, Red Bull has their way to create good content marketing and at the same time they are promoting their brands to the consumers. Red Bull make emphasis on extreme lifestyle adventure as their content to attract the customers to explore more about their brands, for instance, they are the sponsorship for Stratos Jump and other sports. Red Bull has won almost 1 billion YouTube views and over 400 thousand referral links (awesome advocacy) to their content (Levy, 2015). Besides that, other successful companies with their good brand health are the Renaissance Hotel. This hotel has designed two platforms of social media content marketing which called Navigators Platforms and Rlife LIVE program to attract the customers. According to Gutman (2012), content marketing is critical for Renaissance Hotel as it is the currency that drives the relevance and consumer consideration to their brand.

In a nutshell, content marketing is a very important element that the company needs to consider in driving good brand health. Apart from that, effective content marketing will increase the brand health score as it is the indicator for maintaining the business long term period. The companies need to monitor their brand health as the regular basis to ensure that their brands contribute positively to the sales and penetration growth instead of as the guidelines for future business growth and the stability in the marketplace.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This study is attempted to contribute the roles of SMCM in branding strategies that can help the firm to increase their brand health score. Brand health score can be the indicator for the firm to measure their brand awareness among the digital audiences. Thus, the companies need to focus more on SMCM to attract more consumers to engage with their brand.

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