

Chapter 94

Understanding Brand Implication and Engagement on Facebook

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ABSTRACT

What are the drivers for Brand engagement and implication on Facebook? In order to explore the impact of motivations on content and information sharing on Facebook brand pages, this study proposes an analysis focused on a reduced number of motivations and a proposal of a statistical model attempting to link the frequency of posting and liking on Facebook in general and Brand engagement to motivations. The aim of the study is to assess the impact of motivations on brand implication and frequency of posting on Facebook. The authors use the concept of brand implication measure a deep interest toward brands on Facebook. The concept of frequency of posting and liking focuses on the tendency to post or like frequently each time the user connects to Facebook. The motivations the authors introduced are based on the literature for sharing on social networks.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasingly marketers are interested by social network and virtual community analysis. Firms want to understand their Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest fans. Yet, researchers want to understand why individuals post online by studying the context of professional virtual communities for instance (Wasko and Faraj 2005). Also, why do they adopt certain types of behaviors online as in travel related Websites for example (Kyung Hyan, Gretzel, 2008). The authors are also interested by

their relations to virtual communities (Dholakia et al. 2004). Indeed, researchers have employed various theories regarding social network analysis (Wellman & Gulia, 1999), motivational theory (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002), and brand engagement (Spratt, Czellar & Spangenberg, 2009). We chose the social network Facebook because brands are increasingly developing their strategy to target their fans on their brand pages.

The Facebook is a social network that was launched in 2004 for college and high school communities. Facebook was funded by Mark

Understanding Brand Implication and Engagement on Facebook

Zuckerberg and his college friends in Harvard. In September 2012, Facebook attained a billion of active users worldwide. Half of Facebook users connect to Facebook by using a cellphone.

Among online social networks, Facebook stands out for three reasons: its success for university users, the quality of the personal information displayed on platform, and the fact that individuals are not anonymous. Facebook is of interest to researchers for two reasons:

1. As a mass social phenomenon in itself;
2. As a unique window of observation on the privacy attitudes and the patterns of information revelation among individuals.

Facebook is a real opportunity for marketers. There are 18 million users in France and 10 million spend 55 minutes per day on the platform. The aim of the study conducted by a communication Web agency called DDB is to understand why brand fans in France like their favorite brands on Facebook. The majority of users that answered the survey were women (55%) the average age was 31 years old. The fans that are heavy likers are called "Hard core users." They connect to Facebook several times a day. They use the platform to have fun (49%), talk to their families and friends (32%), and to search for new information (16%).

Why Facebook users become brand fans? For 75% of users they liked a brand because they received an invitation or email. They also liked a brand because of the Word of Mouth of their friends on Facebook (59%). The other reason why they liked a brand is because they conducted an active search on Facebook to find a specific brand or product (49%).

Fans have specific expectations toward their favorite brands: they want to gain the attention of their favorite brands when they become fans (53%). When they are attached to the brand, they become ambassadors (48%) and recommend the brand to their friends.

Fans want the brands to have on their pages: promotions (41%), news regarding the brand (35%). Yet, not all fans are ready to comment or like: only 50% of the fans are ready to contribute on the brand page. Nonetheless, 76% have already liked a brand post on a brand page.

Being a fan impacts the intentions of buying the brands' products and services (36%). Brand fans are also 92% to recommend the brand to their friends. The hard users give a very high grade (between 8 and 10) to their favorite brands on Facebook.

Nonetheless, brand fans can be quick to unlike a brand on Facebook, specifically when the brand posts too much information (82%). This phenomenon should be carefully studied and taken into account by both researchers and marketers alike.

What are Brand pages users on Facebook interested by? According to the study, Facebook users tend to be interested by media (55%), important causes (51%), and fashion and luxury brands (46%).

The DDB study was focused on a reduced number of users. Yet when we go on Social bakers Website we can clearly see the favorite brands worldwide on Facebook with regards to the total number of likes. If we look at the top ten, 7 out of 10 brands provide food and/or beverages to the masses: Coca cola, Red Bull, Starbucks, Oreo, McDonald's, WalMart. Thus food related brand appear to dominated worldwide on Facebook.

Thus it is essential to study the literature on Brand communities to comprehend more deeply why users engage in brand engagement behavior and why do users contribute to brand communities on Facebook. Brand communities are defined by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand." The members of brand community share in common their interest for a brand but also consume the brand's products or services. These individuals share knowledge about the brand's

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