Social Media for Brand Managers

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MBA-Intensive Course taught by: Joel Rubinson, President Rubinson Partners, Inc. and former Chief Research Officer of the Advertising Research Foundation

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I Course description

A. Overview

Social media is transforming the way marketing organizations are thinking about building strong brands and durable customer relationships. Increasingly, brands are being managed as conversations and personifications that transcend the features and functions they offer. For example, in attracting more than 8 million fans to its Facebook page, Coke had to be a socially interesting relative to McDonald’s, Aston Kusher (aplusk), Starbucks, Levi’s, etc. It’s as if people were deciding which brands to walk up to and chat with at a cocktail party. Tony Shieh, CEO of Zappos says brands are culture and opens his brand up to a million or more people every day via dialogue on Twitter and his blog. Social media creates two way brand channels, where the brand can speak, listen, and respond – and where people are speaking to each other about the brand outside of the brand’s control. Probably the greatest social media case is Obama for President in 2008. Effective integration of a brand into social networks must begin with listening, which is a new form of marketing research. Listening to the blogosphere allows you to hear how people are expressing their passions, to know where these conversations are taking place, to understand the sentiment and context for these conservations, and to engage in these conversations. Because social media combines advertising, PR, customer care, analytics, and marketing research, it is transforming brand management structures. We are seeing cross-functional social media teams start to emerge. Anyone entering marketing management or marketing research must be prepared to lead such cross-functional teams as part of their career path. While the need to participate in the conversation is being recognized, the current generation of marketing managers is not generally comprised of social media natives; thus, new and retooled talent is needed.
This course is intended to equip marketing students to lead brands in a social media world and to contribute and even run cross-functional social media teams in a marketing world that is moving from brands broadcasting a message to brands listening and then engaging with people.

B. Grading and assignments

Students will be graded on:

1. Social media participation assignments and class participation (25%)
2. First assignment: comparative analysis of the social graph of two competitive marketers (25%)
3. Final exam: Creation of a social media marketing strategy and plan for assigned brand that is currently marketed (but has a poor social media presence) (50%). Due by COB Feb 3, 2011

BECAUSE OF THE INTENSIVE FORMAT, NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED EXCEPT DUE TO SOME CALAMATOUS EVENT.

C. Syllabus

Prework (read assigned chapters from textbooks)

READ CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 OF GROUNDSWELL

CHAPTERS 1, 5 ARF LISTENING PLAYBOOK

1. Jan 24: Introduction to Social media for Brand Managers
   a. Introductory comments
   b. Broader context of change
      i. Digitalization changes everything
      ii. Emergence of mobile
      iii. Long-tail of media and brand choices
      iv. Power shifts to the retailers
      v. Power shifts to the consumer
      vi. Thinking about “store-back marketing” and how social media might fit in
      vii. Social media landscape (the main social media networks and environments)
   c. Review of the social media environments with particular emphasis on how to join and use Twitter and Slideshare
d. Drivers of joining social media networks: need to belong, need to share, need to participate

Contemporary thinking about building strong brands by entering the conversation. How social media combines analytics, insights, advertising, customer care, and PR. Review selected case history.

ASSIGNMENT: JOIN TWITTER, SLIDESHARE. FOLLOW ME AND TF ON TWITTER. (WE WILL FOLLOW YOU BACK AND CREATE LIST TO FOLLOW). START TWEETING INTERESTING BLOG POSTINGS, PRESOS, ETC. USE TWITTER AND ICEROCKET.COM TO FIND OTHERS TO FOLLOW. STAY ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE.

2. Jan 26: Listening

READING IN PREPARATION FOR THIS SESSION; READ CHAPTER 5, GROUNDSWELL

CHAPTER 6, ARF LISTENING PLAYBOOK

a. Marketing via social media starts with listening which can be defined as “the study of naturally occurring conversations, behaviors, and signals, that may or may not be guided, that brings the voice of people’s lives into the brand.

b. Invited speaker: Steve Rappaport, author of The ARF Listening Playbook.

c. Broad classes of tools for listening
   i. Text mining of the blogosphere for insights and forecasting
   ii. “listening” to search (terms and volume) for insights and forecasting
   iii. Managed customer communities—an evolution of focus groups
   iv. Understanding sentiment – an extension of computational linguistics and text analysis

d. Overview of leveraging listening into innovation, sense and respond, customer care and satisfaction, PR, conversation, advertising, and research strategies. Case histories discussed.

e. Examples of building a dashboard using free tools.

f. Relationship of listening to more traditional forms of marketing research

ASSIGNMENT FOR GRADING: CREATE 2-3 PAGE DOCUMENT OR BRIEF PPT PRESENTATION THAT COMPARES AND CONTRASTS THE SOCIAL GRAPHS OF TWO COMPETITORS (TO BE ASSIGNED). USE FREE LISTENING TOOLS TO ADD TO THE YOUR ANALYSIS. SUBMIT ASSIGNMENT ELECTRONICALLY FOR GRADING PRIOR TO THE THIRD CLASS (25%)
3. Jan 29: Building brand engagement and Measurement

READING IN PREPARATION FOR THIS CLASS: CHAPTER 6 GROUNDSWELL, CHAPTER 4 ARF LISTENING PLAYBOOK

a. How listening can lead to creating brand presence that builds engaged customers and uncovers unhappy customers.

b. Brand backyard (creating environments you own, like My Starbucks idea, or peer to peer customer care)

c. Consumer backyard (places where people talk about your brand or their relevant passions sponsored by others, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Forums)

d. Invited speaker. Lynne d Johnson, noted social media expert. She will discuss metrics that are used to judge success of brand participation in social media.

e. Examples of how to build a social media campaign and ongoing presence

f. Invited speaker Judah Phillips, head of Global Site Analytics at Monster Worldwide. The role of social in the larger digital picture.

4. Jan 31: Brand social media architecture: cases and crises

READING IN PREPARATION FOR THIS CLASS: CHAPTER 7, PP 186-191, 197-203 OF GROUNDSWELL.

READ PAGES 25-27, 59-60, 64-67, 81-88 ARF LISTENING PLAYBOOK


READ: http://www.slideshare.net/candace/motrin-moms-twitter-case-study


a. Enabling those you dialogue with to become contributors, advocates and ambassadors for your brand

b. Creating sharable assets that spread

c. Focus on cases: Obama, Dove Campaign for Real Beauty

d. Metrics and digital approaches for tracking advocacy and asset sharing
e. Examples of crises that arose and spread via social media and how companies responded (Dell computers bursting into flames, “United Breaks Guitars http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YGc4zOqozo”, Motrin)

f. How presence in social media can help you defuse the crisis and increase the propensity for customer forgiveness

g. Examples and sources for listening dashboards that help a company to monitor 24/7/365

5. Feb 2: Equipping the organization

READING IN PREPARATION FOR THIS CLASS: CHAPTERS 11-12 GROUNDSWELL

a. Creating the listening and fast-learning organization that also engages the social media customer

b. Invited speaker: Frank Cotignola, Kraft Foods will give examples of creating a consumer insights function that embraces both traditional research and listening methods

c. Corporate cultural change and understanding of social media

d. What are the new organization structures, breaking down of silos, cross-functional team creation, etc. that are needed to effectively manage the brand conversation?

e. Who owns social media?

f. What are the new talents the organization needs

g. Leveraging this new organization into redesigned innovation and brand sense and respond processes

SUBMIT FINAL ASSIGNMENT BY COB FEB 3.