

Summer 6-29-2017

Transitioning Business-to-Business Marketing Communications to Social Media

Terri S. Gibson
Bowling Green State University, terrig@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_smc



Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [Business and Corporate Communications Commons](#), [E-Commerce Commons](#), [Marketing Commons](#), and the [Technology and Innovation Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gibson, Terri S., "Transitioning Business-to-Business Marketing Communications to Social Media" (2017). *Master of Arts in Media and Communication Plan II Graduate Projects*. 6.
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_smc/6

This Plan II Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Media and Communication at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in Media and Communication Plan II Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

**Master of Arts in Media and Communication Degree
with a Specialization in Strategic Communication**

Project Approval Form

Candidate Terri Gibson has completed all the necessary master project requirements of the School of Media & Communication's Master of Arts program.

APPROVED:

Advisor:

Claudia Y. Owens

Dr. Claudia Y. Owens

June 29, 2017

Date

TRANSITIONING BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Terri S. Gibson

A master's project submitted to the faculty of
Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Media and Communication
with a Specialization in Strategic Communication

Dr. Claudia Y. Owens, D.M.

June 29, 2017

Executive Summary

There has been a movement toward digital media marketing channels away from the traditional media marketing channels in the realm of business-to-business (B2B) marketing. This transformation is more than mere semantics. It reflects the recent integration of digital strategies including blogging, social media, and email marketing by B2B marketers. A greater commitment to driving return on investment (ROI) and tracking movement through a website is seen in these strategies. In the rapidly changing digital landscape of B2B marketing, there is a focused emphasis on analytics, which reveals a sharp contrast between traditional media channels and social networking. With traditional media, marketers know very little about the level of success achieved by a campaign because the tools for tracking performance are mostly inferential. With digital media, results can be obtained in real-time, through the big data and plentiful content that is readily available for analysis. The challenge presented by this phenomenon is to make sense of the new paradigm created in B2B marketing by the social media platform.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the literature and determine the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media. Evidence-based research was used to analyze how small business owners can successfully transition from traditional media channels to social media channels. They must engage in knowledge acquisition, resource development, strategic planning, and performance measurement. This project will contribute to existing literature from a small business perspective by creating a clear representation of a B2B marketing approach in the Information Age by considering the usage of digital media and the factors that influence the operationalization of networking.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	2
Significance to the Problem	3
Theoretical Background	4
Research Questions	5
Definition of Key Terms	6
Purpose	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Introduction	8
Background	9
Social Media – Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter	10
Facebook	10
LinkedIn	10
Twitter	11
B2B Marketing	14
Web 2.0	16
Challenges	18
Theoretical Framework	20
Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)	20
Grounded Theory	22
Social Contagion	23

Media Synchronicity Theory (MST)	24
Summary	25
CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL MODEL	26
Introduction	26
Assumptions	26
Conceptual Model (Figure 3.1)	27
Tactics	28
Engagement	29
Measurement	30
Audience	30
Tools	31
Conceptual Model (Figure 3.2)	31
Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)	32
Grounded Theory	33
Social Contagion	34
Media Synchronicity Theory (MST)	34
Elements for Success	35
Internet Marketing Strategy Planning	35
Specialized Internet Marketing Knowledge	36
Measuring Marketing Performance	37
Extending Internet Resources and Outsourcing	37
Summary	38
CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS	39

Introduction 39

 Key Recommendations 40

 Recommendation One – Acquire Specialized Social Media
Marketing Knowledge 40

 Recommendation Two – Develop Internal Marketing Resources
and Outsource 41

 Recommendation Three – Engage in Social Media Marketing
Strategy Planning 42

 Recommendation Four – Measure Marketing Performance 43

 Implementing a B2B Social Media Marketing Plan 43

 Challenges 44

 Summary 45

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION 46

 Introduction 46

 Gaps in the Literature 46

 Additional Research Opportunities 47

 Unanticipated Findings 47

 Limitations 48

 Conclusion 48

REFERENCES 50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
3.1 Challenges of Social Media Marketing Strategies	28
3.2 Conceptual Model – Effective strategies for B2B Social Media Marketing	32

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1 Differences Between Transitional Media Channels & Social Media Channels	41

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In an article titled *Why B-to-B Ought to Love Social Media*, Josh Benoff (2009) made this optimistic statement. “If you provide a place where they can share problems and solutions, they’ll come. They’ll listen. And you’ll get your message across” (p. 20). That place, where problems and solutions can be shared, exists in the many platforms of social media (Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and countless others). How should business-to-business (B2B) marketers react to this opportunity to network, to connect in a virtual world that has no formal or physical boundaries? In this paper, I will first look at prior scholarly works that examine social media and B2B marketing, then I will explore some of the social media options available to businesses, followed by a look at the ways to identify the best paths on social media for B2B marketing.

The current scholarly literature offers a variety of definitions for social media. Simply put, “social media is the way in which people interact to create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media is different from traditional/industrial media and advertising in many ways such as immediacy, permanence, cost, quality, frequency, and reach” (Katona & Sarvary, 2014, p. 144). Van Osch & Coursaris (2013) presented a working definition of *organizational social media*:

Organizational Social Media are technology artefacts, both material and virtual, that support various intra- and extra-organizational actors—including management, employees and external stakeholders—in a multiplicity of organizational communication activities for producing user-generated content, developing and maintaining social relationships, or enabling other computer- mediated interactions and collaborations in the context of a specific organization and its environment (p. 703).

One of the most useful descriptions of social media was explicated by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media is “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p. 61). This definition includes many of the significant elements found in other definitions, for example, online content, users playing a key role, and the role of Web 2.0 technologies and applications. These elements are important in a B2B context in determining how and why potential B2B customers use social media for business purposes.

B2B marketing is a method of marketing between businesses or a business and an organization, including commercial companies, non-profits, government agencies and institutions. Products or services are sold to other companies or organizations for resale, for use in production of other products or services, and/or to support the businesses. Quite often, the business targeted by the marketing is smaller and has more specialized needs, but there are situations where a smaller business offers its expertise and finds solutions for larger businesses. Regardless of size, the business “customer” makes decisions about the value of purchasing the product or services that are being offered. There may be multiple influencers involved in the decision making who need to be considered even though they do not actually make the decision. Being connected to those influencers is vital (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

Statement of Problem

Unparalleled opportunities for businesses have been created with the dawning of the digital era and subsequently, the emergence of social media networks (Quinton & Wilson, 2016). The ubiquity of social media, and the free-flow of conversations that the phenomenon enables and endorses, has brought into question its use in B2B marketing. The scholarly literature has identified noteworthy gaps in research on the use of social media for B2B marketing. Factors

contributing to the significant research gap include the innovation of technology, the innate competitive nature of B2B relationships, and the reluctance of business owners to share insights of the successful usage of social media platforms (LaPalca, 2013; Schultz, Schwepker, & Good, 2012). The digital world with its ever-changing innovative technology is having a significant impact on consumer attitudes, behaviors and interactions. The problem is, this transformation creates an exigent challenge for small businesses that have a proven set of marketing traditions and processes in traditional media channels but do not have the mind-set or the technical expertise to master the data analysis and modeling needed to achieve the same success in the digital media channels. According to Hausman (2016), running a social media campaign in the same manner as a traditional media campaign will likely damage a brand's reputation and waste a lot of money. Because business professionals tend to be interested in thoroughly exploring the "why" of new strategies and eliminating the fear factor before launching into the "how to", adoption of social media marketing is sometimes slow or nonexistent (Breitbarth, 2011).

Significance of the Problem

There has been a movement toward digital media instead of traditional media channels. This conversion is more than just semantics, it reflects the integration of digital strategies including blogging, social media, and email marketing with a stronger commitment to driving return on investment (ROI) and tracking movement through a website. In the rapidly changing digital landscape, there is an emphasis on analytics, which reflects a major difference between traditional media and social networking. With traditional media, marketers know next to nothing about how successful a campaign was because the tools for tracking performance, except for direct media, are inferential. With digital media, results can be obtained in real-time through the big data and plentiful content that is available to analysts. Social media has created "a world

where everyone has the ability to influence opinion; a world where everyone has the ability to influence purchase; a world where distances are down to zero; a world where voice has speed greater than light; a world that pushes away any attempt to regulate it, except through mechanisms of self-regulation” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 69). Now, the challenge is to make sense of it all.

The study of the effect of social media use in B2B marketing strategies is important to both communication scholars and marketing practitioners. The effective use of social media as a marketing communication tool is not clearly understood and often the effect is poor use that results in unsuccessful campaigns. This research project proposal considers the effects of social media usage on B2B marketing from the perspective of small business owners regarding its benefits to performance and communication. This study is important because it will review some of the current social media activities and collaborative applications relevant to B2B marketing interactions, providing contemporary information on the benefits and effectiveness of social media marketing techniques. It will benefit multiple levels of social media users by evaluating the advantages/disadvantages, effectiveness/ineffectiveness, and sustainability or lack of sustainability found in B2B marketing on social media sites.

Theoretical Background

To understand how B2B marketing can benefit from the use of social media, companies must recognize, build, and analyze the roles of bridges, structural holes, and the strength of the ties in their networks. Then, observing how social contagion effects the diffusion process throughout the network will give insight into effective methods of B2B marketing on social media. Social network analysis (SNA) is a key technique used in many disciplines including sociology, communications and economics and is now commonly available as a consumer tool.

It incorporates the process of investigating social structures using network and graph theories (Grandjean, 2016). SNA will be used to identify the best paths on social media for B2B marketing strategies. By viewing the research and insights along grounded theory, clues and opportunities can be found, and the data can guide the development of insights (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

Studies reviewed revealed multiple theoretical approaches that can be considered for this project including innovation diffusion theory (Badura, 2016; Demishkevich, 2015), grounded theory (Demishkevich, 2015, Narayanan et. al., 2012), social contagion (Hayati, 2012), and media synchronicity theory (Badura, 2016; Murphy, 2013; Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2015). Building on the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST), I will analyze the ways companies can develop and execute coordinated social media campaigns using Web 2.0 applications as the catalyst to drive traffic to the website. MST focuses on the capability of media to support synchronicity. Synchronicity is a state in which individuals are working together, at the same time, with a common focus. MST assumes that communication will be enhanced when the synchronicity required by the communication process is supported by the synchronicity of the medium (Murphy, 2013; Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2015).

Research Questions

1. According to the literature on small businesses, what are the challenges of developing and implementing successful business-to-business (B2B) social media marketing strategies? And, what are the elements of success?
2. What are the implications and relationship of social media on a company's B2B marketing activities?

Definition of Key Terms

This section includes the commonly used terms that are used throughout this research. The definitions of the terms came from the peer-reviewed articles and government websites. For this research paper, the following definition of key terms will be used:

- **Business-to-business Marketing:** a method of marketing between businesses or a business and an organization, including commercial companies, non-profits, government agencies and institutions.
- **Small business:** The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business as a privately owned and operated business with fewer than 100 employees or annual receipts not exceeding \$2.5 to \$21.5 million; however, over 86% of small businesses have fewer than 20 employees (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012).
- **Social media:** a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content through social networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Purpose

The purpose of this master project is to analyze the literature and determine the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media. This project will contribute to existing literature from a small business perspective by creating a clear representation of a B2B marketing approach in the digital age. It will consider the usage of digital media and the factors that influence the operationalization of networking. This project also seeks to increase the understanding of the implications of communication channels including owned media, paid media (ads), and earned media (sharing behaviors) on the company's marketing activities. "The pervasiveness of social media technologies and

applications enables not just the generation of online conversations but enhances B2B collaboration activities atop the B2B and intra business conversations" (Sood & Pattinson, 2012, p. 117).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review has been designed to investigate the available strategies that direct small businesses to the successful implementation of business-to-business (B2B) marketing on social media. The evidence-based research in this chapter examines social media, the available platforms and techniques, and the potential application in B2B marketing. It includes studies that analyze the challenges small businesses face in transitioning from a proven set of marketing traditions and processes in traditional media channels to the recently established or less familiar digital media channels.

The keywords used in conducting database searches included B2B (business-to-business), B2B marketing, B2B marketing strategies, social media, and LinkedIn. Various combinations of these terms directed me to pertinent sources. For this project, the search of peer-reviewed articles, refereed scholarly journals, and professional journal-based articles was limited to those published between 2002 and 2017. Using a Communication and Mass Media database, B2B marketing strategies revealed the most articles with 64 articles available. The combined terms B2B marketing and social media only returned 5 articles. Narrowing the search to B2B marketing and LinkedIn was too limiting as it resulted in only a single article. The literature that resulted from the limited search was highly relevant and provided evidence of the implications and relationship that social media has on a company's B2B marketing activities. Literature that focused on influencing a firm's sales levels was given less consideration than those that focused on developing an organization's customer base.

The contemporary nature of this topic suggests the need for the consideration of gray literature. A portion of the gray literature included in this review was found using the ProQuest

Dissertation and Thesis database where the year range was narrowed to 2011 to 2016. In this year range, there were 39 dissertations using the terms B2B marketing and social media; 38 that used the terms B2B marketing, social media and communication; and 26 dissertations that used the terms B2B marketing and LinkedIn, indicating a growing interest among academia. Other gray literature sources include industry experts that have published works containing both practical information and case studies.

The final section of this chapter reviews some of the theoretical approaches that can be used to evaluate answers to the research questions and provide evidence-based solutions. The different lenses provide perspectives that are beneficial in fully analyzing the problem of small businesses transitioning B2B marketing communication from conventional channels to social media.

Background

Many authors have validated the idea that the Internet and social media are powerful marketing tools that can be engaged for a variety of purposes including attracting customers, building customer loyalty, and extending a product's or service's brand (Levy, 2011; Reichheld & Markey, 2000; Rowley, 2005). Statista, a professional online portal that houses statistics, studies, market research, and business intelligence from more than 18,000 sources reported that, as of April 2017, Facebook had 1,968 million active users, Twitter had 319 million active users and LinkedIn had 106 million active users (“We Are Social”, n.d.). That is a lot of potential connections for B2B marketing professionals.

Social Media – Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter

Facebook

Facebook is arguably one of the biggest media organizations in history and continues to claim one of the top positions as a powerful social network with a very large and active user base (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Narayanan et. al., 2012, Rieder, 2013). The idea of connecting people, sharing ideas, and providing a place, a virtual community, for users to connect with each other and the brands they are interested in and care about is the foundation that supports this social network. A space for brands was officially created by Facebook on its expanding social network in 2007 (Richmond, 2007). Since then, the continued evolution has created various ways for marketing professionals to engage with their audience. Facebook automatically creates basic company pages for any organization which is significantly represented in the membership data. Social media provides facilities for businesses to create their own pages and to have users subscribe to their feed. It is a seamless way to communicate which presents a unique opportunity to interact directly, gain understanding, observe trends, and engage with communities of customers (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

LinkedIn

The social media tool known as LinkedIn was launched in 2002 and had a successful initial public offering (IPO) in 2011 (Witzig, Spenser, & Galvin, 2012). It is an online professional network that allows users to connect with trusted contacts to exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities within a broader network of professionals. Witzig, Spenser, and Galvin (2012) conducted an in-depth study of 200 large, 200 small, and 200 nonprofit firms and found that small businesses have greater adoption and usage rates than larger businesses when considering the LinkedIn social networking services. This study was included because the

findings provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate usage trends and social media marketing needs. “LinkedIn was not built for a specific discipline but is built on a unique platform that can accommodate business professionals who have a narrow work focus as well as those who work in many different capacities” (Schaffer, 2011, p. xvii). LinkedIn fundamentally levels the playing field for all users by stripping away the design elements found on corporate websites and simply presenting every user in the same basic way. Social Media Manager and Content Consultant Katy Elle Blake (2016) compiled some telling statistics on the growth and usage of LinkedIn. There are 433 million registered LinkedIn users and two new members join every second. Each month, 106 million unique users visit LinkedIn and 40% of all LinkedIn users check in daily. LinkedIn is used in 200 countries and territories, 70% of which are based outside of the United States. Supporting the professional network status of this platform is the statistic that 13% of LinkedIn users do not have a Facebook account, 83% do not use Pinterest, and 59% do not use Twitter.

Twitter

There are so many options when it comes to B2B marketing online that the onslaught of advertising and people pushing the latest and greatest offering (of products or services) causes many people to bounce around and others to become paralyzed by the process. This is evidence that further research is needed. The effectiveness ratings for the top eight social media platforms in a study conducted by Marketing Profs and Content Managing Institute ranked Twitter second only to LinkedIn, 66% and 55% respectively. Facebook was ranked fifth with only 30% effectiveness (Kniffen, 2016). This was contradictory to the results of a study done by Social Media Examiner (2016) which surveyed more than 5,000 marketers with the goal of understanding how social media is being used to grow and promote businesses. The *2016 Social*

Media Marketing Industry Report found that for the B2B marketer, LinkedIn was ranked first followed by Facebook and then Twitter (Stelzner, 2016).

There is no question that social media has altered the world, and that the ramifications are being felt globally. It has leveled the playing fields for “organizations of all sizes and niches, democratizing creation, exchange, and collaboration of media” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 85). B2B marketing is all about driving results. Frequently a business community already exists that encompasses businesses that have things in common; common challenges, common problems, and common pressures. Providing a place where common problems and solutions can be shared creates an opportunity for connections to be made between businesses. An important principle to keep in mind when marketing with social media technology is that companies don’t join communities, people do (Bernoff, 2009).

The perception of social media options such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter has changed and now reflects an attitude that they are more of a necessity and/or a value-added business tool, rather than just a forward-looking luxury for modern business leaders. B2B social media innovators have begun to use these platforms as tools to position themselves as “thought leaders”, taking a market-driving role by building relationships (Brennan & Croft, 2012). With the vast amounts of information currently available, social media has been described as “the technological Wild West”, and embraces nearly as much danger to businesses if used indiscriminately. It also offers opportunities to prosper and succeed in a time that is referred to as the Information Age, a period characterized by an individual’s ability to easily transfer information, and to have immediate access to massive amounts of information that previously would have been problematic or even impossible to locate. The Information Age, the Digital Age or Era, the Computer Age, and the New Media Age, are all terms used to describe the period in

human history that is characterized by the shifting from the traditional industry developed by the Industrial Revolution through industrialization to an economy based on information computerization. Because of computerization, there is now more content available on the various social media platforms than can be consumed or experienced (Choi, Huang, Palmer, & Horowitz, 2014; Narayanan et. al., 2012).

The three most used social media platforms, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, have very distinctive characteristics. LinkedIn, which was purpose-built for business professionals, is the Internet equivalent to a business meeting. Facebook is a more generic media that is parallel to a house party or barbecue, causal in nature, and lacking the professional etiquette expectation that is found on LinkedIn. Twitter is a cybernetic soapbox, a virtual platform providing an opportunity for users to air their views publicly (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Shappell, 2010). “At their core, social media platforms are about cultivating relationships, not just about steadily downloading one's own ideas and information about products or services” (Shappell, 2010, p. 48). Using social media tools to educate consumers and encourage intelligent dialogue concentrating on the topics on which a business can offer insights builds a positive brand image and customer loyalty.

An online social community can open communication and exposure to many topics, leading to a meaningful dialogue. The discussion of social media often overlooks B2B companies despite the prevalence of B2B personnel in many forums. Open communities tend to be far more active than closed communities, but they can also be a double-edged sword in B2B communications. The adoption of social technology among B2B companies is driven primarily by customer demographics. It was the members of Generation Y that began the adoption of communities and forums because they were the first to become accustomed to utilizing social

networking technologies for collaboration (Musico, 2009). In comparison, the adoption of social media in B2B relationship marketing has been relatively slow, and its adoption has been inconsistent across platforms, within industries, and amongst countries (Cripps, Standing, & Fanning, 2015).

B2B Marketing

Business-to-business (B2B) marketing is a method of marketing between businesses or a business and an organization, including commercial companies, non-profits, government agencies and institutions. Products or services are sold to other companies or organizations for resale, for use in production of other products or services, and/or to support the businesses. Quite often, the business targeted by the marketing is smaller and has more specialized needs, but there are situations where a smaller business offers its expertise and finds solutions for larger businesses. Regardless of size, the business “customer” makes decisions about the value of purchasing the product or services that are being offered. There may be multiple influencers involved in the decision making who need to be considered even though they do not actually make the decision. Being connected to those influencers is vital (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

In some instances, social media energizes equations, but in other instances like research and insights, it has been found to reverse many equations. In the not so distant past, months were required to draw inferences from gathered data, but today we can achieve the same results in real-time through the big data and plentiful content that is available to analysts. Social media has created “a world where everyone has the ability to influence opinion; a world where everyone has the ability to influence purchase; a world where distances are down to zero; a world where voice has speed greater than light; a world that pushes away any attempt to regulate it, except through mechanisms of self-regulation” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 69). This phenomenon

enables and endorses free-flow of information and conversations but the juxtaposing of this fast-paced realm on the world of B2B marketing, communication, research and content can be complicated.

Because technology changes far more rapidly than human behavior, its adoption takes longer. When you consider “the complexities of organizations, their businesses, processes, people, cultures, relationships and multiple stakeholders, it is not difficult to imagine the complexities of adapting to this change in the context of business” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 70). According to Cronin-Gilmore (2012), some small business owners are apprehensive about changing to digital marketing based on prior bad experiences. Godin (2003) noted that B2B marketers have read and discussed many of the new philosophies, and even used some of them, but have resisted the change and maintained the essence of the traditional marketing strategies.

Traditionally, marketing agencies and researchers were the repositories of insights, but research is morphing. Big data is extensively available to those who can access the significant data and uncover the embedded insights. Analyzing it, and making sense of it in all its different forms, will help to create compelling experiences and narratives. By viewing the research and insights along grounded theory, clues and opportunities can be found, and the data can guide the development of insights. Small business owners are finding social media marketing to be an effective tactic, even more effective than paid search, direct mail, and traditional advertising channels like television and radio. The ability to get granular in how businesses reach other businesses and acquire new customers is available on Facebook with page post targeting, a feature that ensures that the relevant audience is seeing the posts in the news feeds (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

Although successfully bringing about engagement and change can cause discomfort for organizations, it can also be rewarding (Godin, 2010). Corporate leadership often does not understand or have much interest in making the financial or time investment needed to make marketing on social media successful, but when done properly, social media participation becomes a value-added tool for the organization. Backing may be more forthcoming if evidence of the economic value that is created via social media is quantified, showing how it drives business to the main digital outpost, typically the company website. “Social media presents an incredible opportunity to rethink what it means to connect with and influence customers” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 95). It is very different from the marketing and communication techniques practiced in the past and requires a rewiring of the brain for many veteran marketing professionals. Some of the less quantifiable but still valuable items an organization can develop with social media are brand message ownership, “watering hole” establishment, and a direct relationship with customers.

Web 2.0

Huasman (2016) compared the differences between traditional media and social networking, noting that social media is a two-way conversation, whereas traditional media is a one-way conversation. In the beginning, the web was generally a didactic, one-way computer-mediated form of communication, but that has transformed with the evolution of social media platforms and the introduction of Web 2.0 applications. Web 2.0 is defined as “a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes... [supporting] the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of informational

content” (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 231). It has broadened users’ perceptions of the online universe. Research on the use of social media in the development of marketing strategies, building beneficial relationships, and measuring the ROI may be facilitated using specific Web 2.0 applications (Brennan & Croft, 2012).

In the collaborative world of Web 2.0, the power of social networks is leveraged through conversations, connections, and communities. Conversations on social media invoke a lot of discussion and sometimes debates. Marketing processes can be accelerated because of these conversations and recommendations from trusted sources. Businesses that are highly proactive on social media generate many conversations, connections, and associations between people and businesses which subsequently determines interest and potential commitment. It is not uncommon these days to see a stream of product recommendations displayed based on patterns from the user’s social network. The associations, the scope of those associations, as well as the interactions are the foundation of social exchange. Finally, organizations are harnessing the power of the community to influence choices (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

Additionally, the viral effect that social media can generate is particularly effective in marketing activities that aim to influence behavior in the online domain. However, social media consumption that is mediated by mobile technology allows “for a tighter integration of virtual and real life” with the emphasis on location and time sensitivity (Kaplan, 2012, p. 137). Web 2.0 applications emphasize the user-generated content, usability by both experts and non-experts, and interoperability between other products, systems, and devices for end users that facilitate social media marketing campaigns (Katona & Sarvary, 2014; Van Osch & Coursaris, 2013).

Challenges

The scholarly literature has identified noteworthy gaps in research on the use of social media for B2B marketing. According to Jussila et. al. (2014), numerous authors contend that the academic research concerning the use of social media in B2B relationships is fairly incomplete. Factors contributing to the significant research gap include, the innovation of technology, the innate competitive nature of B2B relationships, and the reluctance of business owners to share insights of the successful usage of social media platforms (Schultz, Schwepker, & Good, 2012).

Social media has gained some concentrated attention within the discipline of marketing science. Researchers such as Tirunillai & Tellis (2012) have started to understand the impact of social media and specifically user-generated content on sales as well as an organization's value. Despite this attention on the effects of social media, there has been limited attention for the effective use of social media within marketing. Some questions that require more research include: "Should firms always use social media or should they be very selective? How should they manage risks surrounding social media? What are the best metrics to evaluate social media?" (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström, & Freundt, 2014, p. 10).

Factors such as the size of the businesses, seniority of the major stakeholders of the organizations, a continuing history of the business relationship, and tools for the successful measurement of social media have also been identified as requiring further research by Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, (2012). The application of social media platforms in relation to specific businesses, and the processes used to determine return on investment similarly require further investigation (Moore, Hopkins, & Raymond, 2013). The top five social media questions that continue to challenge marketers involve tactics (What social tactics are most effective?), engagement (What are the most effective ways to engage an audience with social media?),

measurement (How do you measure the return on social media marketing?), audience (How do you locate a target audience on social media?) and tools (What are the best social management tools?). These questions and their order of priority have remained constant since 2014 (Stelzner, 2016). They will provide the foundation for the challenges of social media marketing strategies conceptual model in the next chapter.

LaPlaca (2013) conducted a review of research priorities for the application of social media in the B2B marketing context. Included in the long list of topics suggested for future exploration were: using social media effectively in B2B marketing strategies, return of investment for businesses using social media, digital marketing and social media (e.g. professional networks and business social media) as a conceivable development of social networks and how information technology in the forms of social and mobile media are changing B2B marketing practices and relationships. Digital marketing, as referred to by The Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) is “The use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication which helps to acquire and retain customers while building deeper relationships with them” (Smith, 2007, in Wymbbs, 2011, p. 94). This definition emphasizes the importance of a strategic foundation in any marketing approach (i.e. the ability to measure and integrate) as well as focus upon building relationships and increasing communication.

Demishkevich (2015) concluded that Internet marketing is critical to remain competitive and meet the ever-changing needs in the business environment. To determine what strategies small business owners needed to use Internet marketing when promoting their products or services, she explored how five small business owners in Maryland developed and implemented an online marketing strategy. Chief decision makers from a variety of industries that had fewer

than 20 employees and used Internet marketing were recruited. She collected data from semi-structured interviews with the owners, direct observations of online marketing processes and technology, as well as the evaluation of companies' specific use of various Internet marketing channels. The challenges that Demishkevich (2015) identified included unstructured planning, limited Internet marketing knowledge and expertise, use of Internet marketing channels and tools, lack of systematic approach to the management of Internet marketing, and inadequate measurement of Internet marketing efforts. Demishkevich's (2015) study and theory based research will contribute significantly to answering the study's research questions: According to the literature on small businesses, what are the challenges of developing and implementing successful business-to-business (B2B) social media marketing strategies? And, what are the elements of success?

Theoretical framework

Studies reviewed revealed multiple theoretical approaches that can be considered for this project including diffusion of innovation theory (Badura, 2016; Demishkevich, 2015), grounded theory (Demishkevich, 2015; Bolat, Kooli, & Wright, 2016; Gustavsson & Åge, 2014; Narayanan et. al., 2012), social contagion (Hayati, 2012), and media synchronicity theory (Badura, 2016; Murphy, 2013; Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2015). These theories provide the basis for the effective strategies conceptualized in chapter three.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)

Diffusion of innovations is a theory formulated to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread. Its origins are varied and span multiple disciplines including sociology, communications, marketing and others. Rogers (2003) reasoned that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated among the participants of a social system over

time. He proposed that there are four main elements which influence the spread of a new idea or practice: (1) innovation, (2) communication channels, (3) a time interval, and (4) a social system.

‘Trialability’ is a factor of adoption defined in the DOI theory as the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis (Rogers 2003). Banerjee, Wei, & Ma (2012) claim that “in situations of perceived high risk or complexity of using a technology, the belief-based conceptualization of trialability as a determinant of adoption without evaluation of actual outcomes of experimentation is questionable” (p. 815). A user’s perceptions of the innovations’ attributes may be inaccurate. This creates a need for the gathering of information to eliminate possible ‘misconceptions’ so that the appropriate adoption/rejection decision can be made. Consequently, actual experimentation and evaluation is likely to become a necessary condition of adoption. In situations of high risk such as B2B e-market transactions, risk avoidance behavior is stated to take precedence over perceived benefit. Therefore, experimentation in real life situations are infrequent due to uncertainty and apprehensions of severe negative consequences (Banerjee, Wei, & Ma, 2012; Loukis, Spinellis, & Katsigiannis, 2011).

The mass adoption of online social networking systems has the potential to dramatically alter an organization’s exposure to new information. Social networks may influence an organization’s behavior, but they also reflect the organization’s activities, interests, and opinions. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to determine from observational data alone whether any particular interaction, mode of communication, or social environment is responsible for the apparent spread of a behavior through a network. In a study by Bakshy, Marlow, Rosennn & Adamic (2012), three possible mechanisms were identified to explain diffusion-like phenomena: (1) A user shared a link on social media, and exposure to this information on the feed caused a

“re-share” of the link. (2) Contacts visit the same web page and independently share a link to that web page. (3) A user shared a link within and external to the application, and exposure to an externally shared information causes an additional share of the link on the application.

Diffusion that falls short of 100% adoption due to inherent weaknesses, competition from other innovations, or merely a lack of awareness is often referred to as failed diffusion. Some innovations fail as a result of a lack of local involvement and community participation, others because of rigidity within the social network. An innovation may be widely adopted within certain clusters but fail to make an impact on more distantly related contacts, thus not reaching a complete diffusion rate (Choi, Huang, Palmer, & Horowitz, 2014).

Grounded Theory

The inductive nature of grounded theory involves the construction of theory through the analysis of data. It is a systematic methodology widely used in the social sciences. “The grounded theory methodology aims to produce conceptualizations that are relevant to the actors involved” (Gustavsson & Åge, 2014). Gustavsson & Åge (2014) argued that the conceptualizations that are potentially relevant to leaders are those that discover new perspectives, reduce complexity, enable action, and empower organizations.

A study by Bolat, Kooli, & Wright (2016) used the grounded theory approach to analyze interviews conducted in 26 B2B advertising and marketing firms in the United Kingdom, in part because no empirical evidence is available to prove whether and how firms utilize Mobil Social Media (MSM) to their advantage. The study addressed the gap and found that marketing and advertising firms that adopted digital technologies early use “MSM for branding, sensing market, managing relationships and developing content” (Bolat, Kooli, & Wright, 2016, p. 972).

Traditional market research agencies and market researchers were once repositories of

insights but research is morphing. The data collectors are becoming obsolete as the data, sometimes referred to as “big data”, is now simply available like it has never been before. The survivors will be those who can access the data in its various forms, analyze it, and make sense of it. Those who create compelling experiences and narratives and uncover the insights embedded in the available data will be successful. The challenge is viewing research and insights along a grounded theory approach, the opposite approach of traditional market research. This requires finding clues and opportunities, and letting that data guide the development of insights instead of starting with a hypothesis that guides the direction (Narayanan et. al., 2012). The debate continues between practitioners and academics on this contemporary topic.

Social Contagion

Hayati (2012) used datasets from two US-based B2B companies to study how the interaction between formal and informal organizational structures in B2B associations affected the commitment of managers during a specific marketing strategy implementation. This study addresses the portion of the research question concerning the implementation of successful B2B social media marketing strategies. In part, the study drew from social contagion and social learning theories to interpret the spillover of strategy role commitment from leaders to followers. The research demonstrated the application of social contagion theory in organizations by showing that even though strong ties result in similarities between the attitudes and behaviors of leaders and subordinates, weak ties between managers and influential members on other levels of the organization may create discrepancies and potential tensions between the formal and the informal leaders. The thought leaders that are so influential in social media exemplify the traits of the social contagion theory (Schaffer, 2011). Schaffer (2011), a social media strategy

consultant, presents fifteen case studies illustrating the challenges and elements of success needed to develop successful social media strategies.

Media Synchronicity Theory (MST)

Media Synchronicity Theory can be used to analyze the ways companies develop and execute coordinated social media campaigns using Web 2.0 applications as the catalyst to drive traffic to the website. MST focuses on the capability of media to support synchronicity.

Synchronicity is a state in which individuals are working together, at the same time, with a common focus. MST assumes that communication will be enhanced when the synchronicity required by the communication process is supported by the synchronicity of the medium (Murphy, 2013; Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2015).

By engaging in Internet marketing strategy planning, acquiring specialized Internet marketing knowledge, measuring marketing performance, and extending their Internal marketing resources through outsourcing, small business owners may develop and implement successful online marketing strategies. These findings may influence positive social change by contributing to more effective and efficient marketing practices in small firms that can lead to better financial performance, higher survival rates, and a healthier economic system. (Demishkevich, 2015)

The elements of success that result from the implementation of effective strategies include; establishment of thought leaders (influencer), user-generated content resulting in conversations, connections resulting in direct relationships with customers, communities of customer or experts, and economic value (Bernoff, 2009; Demishkevich, 2015; Musico, 2009; Narayanan et. al., 2012). Chapter three will illustrate these elements in a conceptual model.

Summary

The literature review resulted in the identification of challenges that small businesses face when developing and implementing successful B2B marketing strategies on social media. It is important because there is a rapid movement in the marketing industry toward the increased use of digital media channels over the traditional media channels. These findings are important to both communication scholars and marketing practitioners because they identify areas that need additional study and provide contemporary information on the benefits and effectiveness of social media marketing techniques on the various platforms available for marketing communications.

The next chapter is a discussion on the study's conceptual model. Per Robinson, Arbez, Birta, Tolok, & Wagner (2015), a description of the problem and the fundamental goals of the project are the two essential prerequisite artefacts required for the development of an operational conceptual model. These have been established in the project proposal and supported in the literature review. The model gives a view of the elements involved in the integration of digital strategies and how they differ from traditional elements and strategies. It also gives an elaborate view of the current social media activities and collaborative applications relevant to B2B marketing interactions, providing contemporary information on the advantages/disadvantages, effectiveness/ineffectiveness, and sustainability or lack of sustainability found in B2B marketing on social media sites.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Introduction

Simply put, a conceptual model is constructed to help understand the subject it represents. A more explicative description states: “The conceptual model is *a concise and precise consolidation of all goal-relevant structural and behavioral features of the system under investigation presented in a predefined format*. It provides foundation for the development of the simulation program” (Robinson, Arbez, Birta, Tolk, & Wagner, 2015, p. 2814). Gilbert Arbez and Lou Birta, researchers in conceptual modeling for simulation at the University of Ottawa, believe that there are two essential prerequisite artefacts required for the development of an operational conceptual model; a description of the problem and the fundamental goals of the project. These were established in previous chapters of this master’s project.

The purpose of this conceptual model is to illustrate the evidence-based information, concepts, perspective, and relationships collected and presented in the literature review as they address the research questions of this study. Figure 3.1 describes the hierarchy of the questions that business-to-business (B2B) marketers are seeking to answer as they transition from traditional marketing channels to the digital social media channels. Figure 3.2 is the conceptual model resulting from scholarly literature that illustrates the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media.

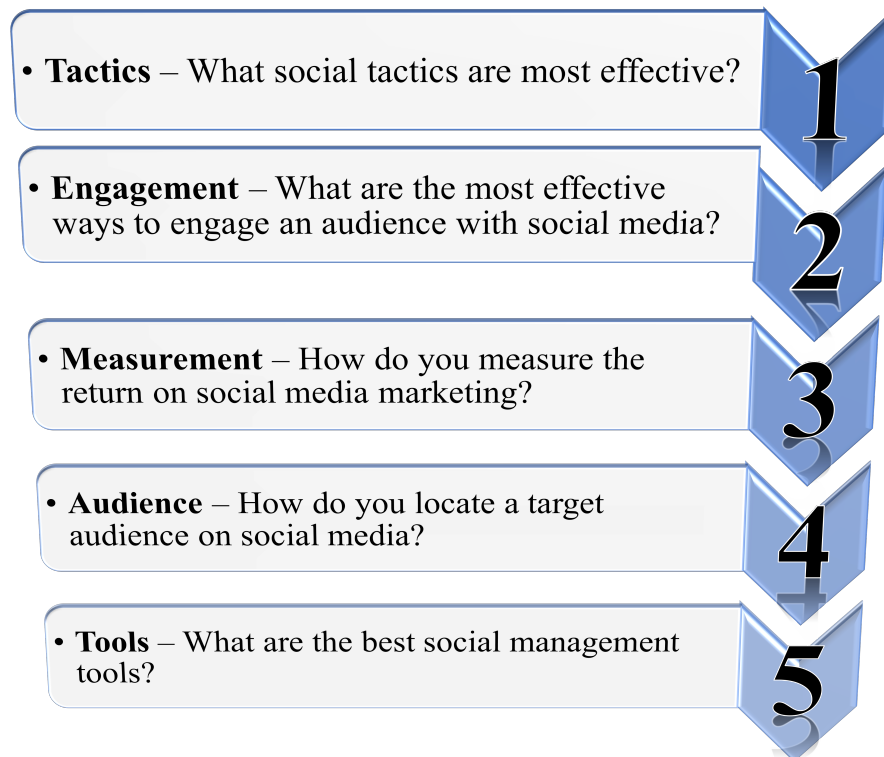
Assumptions

With the emergence of social media networks, unparalleled opportunities have emerged forcing small business owners to consider the use of social media for B2B marketing campaigns. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following assumptions are understood as plausible, accurate, and accepted as true.

1. Social media is a way in which user-generated content, social relationships, computer mediated interactions, and collaborations are enabled, developed, and maintained. Therefore, small businesses will investigate ways to utilize it in B2B marketing (Katona & Sarvary, 2014; Tirunillai & Tellis 2012; Van Osch & Coursaris (2013).
2. With over 2,393 million active users on the top three social media platforms as of April 2017, it can be assumed that social media will continue to be a viable digital marketing channel (Blake, 2016; “We Are Social”, n.d.).

Conceptual Model (Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 represents the hierarchy of the questions that B2B marketers are seeking to answer about social media marketing. Attempting to launch a social media advertising campaign requires different strategies and expertise than those that are needed when launching a traditional media advertising campaign. Godin (2003) observed that over the past two decades, many experts and researchers have pointed out that the dynamic of marketing is changing. Additionally, he notes that B2B marketers have read and discussed many of the new philosophies, and even used some of them, but have maintained the essence of the traditional marketing strategies which are now obsolete. Alternative approaches such as social media are not a novelty – they are a necessity. Business professionals now acknowledge social media as a contemporary tool for marketing, but still harbor a certain amount of fear about how to implement a campaign while minimizing the risk (Banerjee, Wei & Ma, 2012; Breitbarth, 2011; Hausman, 2016; Loukis, Spinellis, & Katsigiannis, 2011; Stelzner, 2016). The top five challenges to social media can be summarized with the following keywords: tactics, engagement, measurement, audience, and tools.

Figure 3.1. Challenges of Social Media Marketing Strategies

Tactics

The challenge of tactics seeks to answer the question: *What social tactics are most effective?* Godin (2003) predicted that the Internet would change marketing before it changed almost anything else, and that traditional marketing would die in its path. Given the constant changes taking place across the numerous social networks, it is not surprising that the top question B2B marketers have concerns which tactics are the most effective (Stelzner, 2016).

B2B social media innovators have begun to use social media platforms as tools to position themselves as “thought leaders”, taking a market-driving role by building relationships (Brennan & Croft, 2012; Schaffer, 2011). Industry thought leaders seek to influence and accelerate marketing processes with the creation of constructive conversations, trusted

connections, and productive communities. Businesses that are highly proactive on social media are those that generate dynamic conversations, connections, and associations between individuals and organizations which consequently produce interest and potential commitment (Narayanan et. al., 2012).

Engagement

The challenge of engagement seeks to answer the question: *What are the most effective ways to engage an audience with social media?* Engaging with customers is becoming increasingly important as a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Godin (2010) expresses the idea that with discomfort comes engagement and change. He further explains that discomfort means that something is being done that others are unlikely to do, because they're hiding in the comfortable zone. When uncomfortable actions lead to success, the organization rewards the initiator of the action and brings them back for more.

Information technology in the forms of social and mobile media is changing B2B marketing practices and relationships, and therefore the way businesses interact with their customers (LaPlaca, 2013). Social media provides a unique platform where businesses can create an information dissemination forum and invite users to follow, discuss, share and add to the knowledge base. This seamless way to communicate presents a distinctive opportunity to interact directly, gain understanding, observe trends, and engage with communities of customers (Bakshy, Marlow, Rosennn & Adamic, 2012; Narayanan et. al., 2012). The Internet, and more specifically social media, is a prevailing marketing tool that can be engaged for a variety of purposes including attracting customers, building customer loyalty, and extending a product's or service's brand (Levy, 2011; Reichheld & Markey, 2000; Rowley, 2005).

Measurement

The challenge of measurement seeks to answer the question: *How do you measure the return on social media marketing?* Accountability is a significant quality found in remarkable organizations and business leaders alike. Being able to measure the ROI for businesses using social media, digital marketing, and social media (e.g. professional networks and business social media) as a conceivable development of social networks has been identified as a research priority (Demishkevich, 2015; LaPlaca, 2013; Moore, Hopkins, & Raymond, 2013; Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012).

Measurement and analytics provide a tangible way to validate the effectiveness of a marketing strategy, thus taking some of the uncertainty out of the process. According to Cronin-Gilmore (2012), some small business owners are intimidated by digital marketing based on prior bad experiences attributed, at least partially, to the lack of social media marketing expertise combined with the lack of measurement.

Audience

The challenge of audience seeks to answer the question: *How do you locate a target audience on social media?* Locating ideal customers and prospects is essential in any marketing plan but is exponentially complicated by the enormous size of the numerous social networks. Organizations are harnessing the power of the social community to influence choices (Bernoff, 2009; Demishkevich, 2015; Musico, 2009; Narayanan et. al., 2012). Based on patterns of a user's social network, associations, the scope of those associations, as well as the interactions, the foundation of social exchange and audience characteristics can be recognized and targeted. According to Narayanan et. al. (2012) the ability to get granular in how businesses reach other

businesses and acquire new customers is a valuable function that helps target a relevant audience.

Tools

The challenge of tools seeks to answer the question: *What are the best social management tools?* Marketers want better tools to simplify the sometimes-daunting tasks associated with a social media advertising campaign. LaPlaca (2013) noted that using social media effectively in B2B marketing strategies remains a topic of interest and that research should look into the mechanisms of how this marketing tool can be applied.

Web 2.0 applications are “a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes... [supporting] the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of informational content” (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008, p. 231). It has broadened users' perceptions of the online universe by leveraging the power of social networks through conversations, connections, and communities. Knowing what tools and applications are available, how they work, and which ones are compatible with each other and applicable to the marketing strategy that is being executed is a fundamental component for success.

Conceptual Model (Figure 3.2)

The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 3.2 indicates the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media. The scholarly literature review revealed a number of theories that provide useful frameworks for creating effective

strategies. The theories included in this discussion are diffusion of innovation theory, grounded theory, social contagion theory, and media synchronicity theory. The elements that indicate the successful implementation of the strategies are Internet marketing strategy planning, specialized Internet marketing knowledge, measuring marketing performance, and extending internal resources and outsourcing.

Figure 3.2. Conceptual Model – Effective Strategies for B2B Social Media Marketing



Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory

The diffusion of innovations theory was formulated to predict and explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread. It is the process by which an innovation is communicated among the participants of a social system over a period of time (Rogers, 2003).

For the small business owner transitioning to social media marketing, it provides a theoretical basis for explaining the adoption of Internet and social media marketing. Adoption of the necessary technology is a vital process that must be undertaken before any strategies can be developed. It is a key component in engaging a target audience. According to Demishkevich (2015), Rogers' (2003) DOI theory identifies the influential factors of technology adoption by small businesses as innovation, communication channels, time interval, and social systems.

Innovations include new methods, ideas, processes, applications, and products. The items that improve, advance, or modernize. Communication channels refer to the way information flows within and between organizations. Time intervals are simply the amount of time between a start and finish, for instance the period of time between the introduction of the innovation and the actual adoption whether it is partial or complete. In sociology, social systems consist of two or more individuals interacting directly or indirectly in a bounded situation (Rogers, 2003). For this research, the social system, in the form of social media, exists on the Internet.

Grounded Theory

The inductive nature of grounded theory involves the construction of theory through the analysis of data (Bolat, Kooli, & Wright, 2016; Gustavsson & Åge, 2014). The amount of data generated by social media is massive and useful. The marketer that is able to access the appropriate data, analyze it, and understand it has the foundation for building a campaign (Choi, Huang, Palmer, & Horowitz, 2014; Narayanan et. al., 2012). Those who create compelling experiences and narratives, and uncover the insights embedded in the available data will be successful.

The challenge is viewing research and insights along a grounded theory approach, the opposite approach of traditional market research. This requires finding clues and opportunities, and letting that data guide the development of insights, instead of starting with a hypothesis that guides the direction (Narayanan et. al., 2012). Grounded theory is more a consequence resulting from this research rather than the actual design. The primary intent of this study is to provide additional information and significance to the existing literature rather than to develop and build theory.

Social Contagion Theory

Social media and online networking have become a much bigger part of the corporate culture and the way business is done in the modern-day digital domain (Breitbarth, 2011; Schaffer, 2011). Its widespread use is undeniable and persistent. The social contagion theory can be used to interpret digital marketing as an organizational social phenomenon that is contagious and can be transferred from one business to another (Hayati, 2012). The flow and contagious pattern of B2B marketing depends on the social network structure among colleagues inside business units and the arrangement and strength of social network ties between businesses (Breitbarth, 2011; Godin, 2010; Schaffer, 2011). Thought-provoking social contagion in B2B marketing is a positive, like the spread of infectious laughter. It provides a framework for finding the tactics and tools needed to advance and execute new approaches.

Media Synchronicity Theory (MST)

Media synchronicity theory is used to distinguish between digital and non-digital modes of communication in B2B marketing. Timing is everything! In communications, synchronicity refers to the amount of time it takes to send a message and receive a response to that message.

“Synchronicity is a feature of live dialogue or conversation that is now available through real time computer mediated systems” (Murphy, 2013, p. 19).

Face-to-face communication requires synchronicity, whereas digital communication can be either synchronous or asynchronous, and traditional communication is always asynchronous (Badura, 2016; Murphy, 2013; Wang, Pauleen, & Zhang, 2015). The choice of media determines the level of synchronicity in non-digital media, however, digital media commonly allows the user to determine the level of synchronicity. “Understanding the relationship between virtual collaboration and social media may allow organizations to develop plans to implement social media in ways consistent with organizational cultural and strategic objective” (Badura, 2016, p. 33).

Elements of Success Component

The elements for success that were identified in the literature review are 1) engaging in Internet marketing strategy planning, 2) acquiring specialized Internet marketing knowledge, 3) measuring marketing performance, and 4) extending Internal marketing resources through outsourcing (Demishkevich, 2015; LaPlaca, 2013; Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012).

Internet Marketing Strategy Planning

Structured planning is a way in which small business owners can successfully develop an online social media marketing strategy and identify the resources need for implementation (Demishkevich, 2015). The participants in Demishkevich’s (2015) study did not have any Internet marketing plan, short-term or long-term, nor did they have a well-defined Internet or social media marketing strategy. A well-defined plan can help small business owners be more proactive and less reactive with social media marketing.

“The key to capitalizing on the business capabilities of LinkedIn (and all social media for that matter) is to create a daily routine where you can efficiently and effectively have an optimal presence” (Schaffer, 2011, p. 178). In any B2B social media situation, a company’s online relevancy and mindshare are a direct result of regular, planned engagement (Schaffer, 2011). The lack of Internet marketing knowledge or expertise, time, and staffing are factors that contribute to an organization’s unstructured planning and unsystematic implementation of social media marketing activities (Demishkevich, 2015).

Specialized Internet Marketing Knowledge

Common characteristics such as lack of knowledge, in-house expertise, and financial capital often prevent small business owners from developing the same economies of scale as bigger businesses (Demishkevich, 2015). One challenge that many small business owners face is the lack of knowledge on how to develop and implement a social media marketing strategy. This was evident in a study by Demishkevich (2015) where 100% of the study participants had no formal Internet marketing training prior to starting their business.

The complexity and diversity of Internet technologies require specialized knowledge and understanding. “The successful integration of Internet marketing into a firm’s operations requires not only the knowledge of online marketing, but also adequate IT infrastructure and the experience to know how the two work together” (Demishkevich, 2015, p. 29). Breitbarth (2011) believes that anyone with business experience and the willingness to learn can realize benefits from social media. Learning as much as you can from the many available resources, making a commitment, and prioritizing strategy creation are important steps in transitioning to B2B marketing on social media.

Measuring Marketing Performance

“To accurately measure the effectiveness of online marketing efforts small business owners need to account for the interaction and impact of different marketing channels on conversion” (Demishkevich, 2015, p. 92). A lack of marketing expertise when combined with a lack of measurement causes some small business owners to be unreceptive to social media marketing. Precisely defining and collecting metrics that demonstrate social media marketing contributions to an organization is important for improving performance.

The measurement of marketing tactics and strategies is a complicated process which requires integration of numerous metrics (Demishkevich, 2015; Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström, & Freundt, 2014). Research has demonstrated that interactivity, personalization, immediate response, flexibility, and precise measurement are some of the advantages of online advertising over traditional media (Demishkevich, 2015). In simple terms, the ROI of social media B2B marketing activities are governed by whether or not the objective is realized (Moore, Hopkins, & Raymond, 2013).

Extending Internal Resources and Outsourcing

Social media becomes a valuable marketing tool when there is a commitment by the organization to be an active member of online communities. With the proper allocation of time and resources, networking success is achieved by participating in conversations and providing professional, honest, and tangible suggestions to the topic being discussed. The discussions are significant because they take place between specific companies that are already connected at some level on social media (Schaffer, 2011).

“Due to the generalist nature of some business owners, they may benefit from outsourcing e-marketing to a web agency unless they can afford to hire in-house specialists”

(Demishkevich, 2015, p. 28). Small business owners who never worked with an agency have mixed reactions to the possibility of hiring professional help noting budget restraints or the possibility of additional work outsourcing could involve. Extending internal resources may be facilitated by the acquisition of specialized Internet marketing knowledge.

Summary

This chapter has applied the scholarly literature on the use of social media in B2B marketing to create a conceptual model that can be useful for creating implementation strategies for small businesses. The hierarchy of the questions that B2B marketers are seeking to answer as they transition from traditional marketing channels to the digital social media channels served to focus the development of the conceptual model. The resulting conceptual model which applies theories from the scholarly literature review illustrates the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media. The next chapter will explore some recommendations and implications for B2B marketing practitioners.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The recommendations framed in this project are the results of analyzing the scholarly literature and determining the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a business-to-business (B2B) marketing program on social media. The recommendations provide a resolution to problems encountered by small business owners during the transformation to social media marketing where the proven set of marketing traditions and processes in traditional media channels are not valid. The proposed approach speaks to the mind-set and the technical expertise that is necessary to master the data analysis and modeling needed to achieve success in the digital media channels. The challenges and concerns of transitioning B2B marketing communications to social media are addressed through the development of effective, theory-based strategies and the identification of four elements for success.

This study included an analysis of qualitative and quantitative case studies that explored the relationships of social media in B2B marketing (Badura, 2016; Bakshy, Marlow, Rosennn & Adamic, 2012; Banerjee, Wei & Ma, 2012; Bolat, Kooli & Wright, 2016; Cripps, Standing & Fanning, 2015; Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt, 2014; Levy, 2011; Wang, Pauleen & Zhang, 2015; Witzig, Spencer & Galvin, 2012; Wymbs, 2011). The systematic review also incorporated gray literature analyses with multiple case studies that applied various communication theories for developing effective strategies (Demishkevich, 2015; Hayati, 2012; Murphy, 2013; Rieder, 2013; Robinson, Arbez, Birta, Tolk, & Wagner 2015; Van Osch & Coursaris, 2013). Additionally, expert opinions (Blake, 2016; Breitbarth, 2011; Godin, 2003 & 2010; Hausman 2016; Kniffen, 2016; Musico, 2009; Richmond, 2007; Schaffer, 2011; Shapell, 2010; Stelzner, 2016) provided background information, insights on indicators of successful

development and implementation of a social media B2B marketing plan, as well as answers to the research questions.

Key Recommendations

The elements for success that were identified in the literature review and the foundation for the formulated recommendations are: engaging in Internet marketing strategy planning, acquiring specialized Internet marketing knowledge, measuring marketing performance, and extending Internal marketing resources and outsourcing (Demishkevich, 2015; LaPlaca, 2013; Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012). The key recommendations also focus on the challenges of developing and implementing successful B2B social media marketing strategies that the scholarly literature on small businesses identified; effective tactics, audience engagement, ROI measurement, target audience location, and identifying the best management tools (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt, 2014; Stelzner, 2016). Following the recommendations will have a positive effect on the implications and relationship of social media on a company's B2B marketing activities. Small business owners who are passionate about growing their businesses and interested in learning about Internet marketing best practices will be more effective when making the transition from traditional media channels to social media channels (Breitbarth, 2011; Demishkevich, 2015; Schaffer, 2011). The key recommendations presented in this study speak to the challenges identified in the research and the steps that are needed to achieve the elements of success.

Recommendation One – Acquire Specialized Social Media Marketing Knowledge

Understanding the differences between B2B marketing on traditional media channels versus digital social media channels will impact the success of a B2B social media marketing campaign (Breitbarth, 2011; Hausman, 2016; Stelzner, 2016). Table 4.1 lists the differences

between traditional media channels and social media channels that need to be considered and understood before conversion is undertaken.

Table 4.1	
Differences Between Traditional Media Channels & Social Media Channels	
Social Media	Traditional Media
Two-way conversation	One-way conversation
Open system	Closed system
Transparent	Opaque
One-on-one marketing	Mass marketing
About you	About me
Brand and user-generated content	Professional content
Authentic content	Polished content
Metric: Engagement	Metric: Reach/frequency
Actors: Users/Influencers	Actors: Celebrities/representatives
Community decision-making	Economic decision-making
Unstructured communication	Controlled communication
Real time creation	Pre-produced/scheduled
Bottom-up strategy	Top-down strategy
Informal language	Formal language
Active involvement	Passive involvement
Deep analytics	Poor analytics
Paid, Owned, Earned	Paid

Because digital social media channels are ever-evolving, small business owners need to consider acquiring training directed specifically at social media marketing (Demishkevich, 2015). The intended results of the training are to gain specialized skills; navigate, create, discover, and stay up-to-date with the developments in digital marketing as well as to develop the knowledge base needed to make the best decisions when working with vendors, hiring marketing professionals, planning resources, and implementing strategies. Additional training and ways to stay current with the newest technologies and available tools should also be investigated (Breitbarth, 2011).

Recommendation Two – Develop Internal Marketing Resources and Outsource

Acquiring specialized social media marketing knowledge will be more beneficial when it is supported with adequate resources, whether those resources are internal or external.

Developing internal marketing with “sufficient allocation of resources and access to knowledge and expertise is important for the successful development and implementation of Internet marketing activities” (Demishkevich, 2015, p. 103). This recommendation is important as it addresses the options available to small businesses when transitioning from traditional marketing channels.

Demishkevich’s (2015) study indicated that some small business owners did not utilize social media marketing channels to their full potential due to limited internal resources and capabilities. A way to compensate for this discrepancy is to outsource or engage a specialist that is knowledgeable in social media marketing. Retaining a consultant or web agency to guide the business owner during the planning process and keep them updated on the latest developments, tools, and channels could be a cost-effective strategy for small organizations (Breitbarth, 2011; Hausman, 2016; Stelzner, 2016).

Recommendation Three – Engage in Social Media Marketing Strategy Planning

Once the specialized social media marketing knowledge is acquired and the necessary resources are allocated, an organization is better positioned to begin the process of systematically structuring both a short-term and long-term social media B2B marketing plan. According to Demishkevich, (2015) the “lack of Internet marketing expertise, time, and staffing contributed to unstructured planning and unsystematic implementation of activities” (p. 104). To help optimize B2B marketing effectiveness on social media, small business owners need to make an investment in developing a workable plan. The objective is to become experts on the best strategies, tactics, tools, channels, and ways to implement the resulting B2B social media marketing plan. The plan, whether developed in-house or with the aid of an outside expert, will enable the small business

owner to stay focused on the organization's efforts and align the resources and budget with business goals (Breitbarth, 2011; Demishkevich, 2015; Stelzner, 2016).

Recommendation Four – Measure Marketing Performance

A social analytic platform is used to identify the significant elements needed to make informed decisions and drive real business value. Accurately defining and collecting the metrics that demonstrate social media marketing's contributions to an organization's stability and growth is essential for improving performance and identifying opportunities. "Not all small business owners had the knowledge and tools to track, interpret, and translate Internet marketing performance data into actions" (Demishkevich, 2015, p. 104). Having the right tracking mechanisms in place allows the small business owner to account for the interaction and the impact that the conversion from traditional marketing channels to digital social media marketing channels has on the business. Although the precise measurement of marketing tactics and strategies is a complicated process that can require the integration of numerous metrics, it is one of the most advantageous components of online advertising over traditional media (Stelzner, 2016; Wymbs, 2011).

Implementing a B2B Social Media Marketing Plan

Knowledge acquisition, resource development, strategic planning, and performance measurement are crucial steps in the successful transition from traditional marketing media to social marketing media. To succeed in the current competitive B2B marketing paradigm, marketers need to thoroughly understand how to leverage the powerful tools found in the digital channel known as social media. A tool is anything that helps accelerate or "power up" the ability to accomplish goals, and the many Web 2.0 applications available on social media fall into this category (Breitbarth, 2011; Brennan & Croft, 2012; Constantinides, & Fountain, 2008;

Narayanan et. al., 2012). The applications and users vary greatly from the very far-reaching, informal and general audience of Facebook to the formal, business oriented users of LinkedIn. The recommendations; acquire specialized social media marketing knowledge, develop internal marketing resources and outsource, engage in social media marketing strategy planning, and measure marketing performance, can serve as best practices for small businesses that are endeavoring to develop and implement an effective B2B social media marketing plan.

Challenges

The challenges presented by the process of transitioning to social media marketing, including learning to use the various digital tools of B2B marketing on the Internet requires commitment and persistence on the part of the small business owner. The assurance of success does not exist and there are not abundant proven examples to emulate which may cause hesitation when contemplating the opportunities available in social media marketing. “These opportunities require an upfront investment, however, in the long-term they can help small business owners to be more effective and efficient in marketing online” (Demishkevich, 2015, p. 104).

The digital B2B marketing field is fast-paced and ever-changing with innovative technologies and a significant impact on consumer attitudes, behaviors and interactions (Breitbarth, 2011; Hausman, 2016; Shaffer, 2011). The speed, the continuous changes, and the impact of online thought leaders are all challenges the small business owner must keep in mind when developing B2B social media marketing strategies. These challenges can be placated by developing effective digital communication and accurate big data analysis.

Summary

This project analyzed the literature and determined the best strategies that lead to the successful implementation of a B2B marketing program on social media. The findings derived from the evidence-based research indicated that addressing the challenges and concerns of small business owners transitioning to B2B social media marketing enables the creation and application of an effective strategy. The systematic review also identified the elements for success; knowledge acquisition, resource development, strategic planning, and performance measurement.

This study contributes to existing literature from a small business perspective by creating a clear representation of a B2B marketing approach in the digital age. It considered the usage of digital media and the factors that influence the operationalization of networking. This project increases the understanding of the implications of communication channels on a company's marketing activities. "The pervasiveness of social media technologies and applications enables not just the generation of online conversations but enhances B2B collaboration activities atop the B2B and intra business conversations" (Sood & Pattinson, 2012, p. 117).

The next chapter will discuss gaps still existing in the body of research. These gaps combined with the fast-paced, ever-changing nature of social media marketing present opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study analyzed literature containing business-to-business (B2B) marketing intelligence to determine the most effective strategies for small business owners transitioning from traditional media channels to social media. The evidence-based research provided information on the challenges faced by small business owners when migrating to social media marketing. It also presented knowledge on the best practices when developing and implementing a B2B marketing strategy for many Web 2.0 platforms on social media. The elements important for achieving success as well as the implications and relationship of social media on a company's B2B marketing activities were revealed. A discussion of gaps found in the literature, unanticipated findings that emerged from the research, limitations, and a summary of the study are presented in this chapter.

Gaps in the Literature

Noteworthy gaps in the scholarly literature on the use of social media for B2B marketing are acknowledged by academics. According to Jussila et. al. (2014), numerous authors contend that the academic research concerning the use of social media in B2B relationships is fairly incomplete. Factors contributing to the significant research gap include the innovation of technology, the innate competitive nature of B2B relationships, and the reluctance of business owners to share insights of the successful usage of social media platforms (LaPalca, 2013; Schultz, Schwepker, & Good, 2012).

Research specifically concentrating on social media has gotten some attention within the discipline of marketing science as well as a few other disciplines including social sciences and communications. An understanding of the impact of social media and specifically user-generated

content on sales, as well as an organization's value, has been increased by studies conducted by Tirunillai & Tellis (2012). Although there has been increased contemplation on the general effects of social media, there has been limited research on the effective use of social media within marketing, especially B2B marketing (LaPalca, 2013).

Additional Research Opportunities

The gaps in the scholarly literature contribute to the opportunities for future research.

Some questions that require more research include:

- Should firms always use social media for B2B marketing or should they be selective in its use?
- What are the best metrics (tools for the successful measurement) to evaluate social media?
- How should organizations manage the risks surrounding the use of social media in B2B marketing campaigns?
- Is the size of the business a factor in the successful development and implementation of a social media B2B marketing plan?

Unanticipated Findings

Although the evidence-based research confirmed that there are countless options available for B2B marketing online that bring with them a barrage of advertising and aggressive offerings causing many small businesses to bounce around and others to become paralyzed by the process, the effectiveness ratings for the top social media platforms varied between studies. Based on surveys of B2B marketers, the Social Media Examiner (Stelzner, 2016) and Marketing Profs and Content Managing Institute (Kniffen, 2016) published different effectiveness rankings for LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms. Another unanticipated finding was that the understanding of how social media is being used to grow and promote businesses is not consistent.

Limitations

Focusing on the use of B2B marketing on social media by small businesses limited the amount of applicable research to some extent. Not all of the research pertaining to B2B marketing, especially the research based on larger businesses, can be operationalized for organizations of different sizes.

Conclusion

The migration toward digital media in B2B marketing instead of traditional media channels reflects the integration of digital strategies and a stronger commitment to driving ROI and tracking movement through a website. The emphasis on analytics that digital media fosters requires a different set of tools and processes than those used in the traditional media channels. Social media subsists as “a world where everyone has the ability to influence opinion; a world where everyone has the ability to influence purchase; a world where distances are down to zero; a world where voice has speed greater than light” (Narayanan et. al., 2012, p. 69).

The study of the effect of social media use in B2B marketing strategies is important to both communication scholars and marketing practitioners. This research project considered the effects of social media usage on B2B marketing from the perspective of small business owners regarding its benefits to performance and communication. The usage of digital media and the factors that influence the operationalization of B2B marketing were investigated. As the evidence-based research for this study indicated, in order for small business owners to successfully transition from traditional media channels to social media channels, they must engage in knowledge acquisition, resource development, strategic planning, and performance measurement (Breitbarth, 2011; Demishkevich, 2015; Stelzner, 2016).

This study is significant because it reviewed literature on current social media activities and collaborative applications relevant to B2B marketing interactions, providing contemporary information on the benefits and effectiveness of social media marketing techniques: effective tactics, audience engagement, ROI measurement, target audience location, and identification of the best management tools (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt, 2014; Stelzner, 2016). It contributes to existing literature from a small business perspective by creating a clear representation of a B2B marketing approach in the digital age. This project also increases the understanding of the implications of communication channels on a company's marketing activities.

REFERENCES

- Badura, V. R. (2016). A correlational study of social media use and perception of virtual collaboration of U.S. business professionals (Order No. 10042877). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1776157889). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1776157889?accountid=26417>.
- Bakshy, E., Marlow, C., Rosenn, I., & Adamic, L. (2012). The Role of Social Networks in Information Diffusion. *International Worldwide Web Conference Committee (IW3C2)*.
- Banerjee, P., Wei, K. K., & Ma, L. (2012). Role of Trialability in B2B E-business Adoption: Theoretical Insights from Two Case Studies. *Behavior & Information Technology*, 31(9), 815-827. doi:10.1080/0144929X.2010.497564.
- Bernoff, J. (2009). Why B-to-B Ought to Love Social Media. *Marketing News*, 43(6), 20.
- Blake, K. (2016). The 2016 LinkedIn Stats You Should Know - Updated! Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/2016-linkedin-stats-you-should-know-updated-katy-elle-blake>.
- Bolat, E., Kooli, K., & Wright, L. T. (2016), Businesses and Mobile Social Media Capability. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(8), 971-981. doi:10.1108/JBIM-10-2016-270.
- Breitbarth, W. (2011). *The Power Formula for LinkedIn Success*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press.
- Brennan, R., & Croft, R. (2012). The Use of Social Media in B2B Marketing and Branding: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Customer Behavior*, 11(2), 101-115.

- Choi, N., Huang, K., Palmer, A., & Horowitz, L. (2014). Web 2.0 Use and Knowledge Transfer: How Social Media Technologies Can Lead to Organizational Innovation. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(3), 176-186.
- Constantinides, E., & Fountain, S. J. (2008). Web 2.0: Conceptual Foundations and Marketing Issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9, 231–244.
doi:10.1057/palgrave.dddmp.4350098.
- Cripps, H., Standing, C., & Fanning, S. (2015). Does "Social" Media Work in a Business-to-Business Marketing Context? *Proceedings of The European Conference On E-Learning*, 89-95.
- Cronin-Gilmore, J. (2012). Exploring marketing strategies in small businesses. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 6(1), 96–107. Retrieved from http://www.na-businesspress.com/JMDC/Cronin-GilmoreJ_Web6_1_.pdf.
- Demishkevich, M. (2015). Small Business Use of Internet Marketing: Findings from Case Studies (Order No. 3717534). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1711734002). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1711734002?accountid=26417>.
- Godin, S. (2010). *Linchpin: are you indispensable?* New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Godin, S. (2003). *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Grandjean, M. (2016). A social network analysis of Twitter: Mapping the digital humanities community. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*. 3 (1): 1171458.
doi:10.1080/23311983.2016.1171458.

- Gustavsson, B., & Åge, L. (2014). Conceptualizing for Managerial Relevance in B2B Research: A Grounded Theory Approach. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 29(7/8), 626-632. doi:10.1108/JBIM-10-2013-0223.
- Hausman A. (2016). *16 Differences Between Traditional Media and Social Networking*. Retrieved from <https://www.hausmanmarketingletter.com/16-differences-between-social-media-and-traditional-media>.
- Hayati, B. (2012). Implementing marketing strategies through business-to-business sales forces: A social network perspective (Order No. 3510854). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1020161767). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1020161767?accountid=26417>.
- Jussila, J. J., Kärkkäinen, H., & Aramo-Immonen, H. (2014). Social Media Utilization in Business-to-Business Relationships of Technology Industry Firms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30606-613. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.047.
- Kaplan, A. M. (2012). If You Love Something, Let It Go Mobile: Mobile Marketing and Mobile Social Media 4x4. *Business Horizons*, 55(2), 129-139. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.10.009.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003.
- Katona, Z., & Sarvary, M. (2014). Maersk Line: B2B Social Media—"It's Communication, Not Marketing". *California Management Review*, 56(3), 142-156. doi:10.1525/cm.2014.56.3.142.
- Kniffen, B. (2016). How This Silicon Valley Secret Reveals 2016's Top Client Getting Strategy...and Why Ignoring it will Cost You Thousands. Retrieved from

<http://www.web-page.me/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Linked-In-industry-insights-report-final-Ben.pdf>.

LaPlaca, P. J. (2013). Research Priorities for B2B Marketing Researchers, *Revista Española de Investigación en Marketing*, 17(2) 135–150.

Leeflang, P. H., Verhoef, P. C., Dahlström, P., & Freundt, T. (2014). Challenges and Solutions for Marketing in a Digital Era. *European Management Journal*, 32(1), 1-12.

doi:10.1016/j.emj.2013.12.001.

Levy, P. (2011). Facebook, LinkedIn and Digitas: The State of Social. *Marketing News*, 45(3), 16.

Loukis, E., Spinellis, D., & Katsigiannis, A. (2011). Barriers to the Adoption of B2B e-Marketplaces by Large Enterprises: Lessons Learned from the Hellenic Aerospace Industry. *Information Systems Management*, 28(2), 130-146.

Moore, J. N., Hopkins, C. D., & Raymond, M. A. (2013). Utilization of Relationship-Oriented Social Media in the Selling Process: A Comparison of Consumer (B2C) and Industrial (B2B) Salespeople. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 12(1) 48-75.

Murphy, M. (2013). Communication and interactivity in B2B relationships (Order No. 3585041). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1508812503). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1508812503?accountid=26417>.

Musico, C. (2009). You're Not Social (Enough). *CRM Magazine*, 13(6), 39-4.

Narayanan, M., Asur, S., Nair, A., Rao, S., Kaushik, A., Mehta, D., Athalye, S., Malhotra, A., Akhil Almeida, A., & Lalwani, R. (2012). Social Media and Business. *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers*, 37(4), 69-111.

- Quinton, S., & Wilson, D. (2016). Tensions and ties in social media networks: Towards a model of understanding business relationship development and business performance enhancement through the use of LinkedIn. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 5415-24. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.12.001.
- Reichheld, F. R., & Markey Jr., R. G. (2000). The Loyalty Effect--The Relationship Between Loyalty and Profits. *European Business Journal*, 12(3), 134-140.
- Richmond, R. (2007). Enterprise: Facebook, a Marketer's Friend; Site Offers Platform to Tout Products, Interact with Users. *Wall Street Journal*. p. B4.
- Rieder, B. (2013). Studying Facebook via Data Extraction: The Netvizz Application. *Proceedings of the 5th Annual ACM Web Science Conference (WebSci '13)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 346-355. DOI=10.1145/2464464.2464475. <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2464464.2464475>.
- Robinson, Arbez, Birta, Tolk, & Wagner (2015). Proceedings of the 2015 Winter Simulation Conference, L. Yilmaz, W. K. V. Chan, I. Moon, T. M. K. Roeder, C. Macal, & M. D. Rossetti, eds. *Conceptual Modeling: Definition, Purpose and Benefits*.
- Rodriguez, M., Peterson, R. M., & Krishnan, V. (2012). Social Media's Influence on Business-to-Business Sales Performance. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 3 American Journal of Business Vol 27, No. 2, pp 174-194.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations*. 5th ed. New York: The Free Press.
- Rowley, J. (2005). Building Brand Webs: Customer Relationship Management Through the Tesco Clubcard Loyalty Scheme. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 33(3), 194-206. doi:10.1108109590550510588361.

- Schaffer, N. (2011). Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing. An Unofficial, Practical Guide to Selling and Developing B2B Business on LinkedIn. Windmills Marketing.
- Schultz, R. J., Schwepker Jr., C. H., & Good, D. J. (2012). Social Media Usage: An Investigation of B2B Salespeople. *American Journal of Business*, 27(2), 174-194.
- Shapell, B. (2010). *Deleted, De-friended*. New York: National Association of Credit Management.
- Sood, S. C., & Pattinson, H. M. (2012). 21st Century applicability of the interaction model: Does pervasiveness of social media in B2B marketing increase business dependency on the interaction model? *Journal of Customer Behavior*, 11(2), 117-128.
- Stelzner, Michael A. (2016). 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report. Retrieved from Social Media Examiner website:
http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/report/?awt_l=IzXLE&awt_m=L463moc0hr.ILT.
- Tirunillai, S., & Tellis, G. J. (2012). Does chatter really matter? Dynamics of user-generated content and stock performance. *Marketing Science*, 31(2), 198–215.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. (2012). Statistics about business size (including small business) from the U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/econ/subs>.
- Van Osch, W., & Coursaris, C. K. (2013). Organizational social media: A comprehensive framework and research agenda. Paper presented at the 46th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, Maui. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2013.439>.
- Wang, W. Y., Pauleen, D. J., & Zhang, T. (2015). How social media applications affect B2B communication and improve business performance in SMEs. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 544-14. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.12.004.

We Are Social. (n.d.). Most famous social network sites worldwide as of April 2017, ranked by number of active users (in millions). In Statista - The Statistics Portal. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>.

Witzig, L., Spencer, J., & Galvin, M. (2012). Organizations' use of LinkedIn: An analysis of nonprofits, large corporations and small businesses. *Marketing Management Journal*, 22(1), 113-121.

Wymbs, C. (2011). Digital marketing: The time for a new “Academic Major” has arrived. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(1), 93–106.