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Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

The use of social media for marketing has become a common practice across all industries. However, practitioners are struggling to manage related social media activities, in particular, fan engagement. To address this, case study research method, involving seven case companies from a retail group, was conducted to understand practitioners' difficulties in managing their social media campaigns. This study finds that, besides ROI and fan engagement, the nature of an industry, lack of well-defined standard procedures and insufficient financial resources present the fundamental obstacles in brand page engagement management. Based on the best practices from the case companies and together with professional literature, this paper (1) proposes a basic social media management process to guide businesses to unify their social media fan engagement management and performance evaluations; and (2) integrates various social media marketing tools, readily available in the market, to assist in social media performance monitoring and data analysis.

Keywords: Fan engagement, social media management process, best practices, social media tools, brand page engagement obstacles, social media management problems

Introduction

The use of social media as a means of owned, paid and/or earned media has become a common practice in the business today. As social media gets to play an important role in the marketing, top management starts to pay attention to its social media marketing performance from various perspectives, for examples in terms of number of fans, fans engagement rate and impact on sales revenue. They begin to realize the significance of collecting their own and competitors' social media performance data for comparison purpose, and integrating their various social media brand pages into a single dashboard for ease of decision-making, monitoring, controlling and implementation of related business strategy. The term *performance* used in this paper is neither related to any financial performance nor product/service quality performance, but it is mainly focused on the customer or user engagement perspective. In particular, it is about how a customer appreciates, perceives and evaluates the conduct and management of a business's brand page in the social media. This performance's indicators are measured in terms of number of fans and followers, number of shares, fan engagement rate, people talking about, number of impressions and reach. In particular, performance in this paper is mainly surrounding the aspect of fan engagement.

According to the digital marketing press, more than 90% of all brands exist in the social media world, and have social media marketing strategies to complement with their offline related marketing strategies; and it is interesting that fan engagement is their measure of success in social media marketing efforts (eMarketer 2013; Touchcommerce 2015). However, this is not surprising as

marketing research has proven that socially engaged fans are 50% more likely to convert into buyers (Smith et al. 2015), and this is also the case based on the academic research (Phang et al. 2013). Culnan et al. (2010) suggest that failure to fully engage with fans and customers indicates a failure in social media initiatives.

Retailing is one of the top six industries adopting social media worldwide (Carranza 2015; Keath and Goldman 2016). Social media is claimed to be a disruptive technology to this industry as it has revolved and created a great influence on online shoppers behaviors; 67% of 24,000 online shoppers surveyed by PwC said that they consult reviews and comments on the social media before making their purchasing decision (PWC 2016). Thus, in this case, having a better understanding of social media management and fan engagement in the retail industry is critical to businesses.

Our experience, with a large department store retailer group, suggests that practitioners are struggling to manage, and maintain the engagement performance of all brand pages in the social media, as they are lack of well-defined standard procedures to follow. While current marketing trade press and professional literature has suggested that identifying the most effective social tactics, fan engagement, determining the best social management tool, measurement of social media marketing return and identifying target audience are the common problems faced by businesses in social media efforts (Stelzner 2016), still (1) we are lack of in-depth understanding of the obstacles and problems faced by businesses, in particular in the retail industry, in managing brand pages in the social media; and (2) little has been studied about the social media engagement management process. Thus, this study aims to solve this issue by (1) proposing a basic social media management process to help businesses to use it as a point of reference to systematize their social media engagement management; and (2) integrating various social media marketing tools, those are readily available in the market, to assist in engagement performance monitoring and data analysis.

The subsequent sections of this paper describe the literature review of fan engagement concept and issues in the context of social media; followed by the research method and the case companies' background, the case companies' social media management and fan engagement problems; and finally the proposed social media (fan engagement) management process and an overview of key research findings, limitations of this study and future studies.

Literature Review

Many companies adopt social media by creating a public profile, brand page or fanpage in one or more social media sites, with the purpose to build an online user group for their customers, engage and interact directly with their customers, build brand equity, and promote and advertise their products and services (Gillin 2010; Rishika et al. 2013). Engagement with fans is usually one of their primary goals in social media presence.

Fan engagement refers to any interaction, reaction and participation done by a fan on a brand page with respect to any of the activities posted and presented by the brand. A fan's interaction includes liking, commenting, sharing, posting, reviewing, voting, checking-in at a brand's physical location, tagging a brand page, and tagging his/her friends. On the other hand, the activities typically conducted in a brand page cover the postings of product information, advertisement, curated content, quiz, event, video, question, contest, photo and live video. There are many factors affecting fan engagement, examples are the post presentation type (such as photo, video, status, link), post purpose (e.g., for product announcement, advertisement, designed question, polling, competition, stating an opinion) and posting day (Cvijikj and Michahelles 2011). The vividness of a brand's post content also play an important role in influencing fans' engagement as it can catch ones' attention more easily (de Vries et al. 2012). Different post contents can stimulate fans differently, which result in different effects in the mind of the fans such as being curious, visually impressed, auditory sense impressed, inspired and emotional; these effects are perceived as the drivers of fan engagement (Smith 2013).

On the other hand, according to the marketing literature, customer engagement is affected by customer's perceived values from brand engagement (Higgins and Scholer 2009), the corresponding cost/reward from an engagement (Hollebeek 2011), and customer intrinsic motivations related to utilitarian, hedonic and/or social purpose (Algesheimer et al. 2005). Similarly, the word-of-mouth (WOM) and eWOM stream of literature, consumer engagement, e.g. making a brand recommendation to family and friends, comes from consumer-personal traits and various motivations. While general consumer traits include loyalty, commitment to a brand or emotional attachment and personal relevance, context-specific motivations are product satisfaction, the need for social interaction,

economic incentives, the desire for helping others and advice seeking (East et al. 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Wolny and Mueller 2013).

The motivations for fans to engage, in most of the time, are determined by the value realized from taking part in a brand page's activity. Rooted in the consumption value theory (Sheth et al. 1991), the five dimensions of value relevant to the context of social media are functional value (i.e. having practical value), social value, emotional value, epistemic value (i.e. about facts), and conditional value (e.g., happening at the right time and to the right person). In brand pages, the values those fans typically want to get are information related to a brand, product or service (Shahbaznezhad 2016), participation in contest & giveaways (Carter and Marketo 2012), responsive customer services (Kane 2014), enjoyment (Cromwell 2016), life inspiration (Guest 2015), and social sharing and interaction (Liang et al. 2011). In order to maximize fan engagement, according to the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) (Katz et al. 1973-1974), the values that brands provide (to fans) need to meet the motives of their users, as the use of social media is user-driven, voluntary, user goal-oriented, and subjective. As a result, brands have to understand who their fan segments and targets are, and what they want to decide the right content to provide.

The two categorizations of social media fan segment found to be meaningful and relevant to describe fan engagement activities are as shown in Table 1. The purpose of Table 1 is to allow marketers to appreciate the things that different fan segments do on a brand page, and the values they (i.e., the virtual community) expect to get from a page. Among the seven fan segments, the cheerleader and the loyal fan segments produce the most favorable type of engagements that can benefit the businesses the most.

Table 1. Type of Social Media Users		
User category (Jones 2013)		**The matching Bain's (Barry et al. 2011) consumer segment***
Name	**Description***	
1.The Quiet Follower	• rarely engage with a brand page	• observer – maintain a passive presence and observe brand's contents • showgoer – consumers of entertainment and content generated by others
2. The Casual "Liker"	• may "like" and "share" brand's content but almost no comment	• blog reader – a moderate social media user and consume blog contents • fact finder – a heavy social media user and want to find facts
3. The Deal Seeker	• want brand to offer coupons, deals and events	• deal hunter – a heavy social media user
4. The Unhappy Customer	• talk about one's complaints and issues on brand page	
5. The Negative Detractor/ Ranter	• write about complaints and rants about issues unrelated to a brand	
6. The Cheerleader	• normally s/he comments, "like", and shares all of a brand's posts	• contributor – a creator and a poster of content
7. The Loyal Fan	• (known customer) constantly recommend a brand to family and friends, and s/he defends for a brand against ranters	• Social butterfly – a heavy user of personal networks • Professional networker – a heavy user of professional networking sites • Young & mobile – a heavy user of social networking and gaming sites • Social gamer – an active user on social gaming

*what s/he does on a brand page and/or what s/he wants

However, in the real practice, according to the Garner's marketing report (Sussin 2015), there is "a notable absence of benchmarks," standard and an integrated process that defines the success of fan engagement in social media. In the nutshell, to effectively manage fan engagement and grow existing fan base (virtual community) in any brand pages, an overarching adaptable standard process, encompassing all the required best practices is necessary.

This study provides a solution to this social media practitioner's problem by proposing a basic social media (fan engagement) management process that is rooted in the Hagel and Armstrong (Hagel and Armstrong 1997) framework of virtual community, and related marketing concepts. The virtual community's member development framework consists of four stages or processes, which includes member enticement, member participation stimulation, member loyalty cultivation, and business benefit realization.

Research Methodology

Case study method was adopted. This research method provides the researcher the flexibility to choose the specific type of company, with specific characteristics of interest, to study. In addition, this approach also allows the researcher to study the contemporary phenomenon in a greater depth, and collecting data from various sources in the real business operating environment. Moreover, existing literature shows that very little is known about social media management process. Thus, case study is a reasonable choice (Pan and Tan 2011).

Seven case companies are investigated in this study. These cases belong to a large department store retail group in Taiwan. Although this conglomerate has 18 department stores and shopping malls nation-wide, this study selects only seven cases from it based on the following criteria: (1) each case is managing a brand page on Facebook; (2) each case has some sorts of user engagement on Facebook; and (3) each case has a clear distinctive level of number of fans, and is suitable for making subsequent case-comparison.

Group interviews were conducted between November and December 2016, with 14 managers from the department stores and shopping malls — to understand their social media management requirements, problems and obstacles. A paid social media marketing tool, namely SocialBakers, is used to collect the social media quantitative data of these seven case companies — to identify, validate and triangulate with the data and insights emerged during the interviews. The online social media data dated 24th November 2016 to 22nd January 2017 was collected and used in data analysis. During this period of time, there were a lot of marketing promotions such as annual sales, Christmas sales, anniversary sales and Chinese New Year sales. All of these sales activities were posted on their brand page in Facebook. A lot of interactions, such as "like," "comment," and "share," from the fans were expected. Thus, it was the best timing to analyze social media fan engagement activities. To keep the identity of these cases confidential, a fictitious name is allocated to each case. The demographic data of the seven cases is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Data of the Seven Case Companies							
Company name	Retail type	# of fans (22nd Jan, 2017)	FB startup	Operation length (yrs)	Densified user engagement*		
					Weekly	Timing (**)	Hourly Max / Min
Comp-A	Shopping mall	194,983	Dec, 2011	5	Every week day	Fixed (10am-3pm)	973/389
Comp-B	Shopping mall	173,654	Jul, 2012	4.5	Every weekday, except Sunday	Fixed (1pm-3pm)	1.5K/604
Comp-C	Department store	53,455	Jun, 2011	5.5	Every week day	Fixed (2pm-3pm)	242/97
Comp-D	Department store	32,206	Jun, 2011	5.5	Only five days	Not fixed (2pm)	136/54
Comp-E	Department store	24,119	Jun, 2013	3.5	Every week day	Not fixed (12pm)	104/42
Comp-F	Department store	17,522	Apr, 2010	6.75	Everyday	Not fixed (12pm)	100/40
Comp-G	Department store	7,534	Jul, 2012	4.5	Only three days	Not fixed (12pm)	57/23

* User engagement includes all user posts, such as posts, comments and questions over the 90 days of time range. **indicates the most likely user engagement time-frame.

In Table 2, the first two of the case companies are shopping malls and the remaining five are department stores. This group of cases has a vast difference in number of fans, ranging from around 195K to 7.5K. In addition, most of the case companies have been operating their brand pages for at least three and a half years.

Each company has a very different characteristic of overall user engagements, which include user posts, comments and questions, over the selected time range studied here. While some companies have densified user engagement every day and at a predictable time range in a day (such as Comp-A, Comp-B and Comp-C), some have three to five days only in a week and the timing are not fixed (for instance, Comp-D and Comp-G). As in Table 2, the hourly densified (highest) user engagement, in this sample, varied from a maximum number of 1.5K to a minimum number of 23 engagements.

Social Media (SM) Management Objectives, and Problems

Case companies' business **objectives** of SM brand page: According to the interviews with the managers from the group, their business objectives of building social media brand pages are to build up their brand image, have a closer fan-relationship and make friends with the fans. Consequently, they do not want to look too business-oriented in the social media. The marketing planning manager-X explains that "we have to try our best to increase our number of fans, and avoid fans lost by being closed to our fans." Having a larger base of fans and keeping existing fans are important as they are a source of future advertising revenue, and there is a sign of return in investment of online fans conversion to physical store customers, in at least one of their well-performing brand pages.

Interviews with the retailer managers allow the author to better understand and categorize the obstacles experienced by them, in managing social media brand pages, into three broad categories, i.e.: return on investment (ROI), fan-related, and the nature of the industry.

ROI problems: One of the key problems they are having is that it is very difficult for them to measure how the adoption and use of social media, such as Facebook, actually help them to improve their department store's revenue. Each shopping mall and department store is aware of the abundant amount of efforts required to manage a brand page well. But, similar to other IT project, at the end, they need to report to the top management what was the business performance and outcomes from this investment. A branch digital marketing manager-C explains "we have no means to quantify them and don't know how. For example, we know a department store that has a special unit, which consists of five persons who are full-time and dedicate all their efforts to manage their brand page. Well, it has posted many posts and has many fans. But, so what! Its ROI is challenged by the top management."

The dilemma they are facing is that they cannot abandon their social media initiatives because "everyone is using it. It is a trend now and is valuable [for brand awareness]," claims the marketing manager-D. As a result, each store is thinking hard of how to link its brand page activities to its physical store, so that it can justify the business value of its brand page.

Fan-related problems: The second issue that the case companies are facing on Facebook, firstly, is that there is a sign of aging fan groups. They hope that their fan groups maintain the status quo, instead of aging, as they want to sell products to all ages. Thus, they need to find a way to attract younger fans.

Secondly, maintaining a good record of fans' interaction and generating more engagements from the fans has always been a big challenge to them. They dive deep into every details of when their fans are active on their pages; and they are aware that fans are sensitive to their activities on brand page during normal office working hours, as their identities are listed in the public.

Thirdly, another challenge they are confronting is keeping fans loyal to their brand. To cultivate loyalty, they try to understand fans' need. Unfortunately, the social media content needs of their fans are vast. The digital marketing manager-D clarifies this as "we are unable to catch up with our [fans] needs. ..... Actually, we don't know what they want in specific." All these indicate that the managers still have a lot of hard work to do in order to tackle the problems related to their fans.

Industry-related problems: The business of a retail industry is selling a variety of consumer products to meet various needs of consumers in general. This industry usually receives a wide range of products information from its suppliers, and then it distributes that information to its end-users. As a result, each shopping mall and department store posts a variety type of product-related contents on its

brand page. Although many managers find that this approach makes their pages look messy and lack of focus, they have limited freedoms to decide which products, topics or contents to show up in their brand pages. The digital marketing manager-D explains "due to the nature of our industry, we are unable to produce specific type of content for our fans and we are having difficulty to build our brand identity."

In additions, unlike other industries, most of their post contents are from their suppliers (i.e. different brands selling products in their department stores). They sometimes help their suppliers to enhance the presentation of their posts. But, according to the digital marketing manager-E, "most of the time, we need to follow our suppliers' request and we are not allowed to make changes to their professional photos as they are specially designed as-is."

Based on the interviews with the managers, among the various social media management problems and obstacles mentioned above, fan-related problems are their (the case companies') main priority and focus because (1) fan engagement is a critical metric, perceived highly as an important indicator of page performance, (2) they cannot change the problem related the nature of their industry; thus, instead of focusing on the page content, they shift to building a closer relationship with their fans, and (3) the use of social media for marketing is seen as a necessity tool rather than an entirely ROI-driven choice.

Social Media (SM) Engagement Obstacles

Following the problems listed above, in particular the fan-related problem, the current most urgent problem faced by this group of retailers is that there is a vast difference in the performance (in terms of number of fans, fans engagement, see Table 2 and Table 3 – the number of interactions or engagements per one thousand fans range from 297.3 to 6.3 per day) of each page managed by each independent store under different management unit. The top management of this group perceives this as a SM business operation problem that needs to be solved urgently. According to the interviews with the managers, the main obstacles causing fan-related problem are lack of a standard social media management process and lack of budget.

Lack of a standard SM management process – As a result, this group is currently planning a social media initiative to enhance and regulate brand page performance of each shopping mall and department store. The marketing planning manager-X states that "I hope to know which aspects in a shopping mall and department store's page are doing relatively better than the others, [so that, each shopping mall or departments stores can learn from one another. And, eventually, all stores can perform equally well]."

| Table 3. Fans Engagement and Content Posting (Page Post) in the Seven Case Companies								
	# of Interactions per 1000 Fans				Number of Fan Posts		Number of Page Posts	
Company name	Max	Min	Sum	Avg/post	Sum	Ave/Day	Sum	Avg/week
Comp-A	100.6	25.27	721.2	2.06	0	0	350	26.92
Comp-B	297.3	29.06	1.0K	2.76	46	3.54	368	28.31
Comp-C	234.5	32.77	1.1K	3.05	0	0	348	26.77
Comp-D	275	19.81	838.9	3.98	29	2.23	211	16.23
Comp-E	260.2	44.16	1.7K	4.74	23	1.17	368	28.31
Comp-F	255.2	4.28	641.2	5.39	4	0.31	119	9.15
Comp-G	131.2	6.3	508.5	8.77	4	0.31	58	4.46

Lack of budget – The difference in page performance is eminent among the department stores and shopping malls, for instance, between Comp-B and Comp-F. These two companies are compared during the interviews as they are closely situated but their page performance is vastly different. The branch digital marketing manager-B describes the problems that Comp-F is facing in keeping up its performance up to the standard of Comp-B as such, "it has a relatively lower number of fans to start with. Moreover, it does not have enough manpower to handle the content creation, and update the page content several times a day. Besides this, it was lack of budget to run any advertising campaign at the moment."

Business **solution** to lack of a standard social media management process – Between the two obstacles mentioned above, the management of the retail group chooses to address "lack of a standard social media management process" first before allocating more individual budget to each department store or shopping mall for running advertisement campaigns. A branch digital marketing manager-A suggests that to keep up with a good page performance, "we need to know the best practices in managing a social media page; knowing how to utilize useful social media tools to effectively create the right content … and deciding the right KPI to collect to measure our fans' interaction rate on the page, fans' churning rate and the equivalent information about our competitors." The marketing planning manager-X suggests that "having a standard operation procedure for social media page management to manage disparate social media brand page is what we need at the moment." Marketing planning manager-Y supplements that with "these [standard procedures] we can be informed of each mall and store average performance indicators. Thus, we can take corrective action instantaneously, if required."

Branch digital marketing manager-A suggests that, based on the success in Comp-B, using the right methods and operation procedures are critical. Although Comp-B also does not have a documented process for its SM management process, there are many best practices from it that other stores can benefit from. Also, unlike some other case companies, Comp-B controls and takes an active role in its brand page content's creation. The manager says, "first of all, we have to know the various content presentation styles and tools available in the market. Secondly, we need the know-how to create our contents. Thirdly, in the social media marketing, we have to identify the things that are of interest to our fans, which can generate fans' interactions."

The Proposed Social Media Fan Engagement Management Process

Based on the best practices from the case companies and together with trade and professional literature, we propose a social media (fan engagement) management process in Figure 1, which consists of six sub-processes. The basic concept and logic behind the proposed six sub-processes is based on virtual community development (Hagel and Armstrong 1997), and marketing concepts published in Harvard Business Review (Piskorski 2011; Reichheld and Schefter 2000). As a process within an organization system is a sub-system itself, we adopt the input-process-output model, as a structural guideline, to elaborate this process (Curry et al. 2006). Thus, the details of the procedures involved in each sub-process below centers around its objective/purpose, inputs, steps involved and tools required for implementation (how-to), and outputs.

Figure 1. Basic Procedures in SM Fan Engagement Management Process
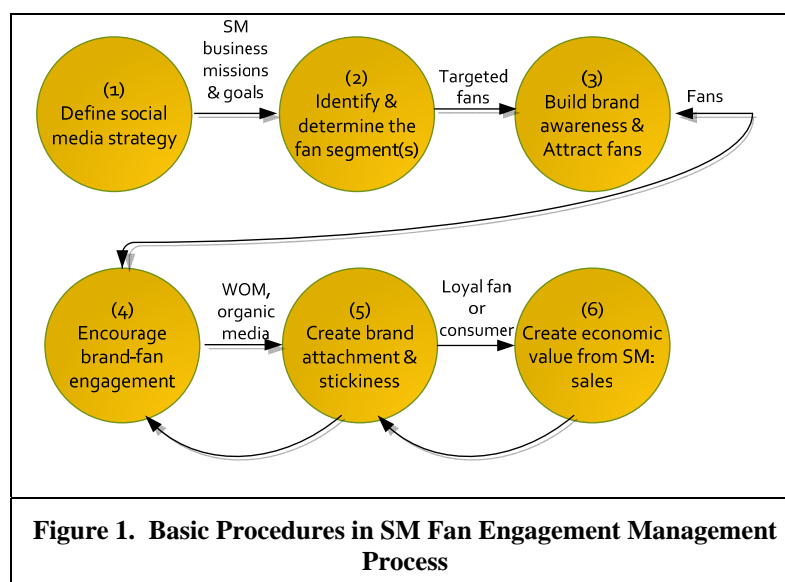
Sub-process (1) Define Social Media strategy

The branch digital marketing manager-A reflects that one of the best practices their well-performing page adopted is having a clear predefined social media goal, strategy and operation objective, e.g.

posting three contents per day, seven days a week. The team is passionate about realizing this objective. A manager from the Comp-B emphasizes that having a dedicated team of staffs to manage a Facebook page's daily operations is very important to succeed. The **purposes** of this sub-process are: (1) to clearly identify the goal, strategy and business objective to achieve in social media (SM) initiative; (2) to ensure social media mission is aligned with the organizational business missions; (3) to determine KPIs for evaluating social media performance; (4) to identify resource requirements, and the roles and responsibilities of a social media team; and (5) to assess the opportunities and risks involved in social media activities.

Some of the fundamental inputs required for this sub-process are organizational business missions, goals & objectives, and organizational resources. **How**: To kick-off a social media initiative, social media marketing trade press suggests to start with (1) writing a business case for social media initiative to clearly identify the need and value of it (Barry et al. 2011); (2) conducting a self-evaluation of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis to produce a list of feasible business objectives and goals to increase the chances of being successful in a social media initiative (Daoud 2016); and (3) conducting competitor analyses (Stein 2016). Tools available in the market to support business for competitor analysis are, SocialBakers, Fanpage Karma and LikeAlyzer, as shown in Table 4. Competitor analysis is required to identify the strategies adopted by the competitors and their best practices in social media marketing, and this helps one to decide how to differentiate from the competitors (Kefi et al. 2016; Socialbakers 2017; Stein 2016). The expected outputs from this sub-process are: SM business missions, goals & strategy, a list of expected SM key performance indicators (KPIs), SM resource requirements, SWOT report, risk analysis, business case and competitor analysis reports.

Table 4. Examples of the Dominant Tools Available in the Market to Support the Social Media Management Process				
Sub-process (1) – competitor analysis (Socialbakers 2017; Stein 2016)	Sub-process (3) – content creation (Smith 2016b) & content curation (Hines 2015)	Sub-process (4) – engagement (Smith 2016b)	Sub-process (5) – social monitoring (Stein 2016; Weinberg 2015)	Sub-process (6) – identify influencer (Berger 2016; Socialbakers 2017; Stein 2016)
• Socialbakers Analytics Plus – uncover competitors' paid social media strategies in one visual dashboard • Fanpage Karma – Strength & weakness of a page, top posts & type of posts, supporters, engagements rate • LikeAlyzer – Overallrank, people talking about this (PTAT), like growth, engagement rate, type of content, when to post	• Canva and PicMonkey – creating social media images on desktop • Pexels, Adobe Spark Post, and Pixabay – for free images • Flaticon – free PNG icons • Lumyer (mobile) – animated Facebook profile • Ripl (mobile) – animated posts and text • Adobe Spark Video, Animoto – video creation tool • Sendible, Feedly, Quuu, Capzool – for content curation	•Google Trends, BuzzSumo – provide the insight into trending topics •Qzzr, Woobox, 22Social – create customized, engaging quizzes, building contests •AgoraPulse - optimize engagement	• Hootsuite, Brandwatch Analytics, Social Mention, Mention, Talkwalker, Topsy – learn about brand mentions, interactions, sentiment analysis, performance of the brand mention, the engagement levels, what influencers talking about your brand	• Mention, BuzzSumo, Little Bird, Klear, Socialbakers Analytics Plus – identify key influencers, what people are saying about you and your competitors on Facebook and Twitter

Sub-process (2) Identify & Determine the Fan Segments

Marketing planning manager-X also ascertains that to avoid competition for fans within each shopping mall and department store, online customer-group, and customer-age segmentations are required. This allows fans to easily differentiate one page from another, and select the right page relevant to them, and remain as loyal fans in the long run. Determining the targeted fan-group will make page-content creation and curation much easier and specific at a later stage of management (Reichheld and Schefter 2000). The **purposes** of this sub-process are: (1) to focus and streamline social media effort to the right target; (2) to better understand the needs of and the types of value to provide to fans; (3) to design the appropriate contents to prepare; (4) to determine the characteristics of fans; (5) to speed up ROI in SM effort; and (6) to identify social media content creation needs.

The inputs for this sub-process are: SM business missions, goals & objectives, a list of expected social media KPIs, and SM resource requirements, SWOT report, risk analysis, business case and competitor analysis reports. **How**: For existing brand page that has already built up its SM community of fans: (1) conduct surveys with the fans to ask what their interests are (Guest 2015); (2) look up information based on one's prior experience in managing a brand page (e.g., the types of posts those received the most engagements in the past); (3) analyze a page's "Insights" (a built-in functionality in Facebook) to identify fans' most engaging posts or contents; and (4) create different pages for different segments or categories of fans. The expected outputs from this sub-process are: targeted fan groups, fan's needs, a list of popular or most engaging contents, a list of content portals & databases identified (e.g. 123rf, shutterstock, GraphicStock), and a mapping of contents to KPIs.

Sub-process (3) Build Brand Awareness & Attract Fans

In comparing the number of fans difference between Comp-B and Comp-F, one of the practices that Comp-B does better is running advertisement campaigns in the social media to improve their social media brand and content visibilities. A branch digital marketing manager from Comp-B says "we adopted the CPM (cost per mille) advertising model to increase our page content awareness." On top of this, "to maintain our fans' interaction, we are caution with our *posting time in a day* and when we post in *week days*. We are aware of when our fans are active. We keep our posting time to lunch time and after work during the weekdays, and weekend in order to get more engagements from the fans," elaborated by a digital marketing manager-C.

In general, the **purposes** of this sub-process include: (1) to let online users know about a brand; (2) to convert users into fans; (3) to build up fans' interest for a brand; (4) keep fans' attentions to a brand; (5) to make fans like, comment and like a brand's post; and (6) to maximize a brand's exposure to the public.

The inputs required are: targeted fan groups, fan's needs, a list of popular or most engaging contents, a list of content portals & databases (e.g. 123rf, shutterstock, GraphicStock), and a mapping of contents to KPIs. **How**: For brand awareness, the steps involved are: (1) define an advertisement strategy, stating the effort distribution of advertisement media, among owned media, earned media and paid media (Newman 2014); (2) search and set the best time for posting in a day on a weekly basis; (3) provide a mixture of contents (product/service, plus other entertaining contents) – tools for doing this are canva, pexels, lumyer and ripl (Smith 2016b), as suggested in Table 4; and (4) update fans or a page several times per day – as seen in Table 3, case companies those posted at least three post per day have a higher rate of fan engagements, see also (Hines 2015); and (5) give the right type of contents to the right group of fans (Brenner 2014). However, there is a need to be cautious of the use of copyrighted materials in a content to avoid illegal use issue (Deshpande 2013).

For attracting fan, the steps covered are: (1) provide contents those contain the elements of inspirational, weird, satisfying cravings, user empowerment, green environment, philanthropic, relevant, emotional, and funny/interesting (Cromwell 2016; Guest 2015; Shahbaznezhad 2016); (2) invite celebrities to be a part of a social media online activities; (3) identify a page's influencers (Shrivastava 2016), and recruit them to be the brand's advocates; and (4) identify and post current hot topics. The expected outputs from this sub-process are: fans' interaction KPIs (e.g., like, comment, share), a matrix of fan's needs and the desired contents, a matrix of weekly posting time and contents with specific topics, a table of categories of contents, brand awareness KPI's (e.g., increment of number of fans, number of reach, and number of views).

Sub-process (4) Encourage Brand-fan Engagement

The branch digital marketing manager-B emphasizes that "there is a need to identify the things that can keep fans interested and can generate fans' interactions [e.g., video is the most engaging post type in all cases, see Table 5]. …. [To achieve this, it] is critical to use trendy and up-to-date methods to post contents, e.g. make use of the GIF image, Instagram's Live Video, Facebook Live Video." The **purposes** of this sub-process are: (1) to create fan's attentions for a brand; (2) to keep fan's interest alive; (3) to strengthen the presence of a brand in a fan's mind; and (4) to increase the chances for a brand's exposure to a fan's friends.

Table 5. Summary of the Most Engaging Post Types								
	Photo				Video			
Company name	Distr.	React.	Commt.	Shares	Distr.	React.	Commt.	Shares
Comp-A	53.15%	73695 67.32%	20097 18.36%	15672 14.32%	41.63%	13886 55.04%	6307 25.00%	5035 19.96%
Comp-B	51.82%	25232 46.35%	16769 30.80%	12442 22.85%	38.50%	71268 63.54%	23610 21.05%	17276 15.40%
Comp-C	57.19%	28116 63.78%	9228 20.93%	6742 15.29%	27.64%	4122 64.24%	1276 19.88%	1019 15.88%
Comp-D	37.27%	4365 62.10%	1727 24.57%	937 13.33%	36.13%	3227 73.52%	619 14.10%	543 12.37%
Comp-E	44.31%	23331 76.04%	4224 13.77%	3128 10.19%	34.46%	4774 87.90%	225 4.14%	432 7.95%
Comp-F	73.21%	4689 46.84%	2854 28.51%	2468 24.65%	26.79%	585 63.79%	193 21.05%	139 15.16%
Comp-G	50.85%	2577 77.23%	400 11.99%	360 10.79%	49.15%	136 89.47%	8 5.26%	8 5.26%

The inputs required are: a list of interesting & interactive contents, a list of content portals & databases, a matrix of fan's needs and the desired contents, a matrix of weekly posting time and contents with topic, a table of categories of contents, and a list of new ideas for contents. **How**: The best tactics to encourage engagement from fan include the following ideas: (1) interact responsively with fans on the brand page; (2) provide new ideas relevant to daily life or the brand (Hudgens 2016); (3) make things convenient to fans (Reichheld and Schefter 2000), for examples providing information most likely required by the fans; (4) incorporate call-to-action (CTO) mechanism in a post (Cromwell 2016); (5) create contest and sweepstake – tools for doing this are qzzr and woobox (Smith 2016a), as shown in Table 4; and (6) provide economic values, e.g., discount and freebies to the fans (Cromwell 2016). The outputs from this sub-process are: fan engagement KPIs (e.g., fans likes, shares, participations in contest & quizzes, comments, feedbacks for future improvement, and/or complaint), and word-of-mouth marketing.

Sub-process (5) Create Brand Attachment & Stickiness

The branch digital marketing manager-D states that "we are having problem of keeping fans loyal. Our current situation is that they are *short-lived* and *having no love* for us. We are thinking of how to generate more interactions and loyalty from them." Thus, the **purposes** of this sub-process are to: (1) create brand loyalty; (2) develop fans commitment for a brand; (3) make fans rely on a brand page (for daily life details, brand-related details, making their lives easier); (4) create customized support for fans; and (5) facilitate trust building for a brand.

To achieve the purpose of this sub-process, the following inputs are needed: a list of values provision to the fans, good customer service/care, good brand impression, a matrix of fan's needs and the desired contents, and a list of most engaging fans. **How**: The methods to accomplish this sub-process are: (1) provide something unique in the content creation; (2) offer social interactions, networking and exchanges in the page among the fans; (3) create brand ambassador programs; (4) develop a program to reward fans (Brennan 2015); (5) give long-term values to fans consistently, such as in terms of social supports, e.g., informational and emotional, see (Liang et al. 2011; Reichheld and Schefter 2000); and (6) conduct social monitoring to learn about brand mentions, interactions and sentiment analysis (Alwash et al. 2016). The tools for doing this are Hootsuite, Social Mention and Topsy (Smith

2016b; Weinberg 2015), as listed in Table 4. The anticipated outputs from this sub-process are: a list of loyal fans, positive comments, positive reviews, brand ambassador program, brand recommendations, brand supports, and fans trust.

Sub-process (6) Create Economic Value from Social Media: Sales

The ultimate goal of businesses for spending a lot of efforts in administering a social media page is to obtain economic value from it. To accomplish this, the branch marketing manager-A from Comp-B suggests "having some sort of online-and-physical store integration. We have seen some good results as we have fans asking for a certain product posted on our Facebook page using their mobiles in our physical store." This is important as it can improve customer convenience and reduce fan's transaction costs (Reichheld and Schefter 2000). Therefore, the **purposes** of this sub-process are to: (1) conduct marketing activities in the social media; (2) generate sales opportunities for physical stores; (3) generate online sales; (4) evaluate the performance of social media marketing; and (5) serve as a benchmark to revise current social media strategy.

The necessary inputs are a list of loyal fans, fans trust, marketing details, positive comments, positive reviews, brand ambassador program, brand recommendations, and viral hashtags. **How**: The steps involve: (1) identify an influencer (an expert) in the field or in the industry – tools for doing this are socialbakers analytics, mention and BuzzSumo (Berger 2016; Socialbakers 2017; Stein 2016), see Table 4; (2) organize flash promotions (Barry et al. 2011); (3) provide the right settings to the potential buyers, i.e. having an influencer for making suggestions or hosting online events (Barry et al. 2011), and shopping cart is available to make it convenient to make purchase (especially for impulsive purchase), see (Orendorff 2016); and (4) make sure to match product and service with fans' need. The anticipated outputs from this sub-process are: social media marketing KPIs (e.g., online purchase, sales revenue), sales opportunities, social proof & user experience sharing, fans increment, and a revised social media strategy.

Note that the fan engagement sub-processes (3) to (6) in Figure 1 can form feedback loops between one and another sub-process, as there is a need to be flexible enough to adapt and evolve based on fans' requirements, social media technology environment, and a business context, cf. (Giorgio et al. 2016).

Conclusion

This study highlights several aspects, such as return on investment, top management supports, fan engagement issues and the nature of an industry, being the fundamental problems faced by businesses in managing social media brand pages. Although benefit realization from social media is still a big challenge for most businesses, many find it a necessary tool to access and get closer to consumers. One of the deputy managers we interviewed expresses that "we are having difficulties to justify the value of our brand pages. However, we cannot afford to give up our social media campaigns on our brand pages. Everyone is using it. It is a trend now."

This study makes the following practical contributions to the practice: (1) identify the various problems and obstacles faced by the businesses in managing a social media brand page, in the retail industry; (2) propose a basic social media fan engagement management process for businesses to use it as a guidance to unify and systematize their social media management and fan engagement; and (3) introduce and integrate various powerful social media marketing tools those are readily available in the market, to facilitate social media engagement management and performance data analysis.

While the majority of prior studies focus on the characteristics of a post content affecting fan engagement, this study focusses on a broader scope, overarching factors influencing fan engagement. Consistent with Stelzner (2016), ROI and fan engagement are also our case companies' social media brand page engagement obstacles and problems. But, on top of that, we expand existing pool of knowledge by discovering that the nature of an industry, lack of well-defined standard procedures and insufficient financial resources are also the fundamental obstacles in brand page engagement management. From the theoretical perspective, this study contributes to social media fan engagement obstacle concept by identifying its critical antecedents.

There are several typical research limitations in this study. Firstly, some of the research findings here may be context-specific to the department store retail industry (e.g., the 'industry-related' problem mentioned earlier) and it may not be applicable to other industries. Secondly, the proposed social media (fan engagement) management process and the related marketing tools are still subject to

continuous improvements based on the best practices in the field, even though they are up-to-date during its write-up. Thirdly, the effectiveness of the proposed social media (fan engagement) management process, as a whole, has not been validated; and its success may depend on various organizational and technology factors such as availability of budget and resources, management support, digital media creator and social media analyst skills.

For future studies, there are still a lot of work to be done in the area of fan engagement, for instance: (1) it is a challenge for brands to maintain a high or a consistent level of engagement rate from the fans, as most of them are passive, and some are merely deal hunter and have weak attachment to a brand. In addition, it is also challenging to change passive fans to active fans; (2) although it is useful to integrate and link online social media marketing activities to the physical stores' actual sales revenue, it is still not easy and feasible at this moment, due to technology unavailability and organizational readiness; (3) from the economic perspective, it is valuable to identify the rules and mechanisms to dynamically optimize the mix of paid media and earned media to reduce unnecessary online advertising costs; and (4) identifying the most suitable social media engagement model for different fan segments will also be a worthwhile extension to this study.

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