

Chapter 2

From Social Networks to Mobile Social Networks: Applications in the Marketing Evolution

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing has put mobile and social into the center of the vision. Mobile and social interactions have transformed marketing activities and imposed a new paradigm on consumer behaviors based on real-time customer relationship management, peer-to-peer social influence and idea co-creation with consumers. Extensive research has been conducted in both mobile and social media domain, however few research has led a systematic approach by illustrating the marketing evolution and identifying mobile and social features. In this chapter, we fill this research gap through a literature review approach by first presenting the new marketing paradigm created by social networks, and then analyzing the marketing evolution from web-based social networks to mobile social networks. The mobile and social features are identified to guide marketers for application design. Finally, four case studies are presented to show how these features are distributed in applications to lead a better consumer experience. This chapter brings both theoretical and practical implications in this new trends.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2449-6.ch002

INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of Web 2.0 and mobile technologies, the past more than a dozen years have witnessed end-users' increasing involvement in social networks. More than ever, people today use smartphones and tablets to access all their favorite web-sites, especially popular social networks. According to Nielsen social media report, the use of mobile applications and mobile internet increased by 63% in the U.S. in 2012. The trend of mobile social media not only changes and impacts people's way of living and thinking, but it also brings huge business opportunities to companies to redefine their marketing strategies: how they market their brands, products and services, and how they listen to consumers (Zhao and Balagué, 2015). The development of marketing applications has represented a challenge and opportunity for companies to market their brands and products through a new channel; however, the applications currently available in the market are far from perfect and existing application designs do not yet have well established in the new marketing trend by using mobile social networks.

Some marketing research has been done on social media and mobile applications. For example, how social media and mobile applications affect consumers' brand/product attitudes and purchase intentions (Bellman, et al., 2011; Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2011; Kim et al, 2015; Olbrich & Holsing, 2011; Shin and Shin, 2011; Wang, et al., 2012); what factors drive the popularity of brand marketing activities on social media (De Vries, et al., 2012; Singh & Sonneburg, 2012); what factors make mobile marketing strategies accepted by users (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2007; Kourouthanassis, et al., 2010; Picoto, Palma-dos-Reis & Belanger, 2010; Pousttchi & Wiedemann, 2007; Shankar, et al., 2010); and what are the main motives and engagement factors for branded mobile application usage (Bellman, 2011; Ho & Syu, 2010; Wachter, et al., 2012; Kim, et al., 2013; Shen, 2015; Zhao & Balagué, 2014, 2015). However, marketing applications by leveraging mobile social networks have received limited research attention; particularly, how social and mobile aspects have impacted the general marketing strategy has rarely been investigated.

In order to understand the marketing trend of mobile social networks, the first objective of this chapter is to present an overview of marketing strategy given the emergence of social media and mobility. This new trend raises several questions:

- What is social networks? How do social networks affect traditional marketing?
- What is mobile social networks? How is mobile social networks different from web-based social networks in marketing strategy?
- What are the social and mobile features that can be utilized in marketing applications design in this marketing evolution?

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