

Using the Social Media to Obtain Knowledge

by

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Abstract. It seems impossible nowadays to overlook the fact that the use of the Internet has become a daily activity for an increasing number of people. The older generations are getting acquainted to using the services offered by the Internet and they choose it to communicate, whereas the young ones are being born in an era when use of it and communication via Internet is a prerequisite. The business has to exist in the virtual world or otherwise they cannot keep up with competing organizations already on the virtual market, a fact which will undeniably lead to important losses of market share. The main approaches in the literature are concerned with the use of social media as a tool to promote products and services, but the social media can become a tool for organizations that want to streamline and develop their activity and the mix between social media and knowledge management is one of the ways that organizations can to achieve this goals, a fact clearly shown in the present paper.

Key words: social media, knowledge management, interactivity, sharing, innovation

JEL classification: D83, O35

1 Introduction

Once with the use of Internet services, the social media becomes part of everyday life, and the level of interaction among the internet users increases significantly. In other words, the world becomes more prone to socialization. Obviously, the business organizations cannot ignore this opportunity. On one hand, there is a pressure of the consumers felt by the business organizations which cannot be denied. The business has to exist in the virtual world or otherwise they cannot keep up with competing organizations already on the virtual market, a fact which will undeniably lead to important losses of market share. On the other hand, the employees themselves, especially the young people who use social media on a regular basis, are forcing organizations to use social media within the premises, especially if the methods and tools already used for communication in their companies seem to lack the adaptability to newer challenges and demands for a better and more efficient communication.

Once with the use of Internet services, the social media becomes part of everyday life, and the level of interaction among the internet users increases significantly. With the use of Internet services, social media become part of everyday

life, the world becomes more interactive, more collaborative, more social. (Driver, 2008)

Today's education and learning may also benefits from the facilities social media offers, as more and more people use internet applications and multimedia technologies as an alternative to traditional learning systems (Măiorescu and Sabou, 2013). In other words, the world becomes more prone to socialization. Obviously, the business organizations cannot ignore this opportunity. On one hand, there is a pressure of the consumers felt by the business organizations which cannot be denied. The business has to exist in the virtual world or otherwise they cannot keep up with competing organizations already on the virtual market, a fact which will undeniably lead to important losses of market share. On the other hand, the employees themselves, especially the young people who use social media on a regular basis, are forcing organizations to use social media within the premises, especially if the methods and tools already used for communication in their companies seem to lack the adaptability to newer challenges and demands for a better and more efficient communication.

In this context, the use of social media in a business organization comes as a natural consequence.

2 Social media tools used in business

An issue discussed here is the way the main social media tools can be integrated and used in a business organization.

Social networks and especially Facebook, which is the largest social network and social media platform with the highest level of use in everyday life, can be employed for business promotion, for education and influence of consumers and for the assessment of their needs. This way, the social networks seem to be the fastest means of transmitting information to the consumers, while proving a palpable indicator of the organization's values reflected in the eyes of employees.

Microblogging platforms, and especially Twitter, allow organizations to present their business in a fast and efficient way, to communicate in real time with the customers and their employees while buzzing the latest news in the company's life. This news can be events related to the organization activity involving members of its management, or to a launch of new products and services to consumers.

Blogs are another component of social media commonly used in the activity of a business organization and a valuable tool for its policy. Even though their main feature resides in communication, a feature common with most types of social media platforms, post tracing on blogs can help business organization in recruiting personnel, in shaping the consumers' needs, but also in identifying innovative ideas that can later materialize in new products and services or even in appearance of new directions in the economic life.

Nevertheless, communication is not the only characteristic of social media. Through social media, the possibility of sharing information and ideas, or providing public space for various documents, images or videos has reached incredibly high levels. Business organizations can thus more easily convey relevant messages to consumers, investors and employees, while receiving faster responses and feedback to them. At the same time, business organizations can better relate their work to their competitors, to

their consumers' needs and they can more easily exchange and assess ideas or innovations.

Falling into the same category of platforms which allow users to share folders is YouTube, the second most valuable brand in social media, which from the point of view of business organizations can be harnessed for the transmission of messages both to consumers and to those who could influence the activity of organizations. One direct consequence of videos sharing via YouTube may be the education of the consumers, or even the training provided to the company's employees.

3 How does social media influence business

Another issue to be discussed in terms of social media influence upon the organization has to do with the relationship between the social media and the business.

From this point of view we analyze the relationship that social media can develop with each of the participants in the economic process and the relationships that can be formed between them through social media.

It is known that the activities of a business organization can be influenced by external factors, as well as internal ones. Also, the relationship with suppliers and distributors may decisively affect a business organization. Social media can more effectively mediate the relationship between the two partners allowing constant connection and a fast communication between them. The choice of partners and the way they interrelate can be considerably mitigated through the facilities offered by social media.

From the point of view of the producer, social media offers a number of tools through which one can communicate either within the organization or outside it. One can get information or ideas that may help in further development and may also allow the recruitment of specialists that will adapt to the concepts of the recruiter's visions. One can thus maintain a sustainable relationship with both those who are interested in the smooth running of their business and with various business partners whilst having the advantage of better

analyzing and maintaining the existing knowledge potential within the organization.

The consumers and the customers are the very reason for the existence of a company. And the relationship with them is more than essential for a few reasons. First, social media facilitates and helps developing a fruitful relationship which is beneficial for the customers and for the company alike. Then, the organization can evaluate, analyze and implement consumer needs, develop products and services that can accommodate their needs. The company can determine whether the products and services that the customers are offered are satisfactory or not, and it is given the possibility to improve or relinquish some. Moreover, the consumer can have a more direct access to the organization whose client he/she is and can more easily express discontent or appreciation of products and services offered by the organization. More than that, the customer can also readily join influence or pressure groups that can have an impact on decision making.

There may be differences in the use of social media from the perspective of a client from another business organization and that of a consumer as an individual.

Factors internal to the organization and management of the organization, and relations with shareholders and those established among the employees are other components upon which social media can have a major impact. The way the information flows within the organization has changed. The fact that an organization's business management does not anymore control the flow of inside information has led to the transformation of the organization's management because social media allows easier distribution of information to employees and shareholders.

The shareholders can have a quicker access to whatever is happening inside an organization or business, as social media offers a number of tools that inform them and help them analyze economic activities. As a consequence, their investment decisions are made with care and in full awareness. The relationship between social media and the organizations, as seen from the perspective of the employees (probably the most important inside participants in the life of

the organization that are its very engine) is the last relationship that the present paper places under the microscope. Through social media, the employees are given the opportunity to be better informed about the changes in progress in their company. They have instant access to reliable information sources, training. They interrelate more easily with each other and their work is more efficient through a better synchronization of their activities.

The knowledge management is essential in business organizations as knowledge, both tacit and explicit must be carefully kept and used. At the same time, social media provides a number of tools with the help of which business organizations can streamline the process.

4. Knowledge management trough social media

Now we will try to presents the evaluation and the description of possibilities of using social media in the process of knowledge management in a business organization.

To be successful in the future, a business organization should focus on internal communication, on sharing of information and knowledge within the organization and on innovation. Within a business organization there are valuable knowledge resources that when unexploited may reduce the activity of the organization, cause loss of competitiveness and eventually company disappearance from the market. "Knowledge management can thus be described as a significant determinant of sustainable competitiveness." (Knošková, L., 2015) The information flow through social media is an inestimable resource of knowledge and its capture, evaluation and capitalization can lead to development of new products and services, may open the possibility for innovation both in the organizations and in the economic environment.

A knowledge management structure (Liebowitz, 2005) distinguishes between data, information and knowledge. Data refer to elements that can be detected, for example, texts, facts, codes, images and sounds. (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) Davenport and Prusak (1998) define the information as "data that can be decisive in the

decision making." A personal view can transform information into knowledge.

Social media can have a major impact on the innovation process in business organizations. This allows a more efficient communication and a better use of knowledge inside and outside the organization. It also offers new possibilities for the emergence and development of inventions and process innovations by facilitating collaboration and exchange of ideas amongst the employees. The tools offered by social media enable business organizations to improve their vision and become open to innovation. The organizations management must understand that without the implementation of knowledge management procedures that must include the use of social media as well, they will not be able to resist in the future.

5. How business organizations can use information to satisfy consumers

Let's find the ways in which a business can flourish through accurate assessments of customers' needs, and the way a company should keep a close relationship with its customers, as this will contribute to the loyalty of the customers for the products and the services offered by the company.

Through social media, organizations can have faster access to the views and the needs of the consumers; they can maintain a permanent contact with them and can form groups of loyal customers that can afterwards become reliable promoters of products and services offered by the organization. When needed, they can play the part of lawyers that would uphold the values of the organization in the case of social media attacks from competitors or other groups of consumers. They can turn into groups of influence through which the organization may promote its future business.

The analysis of the costumers' relationship with the organization via social media is considering all types of customers, taking into account the way that they relate to the information contained in the online environment and the types of activities they engage in on social media platforms.

The business organizations must provide communication strategies for each user of social media and find methods of communication that would eventually draw them towards the products and services offered by the company, methods described in this chapter.

This chapter also examines the way the organization can analyze and relate to the work done by other competing organizations onto social media platforms, as well as the way the company may react to their actions. Finally, the paper points out the communication strategies that the organization may use on social media platforms and the way it should shape the message. It also explains how a company should analyze such an opportunity, infinitely superior to other means of communication, as this is directly responsible for the influence of the customer's opinion and their economic education.

Nevertheless, social media can be a double-edged weapon, which if not used properly can do more harm than good. If the customers find the messages annoying, or if the tools are not adequate enough to transmit the desired message, the result of using social media may not be the expected one. This annoyance may put off the customers who will reject the products or the services offered, or the relationships and the values that had been carefully built in time. If the right tools are employed, then social media can help transform some irritated customers into loyal ones, into consumers who are already familiar with the company's offers, the so-called educated consumers.

6 Knowledge means power

Not only social media can be an efficient tool that facilitates the communication between the company and the customers, but it can also serve as a tool with the help of which the consumers can put pressure on the organization. It may force the company to listen to their needs and ultimately it may bring about changes within the organization that will mound to their needs. On the other hand, the consumers who use social media are informed consumers who can easily change their opinion about a

particular service or product. "The quality issues means a series of biases related to communication, compliance, knowledge, collaboration, flexibility, perception, etc." (Tachiciu et al., 2011)

Thus social media can be a pressure instrument of the consumers and an important, unique voice able to make their demands known and heard by the organizations and the decision-makers in the society.

Social media is an ideal tool to create groups ready to protect and uphold the rights of consumers in front of the business organizations. It also clearly that consumers can constitute themselves as pressure influence groups aiming at the business organizations.

Once with the use of social media, the consumer has become more informed, more attentive to whatever he purchases. All this time, his perception of the product quality and service has undergone a profound transformation. Nowadays, the consumer does not assess the products only in terms of durability and usability, but refers particularly to the values and opinions expressed by other users/consumers. For this reason, the concept of consumer protection has undergone a major transformation as well. If in the past, the consumer protection started after the customer purchased the product, now the process begins a lot before with the information that the consumer receives. This information relates to other consumer's opinion related to the product or service that the customer is going to acquire. So, once with the globalization process, which allowed not only the exchange of goods, the transfer of attitudes and values, in other words changes in the consumers' culture, education and consumer protection has become a fundamental process and the economic life in the contemporary society.

Social media itself provides the tools and the opportunities which help the consumers become more informed, more alert about what they buy, but at the same time, it transformed them from consumers that cared more about the durability and value of a product, into social consumers, who appreciate a product or a service that is appreciated by their peers.

Meanwhile, the organizations, pressured by their customers and other factors of influence that activate in the online or offline world, have become more responsible for the social values they promote in the society. Social media is one of the tools that serve the organizations advertise such values and actions.

7 Conclusions

Through social media business organizations can better promote their products and services, can have a steady relationship with customers and can get feedback from customers regarding the products and services they offer. Social media communication ensures transfer of information both from the company to their consumers and vice versa. Even if the means of communication used traditionally have not yet lost their efficiency, and are still used successfully, the tools offered by social media, will increasingly tend to replace them. One advantage of using social media at the expense of traditional media is that an analysis of the results of a communication and product promotion campaign can be done much easier and faster.

We can say that the social media use has penetrated all business organizations. Although social media should not be ignored in the life of a business organization. Despite the fact that momentarily the platforms and the tools offered by social media are mostly used for personal use, this phenomenon will force business organizations, especially in Romania to include the use of social media in their daily activity. The use of social media in the Romanian economic environment will certainly lead to more efficient economic activities and to an opening of the Romanian business organizations to foreign markets.

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