

# Chapter 1

## Social Media as a New Emerging Tool of Marketing

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### **ABSTRACT**

*During the fast growth of social media, the ways companies usually use in their marketing are changed; social networks became a great approach for companies to improve their communication with customers. The wide usage of social networking sites and tools by individuals makes companies want to think carefully on how they can benefit from such usage in rebuilding their relationship with customers and increasing their engagement level. Such companies found that social media marketing is the solution through which companies and their customers will become much closer. This chapter covers three main sections where traditional marketing and electronic marketing concepts are reviewed in the first section. Then a detailed exploration of social networks and their distinct features is presented in the second section. Finally a discussion of social network marketing tools and its related technologies is explored in the third section.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, social media has exceeded its existence as a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with an Internet connection, to become a favorite communication channel for a large number of people. Such shift changes the relationship between

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companies and their customers which lead to a tremendous impact on the way companies conduct marketing. Companies, using social networks, can build closer and more profitable relationship with customers along with better understanding of their needs (Nezamabad, 2011). Social network marketing is very advantageous for companies; it can be represented as a great tool for finding talent, building brand awareness, finding new customers, and conducting market research (Bolotaeva & Cata, 2011; O'Brien, 2011).

There are wide ranges of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace and many others. Each site has its distinct features, but all of them share some common features. They are global, free and easy used (Suneetha & Kumar, 2012). Facebook, for example, is one of the fast growing social network sites; according to Das and Sahoo (2011), it has the first rank in the list of the ten most popular social networking sites in the world with M550 estimated monthly unique visitors compared with Twitter which has M95.8 and LinkedIn which has M50. Facebook was launched in 2004 with easily used interface and a wide range of features that are helpful for both individuals and companies (Khasawneh & AbuShanab, 2013); these features enable companies to create: a profile page to prove their existence on the Internet, group to make discussions: this feature is limited because it will be useful only for people who joining it, and a fan page where a large number of people share the same interests (Khasawneh & AbuShanab, 2013; Farooq & Jan, 2012).

Conducting marketing over the Internet and other electronic media has several advantages; Internet is fast, cheap, flexible, and comfortable with no time restrictions. It enables two-way relationship through easily used interface that helps customers make purchases wherever and whenever they want. The Internet is also considered as a friendly environment or platform of ordering, paying, and delivering products and services which guarantee that customers will be satisfied and loyal to their brands (Yazdanifard, et. al., 2011).

This chapter shed the light on the important role that social networks play in electronic marketing area by focusing on the ways through which companies can benefit from the services provided by social networks to gain real-time engagement with customers, to adopt new and creative way of interaction, and to get more insights on customers' perceptions and opinions on their products and services.

## **TRADITIONAL AND ELECTRONIC MARKETING: DEFINITION AND GENERAL CONCEPTS**

Marketing, in general, is a collective process where products/services can be exchanged between individuals based on what they want/need. This collective process is going

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