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Peculiarities of social media integration into marketing communication

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Abstract

This article seeks to answer to the following question: what are peculiarities of the social media integration into marketing communication? Technological changes impact social changes in society. Communication between majority of society members moves to virtual environment, people use social media more actively. It was social media that enabled creation of new, attractive and innovative ways for people to communicate in virtual environment, to flock into communities, to share important and timely information, etc. The main goal of the article is to ground theoretically the peculiarities of social media integration into marketing communication.

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Keywords: Communication; integrated marketing communications; social media.

1. Introduction

Contemporary communication is greatly affected by constantly increasing informational literacy of the society, internet technologies developing apace and information communication means, which are relatively inexpensive and easily affordable to majority of the society. Technological changes impact social changes in society. Communication between majority of society members moves to virtual environment, people use social media more actively. It was social media that enabled creation of new, attractive and innovative ways for people to communicate in virtual

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environment, to flock into communities, to share important and timely information, etc. Increasing audiences of social media determined the changes in communication between business and customers too. Recent scientific literature emphasises that marketing communication in social media helps companies get to know their current and potential clients, create products and services adopted specifically to meet their needs, communicate directly with larger groups of clients in more effective and efficient way, form positive image of organisation and increase sales.

In connection to the opinions voiced in scientific literature regarding the importance of integrated marketing communications and need to use social media, it is possible to claim that business organisations which have goals usual for such organisations and seek to meet increasing needs of customers should first of all actively adopt integrated marketing communications and adapt it in social media. Research problem follows: what are peculiarities of the social media integration into marketing communication?

Research goal: ground theoretically the peculiarities of social media integration into marketing communication.

Timeliness of the article is defined by the lack of scientific research about it. Though integrated marketing communications and social media are researched in scientific literature as separate processes, there is a lack of scientific works or research which would analyse social media in integrated marketing communications.

Integrated marketing communications are analysed pretty extensively in scientific literature. Following Lithuanian scientists analysed it in most detail: Bakanauskas (2004), Bakanauskas (2012), Radzevičiūtė, Šliburytė (2007), Išoraitė (2012); foreign authors: Belch, Belch (2011), Pickton, Broderick (2001), Kotler et al. (2003), Lauer (2007), Kitchen (2005), Christensen et al (2005), Kotler (2000), Smith (2010), Kliatchko (2008), de Pelsmacker et al. (2007), Argenti, Barnes (2009), Cornelissen (2003), Fill (2006). Scientific studies analysing social media are sparser. This topic is nearly researched in Lithuania besides the scientific article of Jurkevičienė (2012). On the other hand foreign authors analyse social media more widely. This topic is researched in works of Angelo (2007), Scott (2010), Cross (2011), Cobb (2007), Solis, Breakenridge (2009), Kangas et al (2007), Mayfield (2008), O'Reilly, Musser (2006), Dailey (2009), Divol et al (2012), Water, Lester (2010), Coombs (2011), Scott (2007), Danaher, Rossiter (2011), Ellison (2008).

Scientific literature emphasises that qualitative and effective communication of business organisations with target groups is one of key factors helping business organisations to compete in the market successfully. However, in order for company to achieve strong competitive advantage, all marketing communication forms and messages it applies has to be concerted interdependently, i.e. business organisations have to apply integrated marketing communications in their activities.

Method. The research methods applied in the article are systemic, comparative and logical analysis of scientific literature.

Importance of integrated marketing communications. Every modern organisation seeking to work in its market successfully marketing communications are needed which would allow organisations to communicate with their current and potential customers of its products or services effectively. Communication is one of main means to form public opinion, which is necessary in society nowadays in order to ensure efficient connections between buyer and seller. For companies it is not enough anymore just to create a product wished by target market in order to compete successfully in modern market. According to Bakanauskas (2012) even best product will be worth nothing in modern market if users will know nothing about its existence. Contemporary marketing points out that quality communication with current and future clients is as important as production of the product, pricing or distribution.

Scientists' list different numbers of marketing communication means. It is caused by the fact that communication channels are constantly widened, more possibilities to communicate with target groups are discovered. Keller (2012) argues that marketing communications mix consists of eight major modes of communication: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, personal selling. Meanwhile Boone, Kurtz (2007), Belch, Belch (2011) and Bakanauskas (2012) summarise elements of modern marketing communications mix and indicate that there are six key means of marketing communication.

Scientific literature emphasises synergy effect of all marketing communication means. Pickton, Broderick (2001) stress that marketing communications have greatest effect then all elements of it are integrated into one whole. According to these authors when integrated marketing communication elements are united by joint idea of communication, they complement, strengthen each other and create an effect of synergy, i.e. sum effect of all communication elements to audience is bigger than sum of effect of separate elements. This opinion is supported by

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