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Social Media Marketing for B2B: From Information to Decision to Retention

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Contents

Learning Points:

- Understand the factors that influence Social Media Marketing (SMM) adoption from a Business-to-Business (B2B) perspective.

- Appreciate the theoretical underpinnings of innovation adoption at the firm level through the lens of the Technology Adoption Model (TAM), specifically in relation to B2B social media adoption.

- Examine the approaches a marketer can take for strategy development, tactics and measurement of a firm's social media marketing efforts.

- Evaluate the stages of the buyer decision funnel and consider tactical methods that can be employed at each stage of the buyer journey.

Introduction

Social networks in a business context, are referred to as two or more connected business relationships, where an 'exchange' exists between business partners. The concept of a 'network' is based on the establishment of ties between individuals, groups of people, organizational departments or corporations, that leads to the creation of social networks (Michaelidou et al., 2011:1154). Advances in web-based technology and innovation have changed the nature of social networks. Where traditional social networks involve personal and social interaction of people these interactions are now mediated by computers and web connected devices such as mobile phones, laptops, and e-notebooks. The advent of Web 2.0 and social media sites has seen a shift from offline social networking to online social networking resulting in intangible and arguably impersonal forms of communication between parties.

These online social networks are more complex, and involve a greater degree of heterogeneity. Yet, the benefits associated with web-based social networking are enhanced in an online environment, where issues relating to time and geographical location become less significant.

Marketing managers are increasingly employing marketing tactics that facilitate the identification of individuals and group members within social media sites to connect and engage with each other. Social media marketing has fundamentally changed the way marketers communicate, interact, consume and create both within and outside the firm. This form of marketing represents one of the most transformative impacts web technology has had on a firm since the advent of the Internet (Dou et al., 2013). The growth of social media sites has revolutionized the way businesses relate to the marketplace, opening up new and exciting possibilities but also creating unprecedented challenges (Aral, 2011, Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As social media marketing has proliferated significantly from a B2C context its uptake as a marketing tool in the B2B context is relatively meagre, by comparison (Swani et al., 2014).

This chapter explores the benefits and challenges of social media marketing from a B2B perspective. It synthesizes theoretical and practitioner frameworks for understanding and resolving challenges relating to social media strategy development, tactical implementation and performance measurement. Practical recommendations along with best practice case examples highlight strategies a marketer can consider as they design, plan and integrate social media content for the modern, socially connected B2B buyer.

Social Media Marketing Adoption: The benefits and challenges from a B2B perspective

B2B adoption of social media has been driven by new technologies and evolving buyer expectations for more consumer-like experiences. The changing nature of the connected consumer has striking implications for the business market (Kumar, 2015) and, as B2C marketers have discovered already, it is not enough to be on social, the benefits are in *being* social.

Despite the relative novelty of social media marketing from a B2B perspective, empirical evidence suggests that that adoption of social media can significantly benefit an organization. In particular, social media sites can be effectively used for a number of B2B marketing activities. Those include e-WOM opportunities (electronic word of mouth) facilitating brand exposure on a scale far greater and more cost effective than the more traditional communication methods can afford a company. The social networking characteristics inherent in social media sites enhance communication, interaction and collaboration, for example, social media can be utilized to identify and attract new business partners (Siamagka et al., 2015). Social media can be used as an effective marketing communications tool to reach and engage with existing consumers, which industrial partners value. Such online interactions enable marketers to obtain valuable feedback (Michaelidou et al., 2011), which when analyzed allow them to better tailor a firm's offering to their business partners' needs (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This in turn is directly related to an increased sales performance and greater return on investment. This marketing communications channel when utilized effectively allows B2B marketers to deepen relationships with their business partners thus facilitating greater trust and loyalty between both parties (Agnihotri et al., 2016). It therefore comes as little surprise to hear that many B2B companies plan to double their social media marketing budgets within the next five years (CMI, 2015).

Notwithstanding the numerous advantages arising from the use of social media sites by B2B professionals, Swani et al. (2014) suggest that one of the key challenges is the struggle to implement

successful social media strategies. This is partly due to a poor understanding of how to use these sites for B2B marketing purposes as well as a perception that social media sites cannot support B2B marketing goals and objectives. Negative attitudes of marketing professionals towards the usefulness and usability of social media sites hinders the adoption of those sites in the B2B business environment. In addition to a lack of understanding of how to use social media sites in B2B marketing, a lack of control over communications is also a deterrent in its adoption as a B2B marketing tool (Michaelidou et al., 2011). There is an increased perception of risk due to marketers being unable to control the exchange of information online and fear confidential information disclosure that may have a profound impact on future B2B business (Simula et al., 2013). As such, the two-way communication channel recognized earlier as a benefit of social media sites in the B2B sector may actually be perceived as a disadvantage, which seriously affects marketers' perception of social media sites usability in the B2B environment.

Research also asserts that there is a common belief among marketing professionals that social media sites do not fit with the nature of the B2B sector, where industrial partners are highly involved in the buying process, which requires face-to-face interaction and the individual personal approach to building business relationships, which cannot be achieved in an environment that is intangible and dynamic such as the web (Habibi et al., 2015, Michaelidou et al., 2011). The impersonal nature of the online environment is therefore yet another factor, which creates a negative perception of the usability of SMM and hinders the adoption of social media sites in B2B marketing. Finally, there are also difficulties in assessing financial gains from these emerging digital channels coupled with a lack of suitable case evidence to help guide decision making. Fulfilling revenue expectations and identifying profitable leads comes under the direct influence of marketing. It is vital for marketers to focus on maintaining an ever productive marketing arm but this is a challenging task. Key challenges include:

1. Targeting – An important principle in B2B marketing is to identify the right decision makers, which can lead to the creation of highly engaging and relevant messages. It is essential to construct messaging around the demographic you are targeting. Social businesses start with understanding the people involved in the decision-making unit. In order to attract and grow a relevant audience on social media, the firm needs a clear understanding of who the decision maker is (education, skills, interests, motivations, goals and values), the members of the decision-making unit, the characteristics of the company they serve (geography, size, industry), how solutions like the firm's are viewed (and what is seen as a competitive alternative), and how these buyers purchase (how they sell to their customers, budgets, risk tolerance and power dynamics).

2. Lead Generation – A lack of understanding of what channels should be utilised for an effective B2B lead generation campaign is an ongoing challenge for marketers particularly in a rapidly changing and dynamic web environment. Traditional marketing techniques would start with telemarketing since it has been a useful means for influencing one's audience for decades. On the other hand, millennials are pushing for further adoption of social media. Sooner or later the B2B sector, regardless of industry type, will be under pressure to implement a multi-channel strategy employing social media marketing tactics to encourage profitable lead generation.

3. Data reporting – Another challenge that discourages marketers from adopting B2B SMM tactics is deciphering analytics data and data reporting. This is an acquired skillset that requires a lot of time and effort but is an essential resource to invest in in order to attribute conversions to a specific channel and identify areas for improvement in the marketing strategy.

Understanding the factors that influence social media adoption from a B2B perspective is important as they can provide insight into key issues that need to be considered when a firm decides to utilize social media as a means to connect, communicate, and collaborate with other businesses online. In so doing, managers are better equipped to make informed, strategic, and timely decisions relating to campaign planning, development and execution. Decisions relating to identifying and implementing the appropriate tactical and measurement options to address goals and objectives are essential to facilitating satisfactory SMM campaign outcomes.

Technology Acceptance Model: A B2B Web 2.0 Perspective

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) has been used extensively to investigate and to identify factors motivating user's adoption of digital technologies. To achieve adoption of a new technology it needs to be perceived as 'useful' by the adoptees. The TAM relies on two fundamental variables to explain behaviour. These two variables are *perceived usefulness* of technology and *perceived ease of use*, which influence attitudes and usage intention, subsequently leading to adoption and usage behaviour of a specific technology (Davis et al., 1989). Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which one believes that using the technology will enhance his/her performance, while perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which one believes that using the technology will be free of effort.

With advancements in web technology particularly Web 2.0, users can set up a significantly more complex web presence in the form of, for example, a blog or a social media website, without have to consider the technological aspects of it. The rise of social media can be readily explained using the original TAM variables. The TAM suggests that perceived ease of use has a significant effect on perceived usefulness. Hence, the easier it is to use a specific technology, the more likely the users will

find it useful. Siamagka et al. (2016) argue that the extent to which B2B organizations find social media easy to use positively impacts perceptions of usefulness in deciding to adopt social media as a marketing tool.

As indicated in figure 1.1 a number of other key predictors of TAM have been suggested to influence adoption of social media sites including firm image, competition, managerial attitudes, training programmes, experience, and results demonstrability. Results demonstrability refers to extent the results of using social media as a marketing tool are apparent, as well as one's ability to communicate the results to others within the firm. This is critical as conversion data is key to informing future strategic direction of online marketing campaigns (Leeflang et al., 2014). Similarly, image captures the firm's perceptions about the prestige and status involved in using a specific technology and social media sites, which in turn influences perceptions about whether the technology is useful and effective in achieving objectives. Siamagka et al. (2016) argue that image is relevant to perceived usefulness of social media as an effective marketing tool. B2B firms that intend to adopt social media should seek to enhance their managers' perceptions about the usefulness of social media, address the perceived barriers through training programs that will enhance employees' skills in social media, and identify the importance and relevance of social media within their organizations (Siamagka et al. (2016).

Insert Figure 1.1 Here

Social Media Marketing: Strategy Development, Tactics and Measurement

The following sections detail elements management need to consider when planning a strategic approach to B2B social media marketing.

Strategy Development

An overall marketing strategy is effectively the firm's theory about how to compete successfully (Lewis et al., 2014) and it is developed by identifying business goals and marketing objectives, assessing the gaps and opportunities, selecting strategies and tactics, and setting targets and metrics to against which to measure progress. While firms may be at differing points in their social media maturity, they can derive value by aligning and integrating their social efforts against a clear set of business goals.

There are several questions that can help firms make informed decisions about their overall social media strategy:

1. How can social media be used to further the firm's overall business objectives?
2. How does social fit into the overall paid, owned and earned media mix?
3. How can social amplify other marketing efforts and drive considerations to purchase?
4. Where can social have the most impact and what metrics will be used to measure progress?
5. How will measurement inform agile decision making on strategy?

Macro goals related to the overall business, and even micro goals related specifically to social media, should be set in collaboration with the various members of the organization, especially those in contact with customers and those at the executive level who have control over budgets.

During initial planning stages, goals may be defined as "help the sales force increase market share." The objectives and strategies are the starting point to building specific plans that create a journey for the overall strategy. Objectives need to be specific, time-based and quantifiable. Many firms take a S.M.A.R.T. approach to creating goals and objectives. See figure 1.2 for a breakdown of the S.M.A.R.T framework. Throughout this process achievable and realistic targets and timeframes are set, the macro objective becomes more specific, and measurable. The following questions should be asked throughout the planning phase.

1. What customer insights can be learned from the firm's social followers, and how will that impact larger business decisions?

2. What social platforms and types of content resonate with the audience in various stages of the customer journey?

3. How can an integrated, omni-channel experience be provided?

4. What governance and infrastructure is needed to support a successful social media program?

Answering strategic planning questions and documenting the strategy ensures that all members of the team know the plan and are able to make decisions to achieve the desired outcomes. A documented strategy can also be shared with new employees, allowing them to see the full picture of their role.

<center>Insert figure 1.2 here</center>

Stages of the Buyer Decision Journey.

The buyer journey offers an important framework for thinking strategically about what customer's value at each stage along the path to purchase. As per figure 1.3 the customer journey is often portrayed as a funnel to help marketers understand what factors effectively move buyers from awareness and consideration to decision, and ultimately to retention and advocacy. But in reality the communication path is far from linear (Agnihotri et al., 2012). Multichannel elements need to be considered and mapped, tested and then optimized with the involvement of team members across the organization who can answer questions about the impact of social on the business and the content types and messages that resonate with buyers at various stages in the funnel.

Insert Figure 1.3 Here

Stage One: Awareness

The buyer journey starts with awareness and interest. At this pre-decision making stage the buyer is not in sales mode and therefore is not seeking out a specific product or service. For this reason, publicity and other forms of earned media, problem-focused advertising, and day-to-day how-to content is most effective, especially if the content strives to entertain, educate, and engage. Industry trend reports and periodicals, for example, can put certain brands on the social Web 2.0 map. These articles and blog posts have potential to be widely shared on social media, giving firms an opportunity to be discovered by non-followers and to re-share to an existing audience base as a way to reinforce the value of the offering. Infographics, vlogs, 'how-to' and reviewer video clips are cited by B2B researchers as the content they often share with colleagues in the decision-making unit. They also seek more information or visit a firm's website/store after viewing (Google/Millward Brown Digital, 2014).

Stage Two: Consideration and Decision

Following awareness, the buyer is in evaluation and decision mode. They require more specific, detailed information. The buyer at this stage may understand the offering and seek solution-focused content to map the offering to the firm's needs. Content needs to fulfil more specific needs. Case studies and whitepapers that address problems and identify solutions, websites with product information and specifications, and web-based events like webinars, webcasts, and virtual events can put subject-matter experts in touch with prospects. Earned media mentions, especially within articles that compare offerings, is important as these articles often show up higher in search results than a firm's webpages.

Stage Three: Retention and Advocacy

At the tail end of the funnel, buyers are using the product or service and forming opinions related to their enjoyment of the offering. A social media strategy is not complete once the sale is finalized. Buyer's remorse is detrimental to renewals but also to future new sales that come from word of mouth. Activation- and engagement-oriented content in newsletters, social media sites, mobile apps and web-based events help reinforce the value of the offering and increase satisfaction with the brand. Customer support channels via social media offer real-time, live chat and response. User forums and support networks allow active users to respond to queries from peers. ROI and pricing calculators, special offers to existing customers, support and reward users by demonstrating the cost to renew vs. the cost to find a new provider. And customer forums, events and in-person activities help customers experience the value of the product and service but also the value of the network of users. Beyond the sale, firms derive benefit from referral programs and using customers as references in case studies and media articles that are used at the top of the funnel.

B2B buyers are presented with an exhaustive amount of content in their social media feeds so to attract attention firms must present value at all stages of the funnel. When assessing an existing social media strategy or creating a new strategy, firms must assess how they can add value by helping customers discover and fulfill their needs and how they can cultivate and mobilize customer communities. The two-way dynamic of social media allows for learning and utility to happen for both parties.

Tactical Implementation

The sharing capabilities offered by social media tools provide mechanisms for users to effectively endorse or recommend a firm's content by sharing attributed links, videos, photos, documents and other materials. The community functions of forums and review sites enable peer-to-peer recommendations, knowledge sharing, support and social proof that validate a product/service's self-proclaimed benefits and lower perceived purchasing risks. Paid advertising opportunities enhance the visibility of a firm's original and earned content with promoted and sponsored posts, targeted ad buys and remarketing initiatives. The ideal social media ecosystem is dependent on a firm's social media maturity and their investment in content creation, which requires an investment in the amplification of that content through cross promotions, one-to-one interactions and paid promotions. A congruent implementation plan employs owned, earned and paid social media tactics throughout the customer funnel with several content types serving distinct purposes at each stage. The following section applies examples of tactical options a firm might consider at each stage of the funnel.

Stage One: Awareness Tactical Approaches

Building brand awareness with edutainment

Social media advertising tools provide highly targeted opportunities to expose prospects to problem-focused educational materials. The visibility of advertisements in social feeds, mentions or recommendations from fellow social media users can heighten interest in a firm and its solutions. By identifying potential accounts, topics and content that resonates with customers, advertisers can promote either a social media post or the firm's profile.

Case Study: CSX Corporation

A look at how a B2B firm created market-driving content rather than responsive, market-driven content.

Objective: CSX, the largest freight rail company in the eastern US serving 40 intermodal terminals across its network, needed to engage two key audiences—logistics professionals and engaged citizens (an influential subset of the general population)—on the incredibly complex topic of intermodal shipping, its viability, and how intermodal transportation is a differentiated means for CSX over its key competitor, Norfolk Southern.

Strategy: CSX and Agency MullenLowe Winston Salem created "The Intermodals", a simple, highly entertaining campaign using sixteen sitcom-inspired videos and an 8-bits video game that was widely distributed on social media and through earned publicity. The "edutainment" quality of the content—talking trains and trucks, sharable content, and a video game allowing visitors to learn about intermodal from the driver's seat—generated widespread interest in the concept of intermodal transportation. More important, the campaign drummed up civic support for and commercial interest in a transportation system that is misunderstood and often not heard of at all.

Results: The Intermodals campaign positioned CSX as an industry leader, drove interest in the service among potential customers and gained support for intermodal transportation among logistics professionals and engaged citizens.

- Awareness: 2 million total organic impressions derived from social media channels and publicity, 120 million impressions through paid digital efforts, 3.9 million video views from Facebook and Twitter.

- Behaviour: Positive sentiment toward CSX increased 72% Period over Period (PoP), 7% of the microsite traffic visited the Intermodal landing page (over 2K visits) and those visitors were highly engaged, viewing on average 1.69 pages per visit (vs. .26 pages previously). Paid digital brought 3M video completions, more than 2x the 0.25% benchmark with 0.68% clicking through.

- Outcomes: Recognition of intermodal as related to CSX increased 294% PoP and 20% YoY. Mentions of CSX increased 231% PoP, and costs were efficiently managed. In paid social, with a $0.37 CPV benchmark, the agency achieved $0.11 CPV (triple the estimate).

The campaign generated substantial buzz in the industry and CSX partners, and even competitors, shared the content extensively. East Coast, CSX's biggest intermodal competitor, retweeted the content, the equivalent of Pepsi retweeting Coke.

Stage Two: Consideration and Decision Tactical Approaches

Generating interest through thought leadership

Showcasing expertise, thought leadership and customer education are common long-lead approaches firms take when developing social media content. Building up trust through freely available, solutions-focused content and participation in community conversations increases prestige and ensures that B2B buyers encounter a firm's offering at the early stages of their research.

Case Study: Airbus

Leading aircraft manufacturer Airbus launched Airspace in early 2016, a new cabin design available on their A330neo aircraft in 2017. The new design purportedly creates a feeling of space for both passengers and airline attendants. In launching Airspace, Airbus posted a video tour on its owned channels and actively promoted that content to capture earned- and social-media attention. Although aircraft sales are an industrial good, the cabin is a consumer-influenced product. Passengers review and compare the details of the on-board experience on social media and this has an impact on the airlines that purchase aircraft from Airbus.

Airbus credits customer feedback on social media for providing their designers insights into the cabin experience and the emotional attributes the Airbus design philosophy can bring to the travel experience. They also use that customer preference information in their sales process to persuade airlines that Airspace by Airbus is the flyer-preferred option (Garcia, 2016).

Stage Three: Retention and Advocacy Tactical Approaches

Retaining customers through service excellence

Customer experience is a key differentiator for businesses. It is the customer's perception of the product/service experience, and all the processes and interactions with the firm. A customer experience strategy integrated with social media can help firms retain more customers and prevent them from defecting to the competition.

Case Study: Amex OPEN

Objective: American Express knows from commissioned research data that small businesses see greater results when they advertise that they accept the card, yet many small business owners fail to do so.

Agency Attention Global and American Express created the "Love My Store" campaign to increase orders and placement of Amex signage among small businesses across the US.

Strategy: Small businesses take great care in designing unique in-store experiences so Amex collaborated with Grace Bonney and her team at Design*Sponge to create six beautiful and engaging new Amex decals that would resonate with small merchants. The campaign included a series of videos by HGTV host Emily Henderson showcasing how various types of small businesses can use their store's design and signage to bring in more customers, as well as a Love My Store photo contest on Twitter and Instagram. Small business owners posted photos of their storefronts displaying the new Love My Store decals and the #LoveMyStoreAmexContest hashtag. One grand prizewinner won $10,000 towards a storefront redesign, plus a one-on-one design consultation with Emily Henderson (Shorty Awards, 2015).

Results: Leveraging the influence of design experts like Emily Henderson and Design*Sponge peaked the interest of Amex's small business audience, served their needs by providing valuable insights on store design and attracting customers, and resulted in broad reach, engagement and conversion.

- Awareness: Campaign content from Emily Henderson, Design*Sponge and Amex social channels drove 5M impressions.
- Behaviour: Those impressions earned over 50K social engagement from small business owners.
- Outcomes: Over 400,000 Love My Store decals were distributed, making the series the most-ordered of all available Amex decals.

The above examples demonstrate that B2B social media is not restricted to awareness and lead generation, and that integrating social media tools are effective tactics at all the stages of the funnel. The ideal mix of tactics is dependent on strategy, but also on several factors within the firm's control:

- Hiring people who have social media talent, industry knowledge and personalities that can help the firm move from broadcasting to interacting.

- Educating and training employees across the organization in social media management.

- Integrating social and automating processes.

- Documenting the strategy and making agile adjustments based on performance.

Performance Measurement

As social media adoption by B2B firms increases so too does the interest in social media monitoring and analytics. Social analytics refers to the tools a marketer can avail of to monitor the effectiveness of social media. Monitoring includes listening, interacting, influencing and reflecting on the positive and negative expressions about a firm's product and services. Social media is an emerging channel and so the tools used continue to evolve. In general metrics are grouped according to outcomes, or key performance indicators (KPIs), along the inbound marketing funnel.

- **Acquisition metrics** such as total fans or followers, and ad impressions for paid media, are about measuring how well a tool is doing at reaching the firm's largest, addressable audience.

- **Behaviour metrics** such as post likes, comments and shares, and click through rates for paid media, qualify how well a tool is doing at engaging the audience, not just reaching it.

- **Conversion metrics** like leads or lead conversion rate, or cost per lead for paid media, are used to track higher levels of commercial intent and are associated with non-revenue generating actions such as email subscriptions, downloads, form completions or other types of content engagement like viewing a video to completion. Revenue-generating actions such as ecommerce

purchases are measured by tracking total transactions, total revenue and average order value. Cost-per-conversion and revenue-per-click metrics report on the efficiency of paid campaigns.

- **Retention** metrics such as lifetime value and referrals can be integrated with other sales and customer data systems to track customer health and advocacy.

Measuring ROI: Social Media and Sales

Measuring the return on investment (ROI) of social media has been a long-standing blind spot for many marketers. Actionable intelligence requires robust data sets, analysts and IT support, nevertheless, even a basic combination of website and social analytics can provide marketers with data that drives decision making related to marketing spend. Manually combining website and social analytics, or using tools like *True Social Metrics*, offer four metrics that help a firm determine their share of conversation, reach, relevance and financial impact: conversation rate, amplification rate, applause rate and economic value.

Insert Figure Three Here

The metrics are calculated as follows and can be used in varying ways to determine resource allocations (Kaushik, 2011).

Conversation Rate = # of Audience Comments (or Replies) per Post

High conversation rate indicates a deep understanding of the firm's audience and what they value.

Amplification Rate = # Re-tweets or Shares per Post

Amplification rate is used to understand what types of content gets shared most. The more sharing the better as this peer-to-peer action represents valuable eWOM (word of mouth), which helps firms expand their networks.

Applause Rate = # of Favourites (Likes or +1s) per Post

Applause, like in real life, is a sign of approval. When followers like or favourite content it is effectively an endorsement, or sign of relevancy, which is visible to that person's followers.

Effective social media also moves followers beyond engagement within social tools and to the firm's website where further interactions occur, such as email sign up, whitepaper download, or click to call. Marketers actively using data-driven decision making assign a value to those actions in their web analytics program in order to calculate economic value, or value per visitor.

Economic Value = Sum of Short- and Long-Term Revenue and Cost Savings

It is the economic value metric that differentiates the channels that are most effective for converting customers at the purchase stage of the customer lifecycle, whereas conversation, amplification and applause rates can be used to indicate the channels that are effective for those at the awareness, consideration and retention stage.

Measurement across social media, apps and websites requires integration of several sources of data:

- Web and app tracking platforms track app and website traffic (e.g. Google Analytics, Kissmetrics, Adobe Analytics, Mixpanel, IBM Digital Analytics).

- Social media analytics help marketers assess their audience size and engagement rates. (e.g. analytics.twitter.com, Facebook Insights).

- Third-party analytics in combination with the above two analytics platforms offer addition insights into audience size and engagement, as well as comparative insights on industry benchmarks and competitors. (e.g. SimplyMeasured, Radian6).

It is essential to understand that social analytics is important regardless of whether you are running a social media advertising campaign or a content marketing plan. Even if you conclude that your company is not ready to adopt social media as a B2B marketing tool you need to be cognisant that there is a strong chance your brand may be mentioned within the social web space. But if you are using social media as a marketing tool it is essential to have measures of success defined and monitored.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at social media marketing from a B2B perspective. A thorough discussion on the factors that facilitate and inhibit SMM adoption within the firm highlighted key issues marketing managers need to address when considering to utilize the emerging social media space as a marketing tool. The use of the Technology Adoption Model provides a theoretical perspective into key issues the modern firm faces when considering to adopt and use social media marketing. The key points from this chapter are:

- Social media sites can support B2B marketing goals and objectives when attention is to strategic planning and integration of social media in the sales cycle.

- They buyer journey offers an important framework for strategically planning content and promotions that effectively move buyers from information to decision to retention.

- Social media is rapidly changing the B2B market and firms positioned to leverage these new communication tools for demand generation, customer satisfaction are outpacing their peers.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Describe the opportunities and challenges a B2B enterprise may experience when adopting social media technology.

2. You are hired as the digital communications manager for a company selling products and services in the B2B market. Currently the company only has a social media presence on LinkedIn. How would you present your case for or against adoption of additional social media tools?

3. Describe the different stages of the B2B buyer journey and give examples of the social media strategy that would be employed at each stage.

4. Outline the range of goals that could be used to define success criteria for a social media campaign.

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