

WILL SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGE THE WAY OF DOING BUSINESSES?

โซเชียลมีเดียจะมาเปลี่ยนรูปแบบการทำธุรกิจหรือไม่

อนุพงศ์ อวีรุทธา¹

บทคัดย่อ

โซเชียลมีเดียเป็นเครื่องมือที่สร้างประโยชน์มากมายบนโลกอินเทอร์เน็ตเป็นมากกว่าอีเมล การบันทึกที่อยู่ และการนัดหมาย ในประเทศไทยเฉพาะแค่จำนวนผู้ใช้เฟสบุ๊คเพิ่มขึ้นจาก 2.5 ล้านคน เป็น 6.5 ล้านคน ในปี 2553 ทำให้ประเทศไทยกลายเป็นประเทศที่มีอัตราการเติบโตของโซเชียลมีเดียมากที่สุดประเทศหนึ่ง นักธุรกิจและนักการตลาดได้พยายามหาวิธีในการติดต่อลูกค้าผ่านทางโซเชียลมีเดียปัจจุบันนี้ผู้คนมักจะให้ความสนใจเกี่ยวกับสินค้าบนโซเชียลมีเดียไม่ว่าจะเป็นความเห็นทางบวกหรือลบก็ตาม ข้อคิดเห็นเหล่านี้ถูกส่งต่อออกไปและมีผลกระทบต่อ การตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้าของลูกค้ารายอื่นๆ ดังนั้นธุรกิจกำลังเผชิญกับคำถามสำคัญว่านักธุรกิจและนักการตลาดจะสามารถนำเครื่องมือนี้มาใช้ในเชิงธุรกิจได้อย่างไร เหตุผลที่ทำให้โซเชียลมีเดียได้รับความนิยมอย่างมาก คือ 1.โซเชียลมีเดีย เปรียบเสมือนหน้าต่างสำหรับการแสดงออกทางความคิดเห็นในสังคม 2.ทุกวันนี้คนเราถูกล้อมไปด้วยข้อมูลข่าวสาร ซึ่งข้อมูล ที่คนเราต้องการ นั้นต้องเป็นข้อมูลที่รวดเร็ว ทันเหตุการณ์ 3.คนในปัจจุบันต้องการทราบความเคลื่อนไหวของเพื่อนว่าทำอะไรอยู่ และ 4.คนต้องการที่จะหลุดจากโลกที่เป็นอยู่

คำสำคัญ: สื่อสังคม, เฟสบุ๊ค, ทวิตเตอร์, ยูทูป, ธุรกิจ

Abstract

The social media is introduced as a new tool that provides the benefits of the Internet. Furthermore, it has moved beyond e-mail, addresses and appointments. In Thailand, Facebook membership numbers have risen from 2.5 million to more than 6.5 million in 2010, making Thailand one of the world's fastest growing markets for the social

¹ สาขาวิชาการจัดการ คณะบริหารธุรกิจ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีปทุม

network giant. Business people and marketers attempt to connect their customers and interact with them using social media. Today, people comment about a product on social media produce either negative or positive brand buzz; these messages are sent out and affected consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, businesses are facing the question how seriously should business people and marketers think about effects of social media business practices? Reasons that make social media popular are the followings. First, social media is a kind of channel that allows people to express themselves in public. Secondly, people today are surrounded by information, which must be timely and updated. Third, people want to see how their friends are currently doing. Lastly, people find a new place to hang around and escape from where they live.

Keyword: Social media, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Business

Introduction

The growth of the technology, especially the Internet, has created a new interest in the information technology development and business strategy. Technology is one of the important factors that provide the potential to change the way of doing business. It is also a key to the growth and success of all kinds of businesses. In addition, technology is an important element for success in the global economy due to the increasing ability of business to process transaction information, transmit more quality information to management, and maintain more efficient inventories [1]. Furthermore, the availability of many information and rapid technology advancement increases customer's expectations at the faster rate; therefore, in order to satisfy the customer needs and expectations, businesses should be responsive in shorter time.

The Internet and electronic commerce, as the new technologies in this century, were adopted and used in order to improve communication with customers to develop and sustain relationship. Additionally, businesses get an enhanced their supply chain systems through automatically and faster transaction times. Generally, the crucial role of technology is to provide organizations the speedy ability to access and gather information. Furthermore, since technology is one of the most important factors behind successful businesses, small and medium businesses, as important members of the economic, should adopt technology to increase business performance.

However, new tools on the Internet such the social media and social network take companies beyond the benefit of the Internet. Social media generally refers to the use of online electronic tools as a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social network is a tool and a utility for connecting with others. However, social network came first which evolved into social media. Social media, including social network is rapidly becoming involved in daily operations, particularly in large corporations that invest heavily in new innovations. The tool has been improved to provide faster speed in communication with flexibility and the ability to communicate quickly anytime and anywhere.

The media has dramatically changed in the last many years from traditional media, including television, radio, magazine, and newspaper to digital media including social media (e.g., Blogs, Webboard, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter). For the Web 2.0 and social media have been adopted and used in order to improve communication and relationship with employees, employers, customers and suppliers. Blogs grew from 54% to 77% globally in just two years, while the number who had written a blog grew from 28 % to 45 % [2].

Typically, people use social media as a virtual network place expressing their opinions, exchange opinions, disseminate and control message anywhere anytime. Business people and marketers attempt to connect their customers and interact with them using social media. Many studies found that consumers are likely to trust more user-generated messages, such as peer recommendations, consumer reviews, testimonies, especially on digital media than messages from traditional mass media [3- 4]. Today, consumers' comments about a product on digital media produce either negative or positive brand buzz; further, the virtual messages are sent out and affected consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, businesses are facing the question how seriously should business people and marketers think about social media effects in business practices?

Social media is no longer a trend for marketers, it becomes reality [5]. Social media is an inevitable channel for customer support. It has been recognized as the most potentially powerful medium [3].

The social media is introduced as a new tool that provides the benefits of the Internet. Furthermore, it has moved beyond e-mail, addresses and appointments. In the last few years, a dramatic transformation has taken place in this oldest and most effective form of media. It is the same transformation that has happened to industry after

industry from computers to cars, televisions to telecommunications. Social media has gone digital. It became the leader in information and telecommunication management for companies of all sizes, enabling the employee to instantly access the information they need to make more informed business decisions. The social media will continue to extend that lead by delivering compelling business and enterprise mobile management information solutions. The relatively easy availability of mobile information gives rise to better business performance regarding rapid communication, fast customer service and real-time data processing.

With the technology, social media, emerging companies ask themselves the same question that was asked at the onset of e-commerce. Why should we invest in the technology? New technology such as social media takes companies beyond the benefits of the regular website. Social media is rapidly becoming involved in daily operations, particularly in large corporations that invest heavily in new innovations. The tool is improved to provide a faster speed in communication quickly anytime and anywhere through a wireless, Internet-enabled device, and without the use of a computer.

Social media is not only available through the internet on personal computer but is becoming accessible from mobile phones and portable gadgets (e.g., iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab, Playbook). Social media applications are increasingly driving the growth of the mobile internet users.

In Thailand, where mobile technology is very fast growing, almost 80% of its population owns a mobile telephone. Additionally, the forecast number of total subscribers in Thailand rise from 62.6 million in 2008 to 71.0 million in 2010 while the wireless penetration level will reach 90.2% in 2010 [6]. Thailand's market for smart phones is believed to have reached about 1.2 million units, which is about 18 per cent of the total mobile-phone market. Huge demand is expected to see the smart-phone segment grow by 100 per cent in 2011 to represent about 30 per cent of all mobile-phone sales. By 2012, half of all mobile phones sold in Thailand will be smart phones. Moreover, social media, Facebook membership numbers alone have risen from 2.5 million to more than 6.5 from January to December, making Thailand one of the world's fastest growing markets for the social network giant [7].

In addition, network operators are also interested in the trend towards converging technology since they have seen a huge opportunity about mobile services. Social media is expected to experience a substantial growth regarding rapid adoption of mobile device and its advantages such as working wirelessly, and anytime-anywhere

connectivity. Convergence of telecommunications and information technologies has revolutionized the way that peoples use these technologies.

Definitely, these trends show that traditional mass media advertising is not the way of the future. The channel of communication between businesses and customers tend to grow online.

Social Media and Social Networking

In the past few years, people who use the internet become having fun since they are able to drive the information on the internet technology such as blogs, social networks, photo-sharing and video-sharing. Such social technologies have enabled a revolution in user-generated content, online community and the publishing of consumer opinion; therefore, this movement is dominating the way people use the internet today and tagged as social media.

Many may be confused between social media and social networking. Social media includes various methods such as social networking, user-sponsored blogs, multimedia sites, company-sponsored websites, podcasts, and much more. People are more familiar with Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace than social media; however, those are a part of social media scheme. Social media is the media that is published, created and shared by individuals on the internet [8-9].

Social network is a type of website model where individual members become part of a broader virtual community [8]. Social network is used to expand the number of one's business and social connects by making connections through individuals online [9].

Therefore, social media generally refers to the use of online electronic tools as a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social network is a tool and a utility for connecting with others. However, social network came first which evolved into social media. Social media, including social network is rapidly becoming involved in daily operations, particularly in large corporations that invest heavily in new innovations. The tool has been improved to provide faster speed in communication with flexibility and the ability to communicate quickly anytime and anywhere. Social media impact is being felt across the globe. Wherever people are able to online they are actively engaged. Indeed, if there is an internet connection, people are involved.

Social Media Became the Routine Activity of People

Unlike other media, social media is an open media for everyone. It allows everyone to become a producer of any content; further, the content is delivered it through interactive and building relationships on the society.

Reasons make social media popular are the followings. First, social media is some kinds of window that allows people to express themselves in public. It is satisfied people needs to draw attention since they like to be recognized. Secondly, people today are surrounded by information. Even more they love to keep themselves posted. Information based on a timeline meaning that the latest news is necessary. Obviously, news on television, radio, and newspaper are not able to fit people needs because the news that is posted on Twitter has more meaning to them since the news is from someone they know, someone they follow. Furthermore, that news is more interested and relevant than random news from the traditional media. Third, people who able to see how their friends are currently doing. Since social media websites normally allow to add friends, this allow users find out what other people want to say and what they are doing. Lastly, people find a new place to hang around and escape from where they live. Somehow daily life is repetitive for someone which is why they need to have something change to their live. As a result, social media is the solution for them to meet new people, new friends whom they can talk and say things they want [10].

Businesses Seek New Media Schemes

Many firms that use technology are experiencing the most positive changes. For example, it allows firms in developing countries to internationalize their products and services more actively and effectively than ever by using the Internet. Technology usually helps small businesses develop their markets, increase sales turnover, increase profitability and achieve competitive advantages [11]. Furthermore, technology also helps small businesses improve productivity and performance within the organization, improve management perception of business environments, and promote stronger and better customer relationships [12]. Moreover, technology is the most important factor behind the successful small and medium businesses (SMEs) competitive advantages regarding reduced information overload [13].

Businesses need to deliver messages to their customers. In decades, businesses used television, radio, magazine, billboard, and more to reach large numbers

of people in a short amount of time; however, these tools are too general to the target. Furthermore, people are not interested paying attention on advertising on television. Traditional mass media competes from magazine to computer email, and computer email to SMS (MMS) texting [14]. Therefore, it is very important for businesses to find their niche. Kotler and Keller say that “more narrowly defined customer group seeking a distinctive mix of benefits”. [15]

Americans are exposed to and astounding number of advertising messages everyday. The result of this bombardment of advertising on society is that consumers have become increasingly resistant to traditional forms of advertising .After spending millions of dollars on mass advertising that consumers tend to block out and ignore, marketers have re-evaluated their advertising methods and are following holistic marketing concepts that focus on customer relationship marketing and more creative, understated ads instead of in-your-face billboards and loud television segments. Social media trends, including social media opportunities and mobile marketing the potentially lasting effects that these trends have on advertising [16].

The social web, otherwise known as Web 2.0 looks at issues around corporate reputation and brand management. The web 2.0 era is to built a solid relationship with its stakeholders as well as to protect its reputation whilst enhancing its brand image and value. The spread of information across the web feeds traditional media channels and reaches larger audiences potentially damaging reputation and thus tarnishing the brand. The article furthers understanding of the overall current web brand management practices for effective on-line corporate communications [17].

However, the problem is many businesses are using social media without really developing a strategy. Businesses participate in the conversation by talking with their customers and not at them.

The idea of building relationship between businesses and customers is required. To build mutually satisfying long-term relationships with key constituents in order to earn and retain their business is one of the most important objectives in the business. To build and sustain such a relationship, businesses must understand and respond to customer needs and goals.

Today, people do not only search for a product on the internet but also seek for other user content and opinion regarding to the product, which that online opinion influence offline people as well. Moreover, social media are growing and becoming more dominated by strangers as the increasingly socialize in the internet.

The appearance of social media such as MySpace, Face book, YouTube and Twitter are the opportunity for businesses to segment the market automatically. The extent of use social media affect on businesses and marketing performance regarding sale, communication, and service. Unlike other technology, social media is not limited to younger or tech-savvy consumers, it is considered to internet-using adults cover a broad demographic range, which is 75% of people who are using internet [18-19].

Social media becomes more popular. The advertising on social media also becomes more effective. Customers can customize the information they need to receive on their social media website so that the businesses more easily to reach connectors and targets.

President Barack Obama used social media for his election campaign in 2008. Additionally, it is very success – the campaign video clips were posted on YouTube and viewed over 1.45 billions views [20]. Social media raises the impact on the presidential election by that year, and that trend is likely to continue.

Messages on social media are easily sent out to their businesses' customers 24 hours a day and have direct access to them as well. It is not limited to marketing only, but it is also relayed to product development and customer support more quickly.

Facebook-Place to Gather Information

Today, Facebook has over 400 million users access to the accounts each day [21]. Mass market communities have a huge potential to develop research services. Every opinion on the site can be used for analytics to explain the consumers' behaviors and their perceptions. Basically, having a Facebook account can be an additionally valuable to the company's website since it provides the company the ability to engage and interact in real time with their community. Furthermore, Facebook is creating an informative business page so that it can certainly support their marketing branding efforts.

Some businesses use Facebook to recruit new employees. Advertising of Facebook allows businesses to targert candidates by sorting zip code, gender, and educational background such as high school and college.

Twitter- Messaging to the Right People

Twitter was launched in 2009 and currently has more than 7 million users [22]. Twitter is started using in businesses since its first launch. Many kinds of businesses adopted Twitter using as a marketing strategy. For example, a restaurant owner can use a Twitter account post a message to inform people that they are eligible to receive a free drink from the restaurant if they show the Twitter message to the waiters or waitresses. In this case, the restaurant can send a promotion through a free advertising method, and it is measurable. To evaluate the method if succeeds, businesses people and marketers can see the feedback of people responding to the message; additionally, be able to personalize and deliver the message to the right customers.

In the matter of fact, interactive and targeted marketing are the keys to success and that traditional media is far beyond that and is a waste of business budgets [23]. Therefore, using the social media is easily to reach consumers in a more personalized way. Bernoff expected advertisings on social media to grow from \$716 in 2009 to \$3 billion in five years [23].

YouTube

YouTube is first launched in 2005 and it became one of the most popular web contents, reflecting the enormous growth in its popularity. YouTube is the largest video sharing site with the most traffic and the highest amount of users on the internet for video seeking. YouTube has over 2 billion views each day. Moreover, new video clips is posted and uploaded every minute [24]. Businesses can take the advantage from posting video clips although the video clips are not full video production. YouTube offers an opportunity for businesses to upload videos on a wide range of subject matter to promote their brand and their expertise at no cost.

Businesses and marketers can use YouTube to reach consumers who are searching for information about a brand or related products and services. YouTube can also be a powerful direct marketing tool, provided that it is considered as part of the marketing mix. For example, Quicksilver and Roxy, Inc. creates min-documentaries about surfing, skating, and snowboarding. As well as, they include marketing events to promote their brand. They post a new video about once a week that allows them to maintain a consistently fresh presence.

Furthermore, many businesses have been using You Tube for internal communication. The presentations to department groups or even the entire workforce can be found on YouTube. Some workers may be absent the day of the presentation or unable to attend. The video clips, recorded and posted on YouTube, may help them to catch up the presentations and the meeting. However, this should be allowed for authorized viewers only. Along with that, businesses can use the video clips for training their workers.

Taking Up the Opportunity

We all may know now that the change and the active participation rates are increasing skyrocketing. Furthermore, most people there love to share their opinions and comments. Sharing opinions and comments through the web are fun and normal. Moreover, website such Facebook and YouTube are providing a space where internet users can produce and share images, comments, and opinions, while Twitter is to leverage mobile users. Therefore, such forms of social media gain a lot of popularity, innovating communication schemes in both mass and niche targets. Thus, this is a very value for business to gather the information since the opinions and comments created are more likely natural. Consequently, business should take up the opportunity to create an idea of social media marketing.

First is for getting a new idea from outside-in, businesses can use social media to generate ideas. The online society is driven by consumer opinion, so ideas can come from anywhere. Listening and asking questions in social media environment become a way to start listening and build relationships. For example, D&G (Dolce and Gabbana) invited famous website builders, bloggers to its fashion show, and let them post and upload photo and video to their Face book, Twitter, and YouTube in real-time. As a result, it brought attractiveness and feedback from thousands of fusionists' around the world [25].

Second is for customer relationship management (CRM). In order to build a relationship, the channel of communication between businesses and customers tend to grow online. Social media generate contents to more people at one times than the traditional media does. Furthermore, messages can go so far from one to another, from one town to another town, and from one country to another country. For instance, when people tweet a message to an average of four people on Twitter, this can end up reaching any people in the world. Former CEO of Sun Microsystem, Jonathan Schwartz, President Barak Obama, and former Prime Minister Taksin Shinawat, for example,

continue to communicate with the public through social media and even tweet his latest activities. In term of business practice, businesses can create content without using any celebrity or a huge budget of advertising.

Third is to build a trust. Users are sharing content and building community across the countries. Basically, social media are worked well regarding to adding more friends. Therefore, the communication with sincere can be used to build the trust. By openly sharing daily activities, businesses can illustrate their friendly mind, image and traits. Communication in public is good, but it will be better if businesses can communicate in public with the interaction. Businesses can avoid from misunderstanding of one-way communication and build business trust at the same time. Interaction in public helps businesses improve their reputation. When businesses have trustworthy supporters, it helps businesses preventing and protecting from businesses' problems and crises. For example, customers can use social media as a channel to contact customer service in traditional ways such as telephone and email in which customers may not always receive an instant response from customer service and most likely to put on hold. On the other hand, social media prompts to response. Furthermore, a question from one customers maybe answered by other customers. Some brands find it difficult to hand over control to their customers. For instance, a case of Dell, the company began by ignoring the negative posts and comment on blogs regarding to their products and their brand. The posts and comment began to worsen; the company finally realized that to improve its reputation and building trust. The company started to participate in social media to have conversations with customers and learn what the problems were and how to fix them. Once Dell began to listen to its customers, and sent out technicians to help customers to solve their problems over social media. The public started to view the brand in more positive light, and finally succeed a better brand identity, and trust.

Forth is to create a right target and community. Early attempts at online marketing often took the form of spamming (sending unwarranted messages via e-mail, or pop-up advertising). Today, there are myriad ways in which marketing professionals use to connect with their main target. In order to stay tune with the consumers, businesses must talk to consumers via social media and find them in the place where they spend time. The development of target groups and content – by – content advertisings are done at a lower cost. For example, businesses using YouTube are able to collect the data of viewers regarding data on time of access, access regions, age, and gender. Along with that information, businesses can use it to understand of people

lifestyles, demographics, and consumption patterns. However, the challenge is to create the ideal of online atmosphere that the targets will be responsive and build the kinds of relationship with the business.

Conclusion

It is predictable that social media will continue to advance at a rapidly rate of usage in business perspective. The business executives who has no social media account and think that social media is not the thing for business. They may rethink since stakeholders are participating in the conversation online. Furthermore, to embrace social media provide a low-cost platform on which to build business brand and image, communicating who are both within and outside the company. Additionally, social network provide the company to engage with employees, customers and people in public at anywhere and anytime. Last but not least, social media provides the opportunity to company to learn from instant information and unvarnished feedback of active participant in social media society. Lastly, this is what the social media change to way of doing businesses and it is creating value to everyone. However, social media is not the final solution for businesses today. Businesses must ask themselves how to use social media and integrate the approach to their traditional forms.

Therefore, another important question is not about the adoption and using social media by businesses, but about the consequences of the diffusion of social media. Hence, they have to find out the answer for themselves:

- 1) How to use social media in order to touch their customers?
- 2) How to decode what the customers saying about their products and service on social media?
- 3) How to use social media and make the customers become the biggest fans of the businesses?

Additionally, instead of looking at consumption decision, businesses are better focusing on the drivers of consumer content contribution since customers love to discuss and share their opinions about products/services and other contents, especially by mainstream media. Moreover, businesses have to understand of the customers, and attempt to gain their trust over the social media.

In conclusion, to adopt social media by businesses, costs and benefits must be considered in terms of potential returns. The technology offers benefits for a wide range of business processes. Social media overrides many of the functions of today's website

because of its ability to allow access at any location for companies and consumers, giving them access to another channel for communication. At least, it can make communication within the firm faster and make the management of the firm's resources more mobility. However, whether or not social media can be effectively used as a tool for businesses, especially in marketing purposes, it is important to the businesses to create a movement of messages and contents among businesses and customers. Secondly, listening to their customers is the must. Third, expand brand awareness to other targets, opening communicate and interact with one another. Lastly, drive and trigger value conversations.

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