

On the Strategies of Relationship Marketing in the Era of New Media-Comparisons between Wechat and Facebook

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Abstract: This thesis, by comparing the two popular social software--WeChat and Facebook home and abroad respectively, mainly discusses the definition and major characteristics of online social networking, points out its influences on companies' conducting relationship marketing, and proposes the strategies which are supposed to be adopted by the enterprises in the new media time so as to help them carry out relationship marketing more effectively in their sales.

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of Online Social Networking

The definition of online social networking is more than chatting in the Internet. It could encompass a subset of issues including commercial activities, entertainment, and all points in and between. Through basic ways that people can connect with the outside world, they are able to do the following things such as networking with current or potential friends, posting and sharing photos, videos, links, etc., advertising and promoting particular products, services or brands that may stir up a demand among netizens.

Viewed as typical social applications, WeChat and Facebook are now playing an increasingly significant role in the area where businesses attempt to carry out their far-reaching relationship marketing strategies.

1.2 Characteristics of New Media

Under a new global economy featured by advanced information technology, the distinctive characteristics of new media, compared with traditional media, can be seen in the following aspects.

Firstly, what is less noted but undeniable is the fact that every single person living in the era of new media is a sort of mass media-one himself stands out as a new media just as the marketers suggest. Taking street snaps for example, once you upload the photos to your WeChat Moments, it could sooner or later arouse interest among your friends and thus trigger the interaction. From this point, it is true that marketing starts from individuals.

Secondly, a diversity of options by users marks one of the prominent features of new media. From a technical level, network, as the fourth media, has more advantages than the press,

broadcasting, movie and TV, namely, traditional media for that everyone can be information promulgator, disseminator and embracer. So it is common to see people watching TV while tweeting or posting on their social networking accounts, which has broken the limitations of the traditional media, thanks to the development of mobile terminals with a greater deal of selectivity.

Thirdly, there is a strong sociality that prevents those networking platforms from being affected by time or space to a large extent so that the users are allowed to publishing their status promptly.

Fourthly, the new media has facilitated the fast growing interactive communication which indicates that the more interactive, the more users are able to share, and the closer they are connected with each other.

2. Relationship Marketing Based on Social Networking

2.1 Definition of Relationship Marketing

The term “Relationship Marketing (RM)” was introduced in 1986 by Dr. Leonard L. Berry in the paper on services marketing. He defined the term as: attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships.

“Relationship marketing” can be comprehended as really concerned with everyone, building a stable, and win-win relationship, including relationships with potential customers, existing customers, strategic alliances, media contacts, key influencers, and even your relationship with your competitors. Then finally, the effective relationship marketing will create a sustainable, successful, and minded business.

2.2 Value of Social Networking (for Rm)

The requirement for the implementation of relationship marketing is to understand the real needs of customers through interactions with them, so as to achieve the purpose of creating values for customers. In the era of personality, the demand for customization is more and more obviously important, which brings up higher requirements for enterprises’ RM, greatly increasing the intensity of communication of information about the parties involved. In this circumstance, social networking tools have contributed a lot to paving the way for a better interaction between customers and businesses, especially the use and popularization of the mobile terminal which saves the customers a plenty of time and energy by making the process of their demand more direct and simplified, and thus the initiative to interact with the enterprise will correspondingly increase.

As social networking is characterized by inter-personality and interactivity, a kind of interactive marketing that is based on social media is bound to be a remarkable field which is worth studying in the near future.

3. Marketing in Wechat and Facebook

Both as powerful social networking tools, respectively popular and fashionable in China and in most part of the world, WeChat and Facebook have both similarities and differences in the features that have been utilized by the businesses when conducting their relationship marketing strategies. The two online social networking platforms have already done a brilliant job in helping business people designing, promoting, and selling their ideas, products, services, etc.

Therefore, I will explicitly elaborate on how the two phenomena are related to business marketing and their respective advantages or features in this chapter.

3.1 Facebook Marketing

Just as it said in the official website of Facebook Business, it is more like an seemingly independent third-party that involved in the business-consumer relationship functioning as an important bond that links the two people that stand on each side of the door.

3.2 Wechat Marketing

The one-on-one interactive way to communicate of WeChat owns a good interactive effect- it can accurately convey information and meanings and at the same time be more likely to form a friendly relationship between the two parties. Based on a range of advantages in doing business, WeChat platform has become another emerging marketing channel after Weibo.

3.3 Comparisons of Wechat and Facebook Marketing

Generally speaking, Facebook is a content-oriented online social networking platform with weak relationship, while WeChat emphasizes strong relationship. To be more detailed, Facebook largely takes communication between strangers into account and is characterized with a wide range of marketing coverage but a comparatively faint effect on consumers, while WeChat mainly focuses on communication between friends, and then creates commercial success among acquaintances and friends with a smaller publicity range but more obvious influences.

In terms of their respective advantages, Facebook is considered suitable for the promotion of products or services at an early stage, while WeChat is correspondingly employed for customer lock-in at a later stage. Given that premise, it is also of use to transform the weak relationship between strangers to strong relationship within friends with the help of platforms just like Facebook, after which WeChat comes on stage as a functional tool to lock in customers for a purpose of a strong connection between businesses and consumers.

In addition, it becomes essential for domestic online social network platforms to set up a database to gather demographic information of the users so that businesses can accordingly produce targeted advertisements for their potential customers. And the wider the data coverage is, the more possibly businesses can target their customers and provide further customized service for them.

From the reality of being unable to use Facebook in China, the vital significance of the comparisons between Facebook and WeChat is to provide instructive references from the research on how to conduct relationship marketing on Facebook for those businesses in China.

4. Conclusion

With the development of modern information technology and the Internet, the social network platform has been gradually established and perfected. Both traditional enterprises and modern enterprises are compelled to lock their own marketing and development goals in the social network platforms because the social networks have such a wide range of user groups that the use of the Internet for relationship marketing will be quite conducive to set the enterprises free from the high cost and low efficiency of the traditional marketing models. Meanwhile, the use of social networks for marketing can not only promote and sell products or services in a more effective way, but also help to build a real link between the business and its users. Moreover, it could possibly bring the enterprises plentiful long-term advantages, through which way the social networks can make timely investigation on the views and feedbacks from the consumers about their products and services so that the production of the businesses can truly meet the actual needs of consumers.

This thesis attaches much importance to the characteristics and strategies of conducting relationship marketing in the new media era through a series of research on the topic. Although many comparisons have already been made, more detailed information has not been presented yet

and the thesis still needs further discussion and explanation concerning its theoretical arguments.

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