

Chapter 10

A New Customer Brand Engagement Framework in Social Media: The Case of Beauti Portugal SEM Healthcare

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ABSTRACT

Brand researchers and practitioners acknowledge that brands have the power to create emotional relationships between customers and enterprises. Moreover, it is known that brands can sometimes reflect the strategic vision of a firm. The aim of this chapter is to capture the creation of an identity for a new brand and to create a framework to better manage customer brand engagement in social media. To the best of this author's knowledge, this research creates a new framework that allows managers better handling their social media strategy regarding engagement. This study contributes to the lack of studies regarding brand management in SMEs, found by Krake, Wong and Merrilees, and Merrilees, and more particularly, it addresses Ojasalo et al.'s gap regarding the few literature research about brand management in SMEs. Moreover, it provides some understanding of customer brand engagement evidenced through social media, which, according to Wallace et al., continues to present challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

The strategic management of the brand is highly aligned with the long term strategy of a firm (Kapferer, 2008; Aaker & McLoughin, 2010). “Today branding is such a strong force that hardly anything goes unbranded” (Kotler & Keller, 2011, p.261). Brands provide value to the customer and are often considered in the customer’s buying process with substantial relevance (Kapferer, 2008). Furthermore, they are also value generators to all stakeholders and produce benefits internally in the firm (i.e the role of the staff) (Chernatony, 2010). Managing brands implies also building it strongly, since it produces a number of marketing advantages, enabling companies to be distinguished from competitors (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). The principal focus of branding is to build successful brands that can be distinguished from the competitor, be admired, establish a relationship with target customers and, if possible, engage them through loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003).

The literature review is scarce about branding in SMEs, especially in the software business (Koporic, 2020; Ojasalo et al., 2008; Odoom, Narteh & Boateng, 2017; M’zungu, Merreles & Miller, 2019). Branding in SME’s is relatively new and is always obfuscated by daily tasks, as Krake (2005) highlights. And despite attracting academic attention in recent years, evidence suggest that studies on branding in the context of SMEs continue to be a gap in marketing literature (Odoom, Narteh & Boateng, 2017; M’zungu, Merreles & Miller, 2019). In this case study, we will analyze the influence of consumer brand engagement and social media in an online platform for beauty & wellness that operates with Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) type of activity.

The consideration of brand-consumer relationships is fast infiltrating the branding vernacular (Patterson & O’Malley, 2006). Customer brand engagement acknowledges the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions of those relationships (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Gambetti et al., 2012; Bilro & Loureiro, 2020). Social media affect brand management because consumers have become pivotal authors of brand stories (Gensler et al., 2013). Thus, social media with its ability to facilitate relationships may help realize the promise of the marketing concept, market orientation, and relationship marketing by providing the tools to better satisfy customers and build customer engagement (Sashi, 2012). Additionally, tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master (Stelzner, 2014). Not less important, as a brand’s social network now consists of many voluntary connections from consumers, the authenticity of a brand’s social identity is affected. At the same time it adds complexity to the management of brand identity (Naylor et al., 2012).

The aim of this chapter is to capture the creation of a framework for better manage customer brand engagement in social media. This investigation bridges the academia gap in the development of a framework which allows managers better handling their social media strategy regarding engagement. This chapter offers suggestions for managers seeking to enhance brand engagement through social media, embracing all channels and suggesting practices for effective social media management. The object of chapter is Beauti, a Small-Medium Enterprise (SME) technologic software product provider that is currently in the first steps of building its own brand.

This chapter contributes to the lack of studies regarding brand management in SMEs, found by Krake (2005), Wong and Merrilees (2005) and Merrilees (2007), and more particularly, it addresses Ojasalo’s et al. (2008) gap regarding the few existing literature about brand management in software SMEs. Moreover, it provides some understanding of customer brand engagement evidenced through social media, which, according to Wallace et al. (2014) continues to present challenges, and take a lot of importance in SMEs.

Therefore, the challenge of this investigation lies in investigate these two research questions:

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