

Chapter 10

Analysing the Role of Social Media in Dialogue Marketing and Management as a Contemporary Franchising Local Area Marketing Technique

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ABSTRACT

The role of social media as a contemporary Local Area Marketing (LAM) technique in Dialogue Marketing is not clearly defined. Dialogue Marketing focuses on a structured approach of ongoing interactive communication to form relationships with people (Allan Steinmetz, 1997). According to Webster and Hume (2015) contemporary LAM techniques refer to using digital marketing to build relationships with local community. Problems facing franchise businesses include how to use Dialogue Marketing as a contemporary LAM technique to maximise local community connections as well as to build essential relationships. Advancing previous work in LAM, this study analyses social media's role as a contemporary LAM technique in Dialogue Marketing. It explores the use of Dialogue Management as a tool to enhance Dialogue Marketing for franchise businesses. It presents an integrated framework for the identification of social media adoption levels and how this can enhance franchise business success by providing an important contribution to the franchise industry sector. It concludes by offering a conceptual touchpoint channel model with a view to progressing discourse in the area and uniting current thinking.

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RESEARCH RATIONALE

This research is significant in that it is not only exploring dialogue management strategy choices as contemporary franchise local area marketing (LAM) techniques in the social media platform hierarchy but also the extent to which dialogue marketing is embedded in social networking. It is also examining further the consistency of LAM techniques used to engage with their online communities.

This chapter will highlight how franchises create and retain their customers with social media using dialogue management strategies. This chapter examines 3 distinct problems. These problems include:

Problem 1: The lack of objective investigation into how franchises make dialogue management strategy choices for their contemporary LAM techniques: Often franchisees are provided with limited marketing training (Webster & Hume, 2015), resulting in poor or inadequate dialogue management strategy choices given their social media involvement. This research will advance discussion into this problem and highlight optimal strategy choices.

Problem 2: Lack of objective reporting into the extent franchises have embedded dialogue marketing into their social networking strategies. Social networking is typically undertaken at a franchisor level rather than at the franchisee level resulting in a standardised approach as opposed to a customised one.

Problem 3: The lack of an enhanced theoretical framework or model that incorporates the dialogue marketing process in the formation of relationships with customers and consumers: A proposed social media engagement model outlines the categories of the relationships but not specifically how dialogue marketing leads people to form relationships using social media platforms. This work will incorporate the notion of dialogue marketing and advance the model.

RESEARCH METHOD

As this work is initially exploratory, a qualitative approach was considered relevant to define the problems the researchers are seeking to examine (Boyce, 2002). The research aim encompassed undertaking exploratory research to ascertain the suitability of conducting a more robust examination and to enlarge the researcher's knowledge about the issues and problems described earlier (Kumar, 1996). An extensive literature review, incorporating 'internet' sources and 'academic business journal databases' was conducted. As Kumar (1996) points out, a literature review can assist a researcher in widening their base of knowledge for their area of research, offering focus and definition to the research problem as well as improving their research methodology. To search academic journal databases, keyword terms the researchers used included *social media engagement*, *touchpoints* and *social media measurement*. Internet search engines, 'Google' and 'Bing' were utilised by the researchers to unearth supplementary information, in particular, practitioner white papers, forum reviews, content articles, industry survey reports and advocacy group websites for the keyword terms, *customer engagement*, *content marketing*, *social analytics* and *touchpoints*.

Following the literature review pertaining to the topic areas, "Franchise Dialogue Marketing" and "Dialogue Marketing in Social Media", further information was collected through a structured observation. A structured observation was conducted in the shape of an internet marketing images review for the keyword, "touchpoints". The reason a structured observation method was considered as an approach for

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