

Brand Communication on Social Networking Sites

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Short description: PhD defence Freya De Keyzer - Faculty of Business and Economics

Abstract

Globally people have embraced social media as important communication channels. These platforms have also caught advertisers' attention who try to engage with (potential) customers through brand communication on these platforms. Brand communication can be defined as every brand-related communication spread by both firms and users. The main objective of this dissertation is to study consumers' responses to brand communication on social networking sites (SNSs). This objective is explored from two different angles by examining consumer responses to both personalized advertising and word-of-mouth.

Social networking site users reveal a large amount of personal information (e.g., location, interests, demographics). That information can be used by advertisers to tailor their messages to specific targets. Our findings suggest that the use of all personalization elements under study are able to elicit perceived personalization. However, interests seem to be the most important. Second, we are able to show a strong positive effect on consumer responses through perceived relevance, entertainment, and intrusiveness. Moreover, we show that when the SNS is liked or when consumers have the perception the SNS protects their privacy, then the indirect effect through perceived relevance becomes stronger. Finally, we found a negative impact of personalization through perceived creepiness which only occurred for a health website, governmental website and online newspapers, but not for commercial website.

Next to (personalized) advertising, we studied word-of-mouth communication on SNSs (sWOM). It is generally accepted that a positive (resp. negative) sWOM message leads to positive (resp. negative) consumer responses. This effect is strengthened when the message uses a factual, compared to an emotional, tone of voice. Moreover, this effect also becomes stronger when evaluating an sWOM message about a more hedonic compared to a more utilitarian service. This message valence effect can also be strengthened by relational characteristics, both with the sWOM sender and the SNS on which the message was posted. However, when considering both the interpersonal relational characteristics and the person-to-site characteristics, only the interpersonal relational characteristics moderate the message valence effect.