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Understanding the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness in the Consumer Electronics Industry

The Case of LG

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Preface

Many thanks to the respondents for taking the time and energy to participate in this study and in the surveys. The valuable insights shared by them have proven essential for this study. I would also like to thank my thesis supervisor Pr Salemi for all hisconstructive criticism, support and assistance.

Keywords: social media, consumer electronics, brand awareness, Morocco, brand equity, social web, online media, communications, web 2.0, socialcomputing

Abstract

Nowadays, marketing and public relations professionals are confronted with a variety of new internet-based communication platforms. These new platforms have shifted the balance of power from the corporate world to the hands of the consumer. Therefore the traditional ways of using media do not apply to these new internet-based communication tools. Bringing forth the need for a new marketing model and accompanying recommendations.

Using a literature search to develop a step by step plan on how social media can be used to increase brand awareness for consumer electronics companies in Morocco. The literature will look at the theory provided such as Weber's social web, Keller's brand equity model and Rossiter and Percy's brand attitude strategy.

Using the phenomenological epistemology when collecting and analyzing the data, the information provided is developed into a framework that can be implemented by consumer electronics companies in Morocco using social media to increase their brand awareness. Afterwards the developed framework is tested through in-depth research with six companies operating in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco.

In the research it is shown that social media can be used to increase brand awareness. An outline is given on how the recommendations provided can be implemented. The recommendations vary from having a small follower base to being consistent in all marketing activities on social media. It is shown that communities and the word-of-mouth principle are essential when trying to achieve the highest levels of brand awareness for consumer electronics companies in Morocco.

Introduction

Carlsson wrote in 2010 that Social Medias are becoming more and more integrated in the organizations and really start to become useful for companies for both sales and as a way to communicate with the customers. It is therefore essential that marketing managers and managers in general start using this new media platform to create a better relationship with their customers. Weber said in 2009 that it is crucial for marketers to find ways on theWeb to communicate with them, rather than at them. Communication possibilities like this did not exist when the traditional media were the only mediumsavailable.

However these possibilities are available to any company in the world, and it has therefore become increasingly difficult for companies to raise awareness for their brand specific as David Aaker (1996) has said. Stand out of the crowd has become increasingly harder and if companies want a way in managing this complexity, is for companies to be able to coordinate messages and their marketing efforts across all media (Aaker 1996)

The relative scarcity of existing research regarding social media and brand awareness, the impact of social media on daily life, the speed and reach of opinions on social media, to understand the way and results of social media activities in the consumer electronics industry; all are reasons why this study was initiated. Regarding the discussion above, this study will be about how social media influences brand awareness and brand image in the consumer electronicsindustry.

Background

Context of theproblem

As described by Rossiter and Percy (1987) brand awareness is essential for the communications process to occur as it precedes all other steps in the process. Brand awareness is so essential that without brand awareness the process cannot continue and no other communication effects can occur. After all the consumer needs to be made aware of a brand first before he or she will buy it. Brand attitude cannot be formed, and intention to buy cannot occur unless brand awareness has occurred (Rossiter &Percy 1987) Therefore brand awareness should be one of the most important marketing communications activities of any firm, it is where the complete process starts. Without brand awareness occurring the next steps of brand attitude and brand image cannot be formed. Described by Stokes (1985) brand awareness can firstly add value by placing the brand in consumers mind and secondly by acting as a barrier to entry to new unestablished brands. Thirdly it reassures

the customer of the organization's commitment and product quality.

The new media's however provide for a great platform to increase brand awareness through using online communities, social media. As described by Safko (2010) people want their information to come from people they know and trust, not from just anyone out there. This means that the way companies communicate with their potential customers can be far more effective if handled in a different way instead of the usual one-way communications through the regular media like television and radio.

This report aims at providing a clear view on how to use social media to increase brand awareness in Morocco. Examples of social media are social community websites like Facebook and LinkedIn, but as well as YouTube and internet forums. However the way in which these social media's are used is very different from any regular way of communications. As described by Kozinets (2009) companies do not have the ability to adjust any information given on these social media's. This is different from providing information on your own website where you have full control on what is being said and posted. Qualman (2010) says that handling social media is therefore very different from handling the tradition media. Instead of the regular word of mouth, with social media we like to speak about world of mouth. Any person can inform many hundreds using social media (Safko, 2010). According to Dunbar (1995) the cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one person can maintain stable social relationships with was 150. At that time those 150 people could not be informed immediately, however nowadays with one click anybody is able to put forth any information about a brand, product or a company; directly influencing brand awareness.

Purpose of thestudy

This research aims to give new insights in using social media to increase brand awareness for companies active in consumer electronics in Morocco. The traditional ways of increasing brand awareness for any company have been excluding the new internet media's, social media. The traditional way of increasing brand awareness is focused heavily on pontification, and people have become more immune to one-way messages that are sent to them through the traditional channels.

No longer does the consumer trust corporate messages. They want their information from people they know, have a relationship with, and share a bond with through trust (Safko, 2010). Social media is a good tool to create a platform for people to share information with each other. Therefore it is important for a company to understand this fairly new field within the marketing industry, and to understand how a company can use this platform to increase their brand awareness, creating a competitive advantage.

The inductive approach is the underlying philosophy in this research. This research tries to understand both the individuals'as well as companies in their behavior on social media. The use of interviews is used to asses and evaluate new implications of marketing for approximately six consumer electronics businesses in Morocco.

The outcome of the comparison between the individuals and the companies will be used to form a new framework which gives insight into building brand awareness with social media. This framework will be formed together with desk research from relevant academic papers and articles, and will link the usage of individuals and companies in social media. After the data is collected and analyzed, an interpretation of the findings will be given as well as the observations that our found to form a theory that can be drawn upon this. The aim of this research is to develop a framework (best-practice model) in social media and its processes that can be used to advice consumer electronic companies in Morocco to increase their brand awareness and brand image.

Aim of thisresearch

The aim of this research is to provide an understanding on how social media can be usedto increase brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. The understanding of the usage of social media to increase brand awareness will be explained in a framework. The framework prepares consumer electronics companies in Morocco on how to use social media to increase brand awareness. Preparing the consumer electronic companies is needed as the frameworks used with traditional media marketing are of detrimental effect when using the same framework in your social media activities. Creating a new framework and increasing the understanding on how social media can be used to increase your brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco, therefore is the aim of thisresearch.

This study differs from existingones

This study differs from existing research in the way that it tries to understand the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness. Previous studies have focused on how social media can be used in a variety of ways, such as the marketing opportunities offered by social media and the implications of social media on communication. This study combines existing research and insights in order to create an understanding how social media can be used to increase brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. These insights and research will be combined to create a framework that can be used to increase brand awareness using social media.

2. Theory and LiteratureReview

Definitions:

Socialmedia:

Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Web 2.0 is the "updated" version of the regular internet in that it offers enough functionality and integration in every day life to use it in day to day problems and questions. Carlsson (2010) described Web 2.0 as a platform on which social media is based. Most important is the change in the offered functionality from the push-principle to a two-way service oriented platform.

There are many different definitions for social media however most agree that the term social media applies to the following: social networks, internet forums, weblogs, podcasts, video's, blogging, wiki's and social bookmarking (Weber, 2009; Kaplan and Haelein, 2010) However some also include search engines in the definition of social media such as Weber in 2009. "Reputation aggregators with the task of aggregating sites with the best product or service to offer and usually put things in order of reputation" (Weber 2009). This study will be including search engines in the definition of social media.

Social media are distinct from the likes of traditional media, such as television, radio and newspaper. As social media give access to publish or acquire information to anyone, and the only vital component is internet, it is deemed far more inexpensive than

industrialmedia, which generally requires far more resources to publish information. Social media is also distinct from traditional media in the way that it provides a platform for two-way communication, something that is not possible with the way traditional media work; one- way sending of information to consumers.

Many technologies are included in Social media: blogs, voice over IP, sharing of pictures and music, video logs and forums are just a few of the available technologies to stay in contact with one another. Most of these technologies can be integrated from one website to another in order to provide the best information available.

The term social media is avoided by Weber; he uses the term "social web". He defines social web as "the online place where people with a common interest can gather to share thoughts, comments and opinions". His definition is split up in three areas:

- Social network sites: such as Facebook, Myspace and LinkedIn.
- Branded web destinations: such as EBay andAmazon.
- Enterprise sites: such as Best Buy, Cisco andIBM.

This whole new world of social web is seen by Weber as a way in which anyone on the web can provide unpaid media. This includes:

- Microblogs: Microblogs are mostly known from the website Twitter. Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service that enables its users to send limited messages, known as tweets. Tweets are text-only posts of up to 140 charactersthat are spread among the author's subscribers, also known as followers. Subscribers can re-tweet and/or forward the message to their followers, making Twitter one of the most fast spreading and easy ways to start with socialmedia.
- Blogs: Online diaries or journals where people can post ideas, reviews, start conversations and link to other websites (Weber 2009). Blogs can be hosted in many different locations, some are hosted by the individual or company themselves. Others are hosted by blogging websites such as Blogger andTumblr.
- E-communities: online communities are a group of people who come together on a website because they have the same specific interest. Some companies even host e-communities to get vast amounts of customer contact as well as customer information. Other e-communities are hosted by dedicated members that want to share thoughts and opinions with fellow interestedpeople.

- Social Networks: websites where people can provide friends, family and colleagues with updated information what is going on in their lives. These sites are very different from the likes of Twitter as these sites provide different ways of communicating not just text-only. Social Networks are sites like Facebook and Myspace but also sites like YouTube andFlickr.

Brandawareness:

Brand awareness is defined by Rossiter and Percy (1987) as the amount of awareness a customer has of a certain brand. Brand awareness has been scaled by both Weber (2009) and Aaker (1996). The following scale will be used:

- Dominant: the only brand the customer recalls in anindustry.
- Top of mind: the first brand a customer canrecall.
- Recall: all brands a customer can recall within a productgroup.
- Recognition: customer has been exposed but cannot particularly recall thebrand.

Brands are important because they shape customer decisions and ultimately create economic value (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2010). It is also thought to believe that brand and branding is a key factor in the purchase decision. Brands are deemed so important that it has been showed possible for a strong brand to charge 19 percent more (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2010). This shows that with strong branding and/or having a strong brand provides a large competitive advantage.

Brands often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings (Wood, 2000). Therefore a brand is deemed critical in the success of a company. Approaching brand management strategically is a key factor in building a brand. Having a consistent brand strategy leads to a stronger brand equity which in turn means a stronger brand. According to Park and Srinivasan in Pappu et al. (2005) there is little consensus on what exactly brand equity means. However the broad meaning of the term “brand equity” , provided by Farquhar in Pappue et al. (2005), is seen as “the value endowed by the brand to the product”. Meaning that a brand with high brand equity allow such a company to charge a higher price for their added value to products and services than identical, unbranded products

Brand equity is conceptualized by Aaker as a set of five assets: brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality and other brand assets. Brand awareness is seen as one of the most important components of brand equity, as it shows the position/strength a brand has within a consumer's mind.

In 1996 it was predicted by Aaker that it is becoming increasingly more challenging to create high levels of brand awareness with the new types of media developed. The winners in the battle of raising brand awareness will be those who are able to coordinate their branding messages through all Medias (Aaker 1996).

According to Weber (2009) however managers should be more interested in brand equity. He states that brand equity is of more interest as this measures to what extent the customer will recommend the brand to others. Weber states this as brand awareness only looks at how well the customers remember a brand.

Creating brand awareness in a successful way requires consideration on the amount of marketing messages consumers are bombarded with daily. Understanding this is necessary in order to be successful in creating brand awareness and in order to start with the two step method by Aaker. First, it is essential to have a broad sales base in order to support a brand. A brand with small sales units and short lifecycles is very expensive to support. The reason why many firms downsize the number of brands they support in order to focus on their biggest brands. Second, firms need to acquire the knowledge of operating outside the traditional media channels (Aaker 1996). As the new types of media provide two-way interaction, a big change from the way traditional media is "pushed" to the consumers.

H1: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness.

Importance

Social MediaCommunications

In a recent study by Nielsen Company (2009) it shows that 18% of the online population uses social media as a core discovery tool in finding new information. It is thought to believe that users especially use social media as a core discovery tool when the product is of complex nature.

> *H2.1: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because the consumer electronics target group uses social media a lot.*

In the report Jon Gibs, VP Media Analytics says "While still a smaller percentage than those who use search engines or portals like Yahoo! Or MSN, it is a significant figure. And as social media usage continues to increase i can only expect this figure to grow." Connecting this information to a study of BIA/Kelsey (2009) shows great opportunities for small- to medium-sized businesses. In the report it is said that small- to medium-sized businesses are slow to incorporate social media strategies into their plans today. Of the companies studied only 9% used Twitter and 23% used social sites for their marketing in the past twelve months. This gives great opportunities for companies to use social media to get a competitive advantage; 77% of the small- to medium-sized companies do not use social site and that figure is 91% for Twitter. With nearly 20% of the online community on the lookout for new information about brands and products, and this number constantly increasing, using social media in your strategy is great for outsmarting your competitor's marketing efforts.

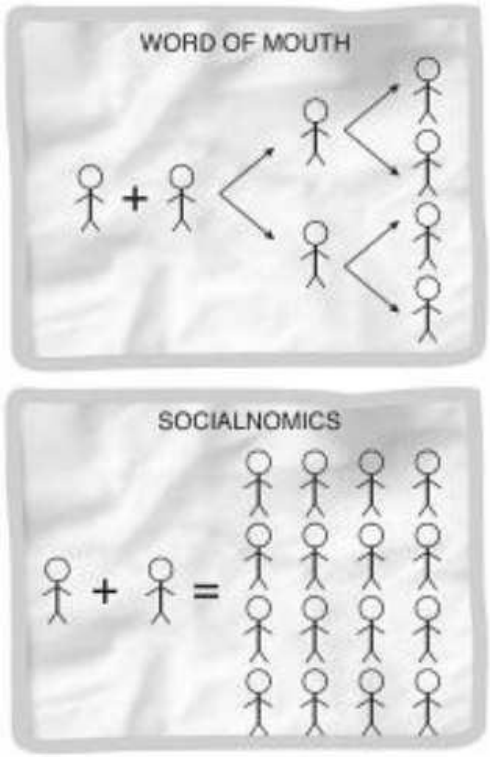


Figure 1.1 Difference between Word of Mouth and World of Mouth

Source: Adapted from Qualman 2010

In addition to the studies of Nielsen Company (2009) and BIA/Kelsey (2009), Qualman (2010) illustrates that the way information is spread online has changed. Word of mouth refers to the more traditional way where everybody tells their positive or negative experience to two people, those two people do the same and so on. However with the likes of Twitter and Facebook you have access to millions of users who have the ability to read your tweets, news and status updates. This scales much better than an individual telling a few friends a week about the new product or service she enjoys (Qualman 2010).

> *H2.2: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because social media spreads fast among the target group.*

With the constant amounts of information being added to the internet it can sometimes be very hard to learn more about the newest products. Searching for the newest television or smartphone can result in thousands and thousands of articles that all have a different, may it be slight, opinion. Therefore it is difficult to know what someone should believe or not.

Socializers trust what their friends have to say and social media acts as an information filtration tool (Nielsen Company, 2009). Socializers here are people who spend 10 percent or more of their online time on social media.



These socializers believe that what information is shared by friends and family is of greater value then what any website with information can share with them. The spam industry has practically killed any chance of e-mail marketing becoming the effective method it really should be (Burmaster, 2009). The findings of Burmaster are directly in line with the use of social media as the new platform for internet information.

Search engines are, rightfully so, viewing social media community sites as competition – people are already going to wikipedia.org directly if they are on a fact-finding mission and starting to search within Facebook for celebrities and other people (Qualman, 2010). With just Facebook alone having more page views per month than Google, social media sites are the competition for search engines in terms of advertising, brand awareness and general information source. This social shift continues to grow and it even seems that social life in general cannot function anymore without the use of internet and its social media. Social scientists are increasingly reaching the conclusion that they can no longer adequately understand many of the most important facets of social and cultural life without incorporating the Internet and computer-mediated communications into their studies (Kozinets, 2009)

In summary, the full potential in the field of brand awareness, brand image and social Medias, is yet to be discovered. However it is very clear that both are inter twined and will be of great value to companies and people even more in the future.

Brand concepts

In the early day brands were introduced to prove ownership of certain animals such as cattle (Aaker, 2008). This method is still used today, but the concept of brands have grown far larger than just a proof of ownership. Brands create customer value because theyreduce both the effort and the risk of buying things (Clifton and Simmons, 2004). Brands are a way for customers to identify different producers from another, but also hold great value for the companies using them. Brands belong to the intangible assets of an organization and are estimated to account for approximately one-third of all wealth (Clifton and Simmons, 2004). Showing the true importance of building a strongbrand.

Building a strong brand however requires understanding of more concepts than just brands and branding. Branding is closely related to many other areas within branding such as brand equity, brand strategy and brand awareness. It is therefore deemed necessary in this research to elaborate further on how these different concepts influence one another.

One of the classical concepts in brand management is that consumers will be prepared to pay a premium price as a result of augmenting the core offering with consumer relevant added values (Chernatony and Riley, 1997). Basically this means that when a product matches the specific requirements demanded by the customer, the customer is willing to pay a higher price. However it is possible for different producers to offer the same type of relevant added values, leaving the customer with two identical products that differ from another in brand only. This is where brands come in, as brands have a set of perceptions that serve to differentiate products from the competition (Aaker, 1996). Depending on how these perceptions match the customer perceptions will influence the strength of a brand. It is therefore up to managers to match this set of perceptions to the perceptions of the targeted audience, making them think of the brand in positive terms (Aaker, 1996). According to Weber (2009) social media provide an excellent platform to start adialogue with your customers, getting to know their perceptions. Weber (2009) actually states that branding in the era of social web is based more on participating in social networksto which people want to belong rather than broadcasting messages to the target groups. He

means that pushing information towards the consumer is outdated in the world of social web, rather have customers waiting on your message.

According to McWilliam (1993) and De Chernatony and McWilliam (1998) there are four views of brands from the perspective of the consumer: a visual identifier, an expression of self-concept, a shorthand device and a guarantee of consistent quality. For customers this means that they will look at all four views before deciding which brand matches those four views best to their own. It allows customers to estimate what a brand promises to them. After evaluating those four views it shows them what they can expect from a brand and how it differentiates a brand from the competitor's. Problem here could be when companies develop different identities for different products, as this clouds the brand and the customers' opinion about the brand. Or as Aaker (1996) puts it; customers are likely to be exposed to more than one identity relating to the same brand. Meaning that customers are likely to get a mixed view on a brand if the brand uses different identities per product.

As previously stated, brand equity is conceptualized by Aaker as a set of five assets: brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality and other brand assets. Of which brand awareness has very high influence on the overall brand equity. Therefore it is important to be constantly increasing your brand awareness. Weber (2009) argues that creating brand awareness through brand recall should make way for creating brand awareness through recommendation to others.

Keller (1993) has defined customer-based brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. Meaning that the customer has a positive brand-equity for a brand when the consumer reacts more favorably to the marketing efforts of said brand than another brand. An important part of creating positive customer-based brand equity is based on brand knowledge. The two components of brand knowledge are brand awareness and brand image. Basically when a customer has knowledge of a brand and has some form of unique and strong associations with the brand then the customer is more likely to have a positive brand-equity for a certain brand. The first dimension, brand awareness, as stated by Keller (1993) consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue (Keller,1993). Meaning that brands need to be correctly discriminated by the consumers as been heard or seen previously. Brand recall performance is seen by Keller as the ability of the customers to think of a brand when thinking of or feeling the need for a certain category.

Apart from the close connection between brand awareness and brand equity there also is a direct link between brand awareness and brand positioning. Elliot and Percy (2007) say it is not enough to reach recognition of a brand if the brand wants to be successful. Instead the brand should focus on attaining a top of mind or dominant brand recall. When this is achieved a brand will come to mind when there is a need for a product. Depending on how this brand matches the required benefits of the customer is key in building a positive brand attitude, eventually building a positive brand equity (Elliot and Percy, 2007).

Defined by Kotler (1991) three main branding strategies are possible. First, companies have the ability to choose individual brand names for different products and services without mentioning the company. Allowing different brands to have different perspectives and associations without being linked to the same company. Second, companies may choose the same name for all their products and services, such as Heinz. Third, companies can choose a hybrid or sub-brand strategy where the company's brand name is combined with an individual brand name for a product or service, such as Kellogs's Corn Flakes. (Keller, 1993)

Traditional media vs. socialmedia

Social media are considered by Mayfield (2008) as interpersonal media with the following characteristics: participation, conversation, community, clarity and unity. Social media has brought new opportunities for communication between a company and its customers or target group. There are very few barriers which means that the traditional way of using mass media is fading. One of the most distinct changes is the active role a user has on social media. He or she can actively participate in conversations, give feedback and offer his or her insights (Pascu, 2008). Creating a flow of information from the users to the company instead of from the company to the user, as is common when using traditional media. According to Kolbitsch and Maurer (2006) it is actually this flow of information, from the bottom- up, that is a specific characteristic of social media and its technologies. In recent history, distributing content to the masses was limited to the people and organizations with enough knowledge and resources to use traditional media (Mayfield, 2008). Social media however have enabled its users to create and distribute their own

Creations (Bowman and Willis, 2003). This is what makes social media so interesting as the lines of user and company generated content are fading (Cooke and Buckley,2008).

It is commonly known that the internet provides a platform that promotes interaction between people, however social media provides an even more complex way for interaction between sender and receiver, strengthening the two-way relationship. Opening new ways of communication using social media (Cachia, 2008). Interaction on social media is seenas an improvement for the user as it offers: independence of information sources, individualized media usage and an overall bigger choice for the user (Van Dijck,2006). The interaction between a marketer and its target group is also the big difference from using traditional media. Marketers using Social Medias will notice the difference of a self-controlled environment and one controlled by the users. Doing this will require the marketer to be talking with, not to, the target group as is usual with traditional media. Indirectly this also means that the marketer will lose some control over the information flow.

Traditional media is considered as non-personal, paid, one-way communication to inform, convince or remind the receiver of a product or service. It was until the introduction of social media that commercials in general were seen this way. However the start of user-generated content and social media has changed this way of thinking (Berthon et al., 2008). With traditional media advertisements the user had to pay for the time and space his advertisement needed. However social media and interactive media in general offer users a platform to promote which is essentially free. A distinct advantage compared to traditional media as the costs to promote are low while the potential return is high.

> *H2.3: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because cost to return is low.*

Traditional media was mostly used for just broadcasting only, sending information to the public. Social media however can be seen as process that evolves around two-way communications (Mayfield, 2007). It is seen as impossible to use the traditional way advertising on social media, from top-down, due to the two-way nature of social media. Consumers nowadays choose themselves if they want to accept or refuse a message, depending on how relevant they feel a message is. Not only does social media offer its users more freedom on what they see and how they interact, it also offers them a platform

where they can let their voice be heard. According to Cooke and Buckley (2008) socialmedia offers its users such an easy way to a place where they can share their opinion, that when consumers feel they are not listened to, they will use to show their frustrations and/or share their opinions (Davies, 2008). Whether or not the users will read said frustrations and/or opinions depends on their micro consumptions (Cooke and Buckley, 2008).
Micro consumptions can be seen as user freedom, as it allows consumers to choose themselves what, when, how and how many they "consume". The exact opposite of traditional media, where the predefined channels do not offer their users such freedom. One would think that this freedom in two-way communications would give public relation managers the ideal platform to communicate with the audience. However public relation managers want some form of control in practice (Pavlik, 2007).

Some other interesting differences between traditional media and online media are put forth by Boyd and Ellison (in Haller, 2007). Any message or post on online media will be archived. Whether or not this was the intention by the creator of said message or post but it does allow users to read the post when they want to. This also automatically means that any user is able to search through all the posts at any given time. Due to the digital nature of the message on online media, users are also able to combine and copy said message to other platforms of their liking. One of the most distinct differences however is the visibility on views and viewers on social media (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). The visibility on views and viewers offers much more insight in the amount of traffic generated on social media than traditional media can. This archive of information extends to the operators online medias, who can have access to a variety of pin point information about the users and their habits, at the click of abutton.

H2.4 Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because it gives clear numbers where traditional media cant.



insights on social media from my former company, The Jack Company

According to Beer and Burrow (2007) online media enable people to live their lives online. They say that the lines between private and public information therefore is fading, people want to show their private lives to the masses. The change in information sharing shows how much social media is integrated in everyday life.

> *H2.5: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because social media is integrated in everyday life.*

The change in information sharing is what is most important for marketers that want to start a relationship with its customers. As the information provided by the customer usually is of private nature it is even more important that marketers understand the dynamic of acting as a partner not as a salesman (Gillin,2008).

Weber (2009) argues that small or medium-sized companies can have a lot easier and more effective ways of taking maximum advantage of social medias, compared to large multinational companies.

> *H2.6: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because social media offers underdogs to have an effective way of promotion.*

Basically any underdog brand can market very effectively on social media as the spread and speed of the message is superior to any other medium out there. The spread and speed of the message is why Weber argues that relatively small or medium-sized companies can take maximum advantage of social media easier. A small company could easily challengeatop of mind brand, with a successful video on YouTube, due to the spread and

speed of the message.

Social media and Brandawareness

In a study by Hoyer and Brown (1990), consumers were asked to choose between three different makes of peanut butter. 70% chose the known brand, while blind testing proved an actual preference with the taste of the other two. This shows that being a known brand dramatically influences customers' choice on buying a certain product, and that this process is influenced by the amount of marketing activities a company does. This logic tells us that if a company is spending a fair amount of money on advertising, more customers have heard of the brand. If more people have heard of the brand and they are still satisfied by its performance, the product is of reasonable enough quality to be loyal to.

This links directly to brand image, defined here as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Real important here is the associations' people have with brands and how these associations' are influenced by other people's experiences. Social media provide an excellent platform for companies to start a dialogue with their customers, learning their experiences. However due to the open nature of internet it is deemed important to have a group of followers that spread your word. As people need to find you instead of you coming to them, as is the case with traditional media.

> *H3.1: To increase your brand awareness using social media you need to have a small follower base.*

It is believed that a strong brand is based on the dialogue a brand has with his customers. The stronger the brand the better the dialogue is with their customers. It is exactly this two-way communication flow that social media offer to companies in very cost effective way, more so than was possible in the past (Weber 2009).

Blogs provide an excellent platform to start a dialogue with your customers. As Weber (2009) argues that using blogs can provide you with a way on becoming part of the conversation. Companies should use blogs more as a marketing tool to start a dialogue with their customers. Apart from the obvious communication advantages gained by using

blogs instead of traditional media, blog also help media efforts. Weber (2009) states that blogs are used as references and as such can help your company in more ways than just a communication tool. Especially for a starting company, media referring to their blog increases their credibility and as such can help them gain more interest with consumers.

Social MediaMarketing

Branding and marketing is about participating in social network to which people want to belong (Weber 2009). The Nielsen Company states that more and more people have the need for a two-way interaction with either the company or a fellow social media supporter in order to get a clear idea about a brand and/or product. It is deemed more important to inform about a product than trying to sell said product in order to interest more people for your social media activities.

> *H3.2: To increase your brand awareness using social media you need to use social media as an information channel not as a sales channel.*

Approaching the question of branding in social media, both Weber (2009) and TheNielsen Company (2009) claim that the stronger dialogue you have with your customer the stronger the brand is, and vice versa. Weber actually questions the core concept of traditional marketing for the use of branding. As traditional media do not provide a two-way interaction between the company and itscustomers.

> *H3.3: To increase your brand awareness using social media you need to have a different strategy from using traditional media.*

As with The Nielsen Company in 2009, a study by Harris and Rae in 2010 states that "online communities will play a key role in the future of marketing as customer annoyance is replaced with engagement, and control of the content. Both The Nielsen Company and Harris and Rae claim that future prosperous businesses will be those who embrace the social media and who see change as an opportunity (Harris and Rae 2010).

Marketing the social web means to adopt completely new ways of communicating with an audience in a digital environment (Weber 2009). As with traditional media

thebroadcasters “push” the information towards the customer, social media allows for a two- way interaction. Continuing as broadcasters pushing information towards customers on the social web can be deemed a failure as marketers should be aggregating customer communities. Social media is not about broadcasting messages to an audience and leave it at that. Instead, when broadcasting on the social web marketers should be the start to participate, encourage and organize a social network to which people want to belong.

Weber (2009) describes two ways on how aggregating customers is done: provide interesting and compelling content on your website; creating a retail environment that customers want to visit, and by going out and participate in the public arena. This means that in order to get a community going your own actions as a marketer will prove vital in the success of said community. As a marketer you need to show your followers that you are available for them, be consistent in your activities, be active on set times each day/week.

H3.4: To increase brand awareness using social media you need to have a variety of updated marketcontent.

H3.5: To increase brand awareness using social media you need tohave consistently updatednews.

Segmenting your customers in the same way as with traditional media will not stand. Demographics like gender, age and education have been less relevant on the social web. What people do and feel have become of more interest in segmenting customers, as well as their interests and attitudes. A marketer should look to identify groups of customers within a large market that can be reached and affected (Weber 2009). Finding a group of people with a common interest in a large market that has not been covered by anyone else yet, is the new niche of social media.
Looking at the role of social networking in an integrated marketing strategy Harris and Rae (2010) argue that online communities have evolved considerably since the startup of chat rooms and news groups. The online technical support function by Cisco is a great example on how chat rooms have changed. Cisco put forward a community of customers which allows a member to help one another with technical support information via web communities. This meant that anyone could help a customer with technical difficulties. For

some it became a competition who could help out the fastest. This strategy is directly inline with the findings of both Harris and Rae (2010) as well as The Nielsen Company (2009). Therefore setting up a community of people with similar interests who will trust and recommend other in the group, can help out your company in a variety of ways, not just branding wise.

Weber does however suggest that social media can be used in any of the product life cycle stages. From development to adoption, social media can be used to engage and inform customers about new products, benefits and so on. After the product is introduced social media can be used as a way for trouble-shooting, problem solving, customer service and support, and as a platform to build buzz using word-of-mouth (Weber 2009).

H3.6: To increase brand awareness using social media you need to use the opinions of your followers, good orbad.

Risks of socialmedia

Previously marketers have been able to use traditional media to put their message out in the world. Marketers were able to control all details from the context of the advertisement to the place it was shown. Social media however do not provide this span of control and it is deemed a failure for marketers to try and control any aspect of social media (Schipul, 2009). Marketers are reluctant but willing to lower their span of control as social media offers them a variety of new tools. One of those tools is the ability to target their most important customers even better. However at the same time do the internet media offer the consumers to control how and when they are targeted (Singh et al, 2008). Targeting an audience that can choose whether or not to be targeted, can be a challenge, which makes it even more important to provide customers with a platform from which they will want to allow targeting to take place. With that in mind, trust is a key word, and breaking it will often result in damage beyond repair. Another risk when using social media is the high amount of people one message can influence. Cahill (2008) argues that the new media have provided customers to have an almost real time life feed with the ability to spread message to thousands of people. Resulting in more fragile brands as it is very hard to stay on top of every message on these new media. A person who just had a bad experience with a brand can put it on the internet seconds later, potentially influencing a large audience. In case this happens it is essential you respond fast and honest to the made

acquisitions(Scott,2007). As a marketer however you are unable to see how many people agree with a bad message as you are unable to evaluate how many people share the given vision. Trying to respond with a false identity or using paid commentators to change negative information can result in ban by the online community (Postman, 2009). One might think that using paid commentators could be a good way to change the opinions of certain users on online media, in the long run this could have severeconsequences for your brand and is actually banned by law in the European Union (EU Unfair Commercial Practices Directive II).
Additionally, getting caught out for doing so may result in more bad press.

One of the biggest risks is seen in the hype of social media in general (Kelleher, 2008). Day in day out new social media platforms are being introduced. The risk starts when companies try to build a community on all of these platforms, as it requires to split your focus on multiple areas, making it unable to fully focus on one community. Defren (2005) argues that this split focus on multiple communities happens when companies only want to use social media because the competition uses it. Having these companies feel the need to be on every social media there is to "outsmart" thecompetition.

LG Electronics Inc is a South Korean multinational electronics company headquartered in Yeouido-dong, Seoul, South Korea.

LG Electronics is part of the fourth-largest chaebol in South Korea (LG Corporation) and in 2014 global sales reached US$55.91 billion. It comprises four business units: Home Entertainment, Mobile Communications, Home Appliances & Air Solutions and Vehicle Components with Starion India as its main production vendor for refrigeration and washing machines in the Indian sub-continent. LG Electronics owns Zenith and controls 37.9 percent of LG Display. Since 2008, LG Electronics remains the world's second-largest LCD television manufacturer. The company has 128 operations worldwide, employing 83,000 people.

Products

LG Electronics' products include televisions, home theater systems, refrigerators, washing machines, computer monitors, wearable devices, solar modules, smart appliances and smartphones.

- ## Televisions

The LG SL9000 was one of several new Borderless HDTV's advertised for release at IFA Berlin in 2009. LG Electronics launched an OLED TV in 2013 and 65-inch and 77-inch sizes in 2014. LG Electronics introduced its first Internet TV in 2007, originally branded as "NetCast Entertainment Access" devices. They later renamed the 2011 Internet televisions to "LG Smart TV" when more interactive television features were added, that enable the audience to receive information from the Internet while watching conventional TV programming.

In November 2013, a blogger discovered that some of LG's smart TVs silently collect filenames from attached USB storage devices and program viewing data, and transmit the information to LG's servers and LG-affiliated servers. Shortly after this blog entry went live, LG disabled playback on its site of the video, explaining how its viewer analytics work, and closed the Bright cove account the video was hosted on.

LG manufactures remote control models that use Hillcrest Labs' Freespace technology to allow users to change channels using gestures and Dragon NaturallySpeaking technology for voice recognition.

As of 2014, LG is using webOS with a ribbon interface with some of its smart TVs. LG reported that in the first eight months after release, it had sold over 5 million webOS TVs.

In 2016, exclusively to India, Indian arm of South Korea's LG Electronics Inc started selling a TV that would repel mosquitoes. It uses ultrasonic waves that are silent to humans but cause mosquitoes to fly away. It was released on 16 June 2016. The technology was also used in air conditioners and washing machines. The TV is aimed for lower-income consumers living in conditions that would make them susceptible to mosquitoes.

In 2018, it was reported that LG was planning to sell big-screen televisions that could be rolled up and retract automatically with the push of a button come 2019.

- **Mobile Devices**
  - Mobile Phone

LG Electronics manufactures smartphones and tablet devices. Other than the G3, LG officially unveiled the curved smartphone, G Flex, on 27 October 2013. LG released it in South Korea in November 2013 and later announced releases in Europe, the rest of Asia and North America. At Consumer Electronics Show in January 2014, LG announced a US release for the G2 across several major carriers. In 2015, LG released LG G4 globally in late May through early June. On 7 September 2016, LG unveiled the V20, and the V30 was announced on 31 August 2017. LG G6 was officially announced during MWC 2017 on 26 February 2017. The introduction of the G7 ThinQ model was scheduled for other a 2 May 2018 media briefing.

  - Tablet computers

In 2014, LG announced three new additions to the G series of tablets, which have LG's Knock Code feature, allowing users to unlock devices with a series of taps. The tablets also feature Q Pair which allows tablets to sync up with a smartphone, with phone calls and text messages passed on to the tablet in real time.

  - Smart watches

LG and Google announced the Android Wear-based smartwatch, the LG G Watch that was in June 2014. In August 2014, the LG G Watch R that has a circular face (similar to the Moto 360) was released. The LG Watch Urbane that LG's third Android Wear-based smart watch has released in April 2015. This was the first device to support newer smartwatch features such as Wi-Fi, and new parts of Android Wear's software interface, like the ability to draw emoji to friends.

  - Rolly Keyboard

In 2015, LG announced a Bluetooth keyboard that folds up along the four rows of keys for

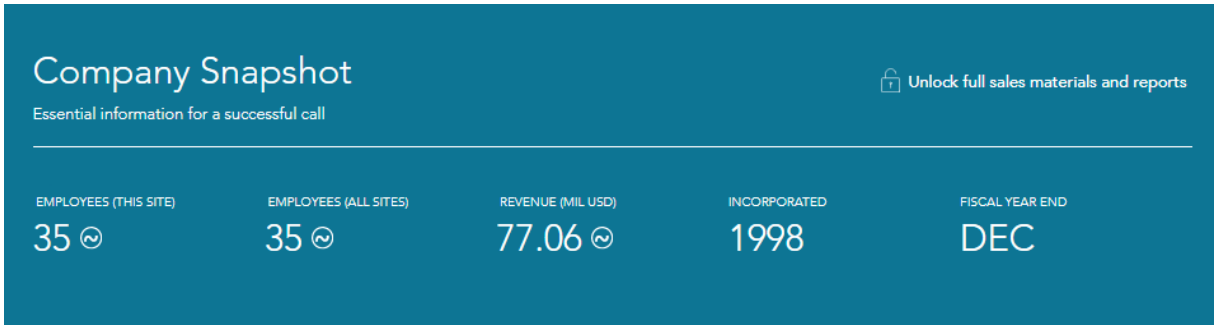
portability. The Rolly keyboard is made of solid plastic. Two tiny plastic arms fold out from the end of the keyboard to support a tablet or smartphone and it can toggle between two different Bluetooth-connected devices at a time. Battery life is an expected three months on a single AAA battery.

- **Home Appliances**

LG manufactures home appliances including refrigerators, washing machines, tumble dryers, vacuum cleaners, air conditioners and microwave ovens. In June 2014, LG Electronics announced the launch of its smart appliances with Home Chat messaging service in South Korea. Home Chat employs LINE, the mobile messenger app from Korean company 'Naver', to let homeowners communicate, control, monitor and share content with LG's smart appliances. Users can send simple messages, such as "start washing cycle," in order to control their washing machines.

LG ELECTRONICS MOROCCO

LG ELECTRONICS MOROCCO is located in CASABLANCA, Morocco and is part of the Electronic Component Wholesalers Industry. LG ELECTRONICS MOROCCO has 35 total employees across all of its locations and generates $77.06 million in sales (USD). There are 371 companies in the LG ELECTRONICS MOROCCO corporate family.





Conclusions

Social media is a platform that allows users to exchange user-generated content. The social media platform offers a big change in the way that media is spread. Instead of the traditional push-principle, used with traditional media, social media allows two-way communications. There are many different technologies on social media that can be used to establish a two-way communication stream between a company and its followers. It is exactly these technologies, such as blogs and forums that allow users to get a better understanding of what their target group wants.

Understanding what the target group wants is key in creating brand awareness. If the value and perceptions added by a brand matches that of the customer, the customer is more likely to be aware of the product, thus raising brand awareness. Even though there are many different levels of brand awareness, brand awareness will always start with recognition and hopefully raise to the levels of top of mind or even a dominant position. Gaining higher levels of brand awareness will result in having a stronger brand. Having a stronger brand is important as they shape the customer decisions and allows the company to charge more for a product then a lesser brand can. Achieving a stronger brand can be done by having a consistent brand strategy which in turn will lead to a stronger brand equity, a keycomponent in achieving a stronger brand. Brand equity is so important that it shows to what extent customers will recommend the brand to others, potentially raising brand awareness even further.

Brand equity is seen as a set of five assets: brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality and other brand assets. Of these five assets, brand awareness is regarded as one of the strongest influences on brand equity as it shows the strength a brand has in consumers' minds. However it is argued that the influx of new media types provide a much more challenging platform to raise brand awareness on. As users now a days are bombarded with marketing messages daily. Therefore in order to be successful in creating brand awareness, firms need to acquire the knowledge of operating outside the traditional media channels.

In recent studies it is already shown that almost 20% of internet users uses social media community platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn alone as a core discovery tool for new information. On top of that comes the usage of social media search engines and portals such as Yahoo! or MSN, showing the need to be present on social media. Thisneed however is, as of yet, not recognized by the majority of the companies out there. Less

than25% of the companies' studies uses social media sites for their marketing efforts, it really shows the true potential these new online media can offer to your company. Apart from the low amount of companies using social media, these new online media provide a tool for reaching far more people than was previously deemed possible. Traditional media use "word of mouth" to spread their message among the population. Social media however allow its users to spread their message using "world of mouth", referring to the potential thousands of users, one person can influence using social media. It is also shown that there is a group of users who believe that the information shared by this "world of mouth" principle is of more interest than the information a website can give them. It is therefore deemed necessary for a company to participate in social networks in order for people to feel like a brand belongs to theirperceptions.

Having a brand match the perceptions of the customer is important, as it will be the brand that matches those perceptions best that will the preferred brand. It is however known that these perceptions can be clouded due to different identities provided by the same brand but for different products. Having the same identity for different products by the same brand is the best way to have clear consumer perceptions, showing the added benefits. Matching therequired benefits and perceptions a customer has will lead to a positive brand attitude, building a positive brand equity.

Social media allows its users more independence of information sources than traditional media can, allowing the customer to get a better idea if a brand matches the required benefits and perceptions. As such, the social medias hold high importance to the marketer However, it also requires a different approach to how to communicate with the customer, compared to that of the traditional medias. Communicating with the customer is key here, as it is normal to be talking to the customer using traditional media. Even though marketers using social media will lose a lot in terms of span of control, they gain a cost free way of communicating with, gathering data, and understanding the target group even better.

Apart from the added functionality to communicate with the customer even better, social media offers some other distinct changes from traditional media. One of those changes is that every message will be archived. A marketer has to keep this in mind as any message needs to be 100% accurate in order for said message not to back fire in the future. Another distinct change is the higher visibility on views and viewers for your social mediamessage. This allows marketers much better insight in the amount of traffic their social media

messages generate. The integration of social media in everyday life can also be regarded as a distinct change from traditional media. Social media is used by many people in daily life, offering more contact moments to influence the consumer. There is another advantage that is mostly applicable for underdog brands as social medias prove to be easier and more effective to integrate than for largecompanies.

Blogs are a vital platform to start a dialogue with you customers. Not only do blogs offer a company a platform on which they can become part of the conversation. Blogs are also used as a point of reference. The usage of blogs as a point of reference is important for a company to increase their credibility, as the more a blog is referred to the more people will trust the blog.

Using social media for branding and marketing requires understanding that people will only participate in discussions if you can provide those people with an environment to which they want to belong. Providing such an environment is important when creating an online community. Having a community is what any marketer is after when using social medias, the people in this community can provide information to people requesting it without being linked in terms of employment to the company. Such an opinion can provefar more interesting for anybody on the lookout for information. Creating said community requires an understanding that using strategies that have proven useful on traditional media are deemed a failure when trying to implement those strategies on social media.
Understanding this is important as social media provide marketers with a two-way interaction channel something that is not possible with the one-way interaction provided by traditional media. Marketers should be eager to participate, encourage and organize a social network to which people want to belong. Providing a community to which people want to participate starts with providing a variety of updated market content as well as having consistently updated news, which allows you to participate in the publicarena. Segmenting your customers in the traditional way such as gender and age will not help a marketer creating a community. Instead try to segment your customers on interests and attitudes.

There are some big risks when using social media however, most of these risks come from implementing the same strategies used for traditional media in social media. Traditional media marketing allowed marketers to have full control over their messages, however social media do not provide this span of control. Trying to control messages on social

media will result in a failure on your marketing activities.

Another risk lies in the way consumers can be targeted on social media. As a marketer you cannot expect that consumers on social media can be targeted the same way as when using traditional media. Social media provide customers full control of when and how they are targeted.

The amount of people one message on social media is also seen as big risk. Social media provide such a wide range of people it can influence, one bad message can change the opinions of a large amount of consumers. Therefore it is said that social media have made brands more fragile, as you are unable as company to be on top of every message about your activities and brands on every social media platform available. However as a marketer you are unable to see how many people share the opinion of one message. Social media is such an easy way for consumers to voice their opinion that a marketer is unable to evaluate how many people share that opinion.

Social media is also seen as a hype by many companies. Risk in sharing this opinion is that companies will try to create a community on every social media platform available. Splitting your focus as a marketer from creating one community.

3.1 Research Questions

The aim of this chapter is to formulate the research questions based on the literature review, which enables the analysis to be done in a proper way and to solve the research problem.

Definition of the problem

Which insights regarding social media and brand awareness can be drawn from existing literature; is it possible to create a framework for consumer electronic companies in Morocco to understand the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness.

The usage of social media to increase brand awareness is a recent trend. In order to get a better understanding of this subject we need to answer the following research questions of an exploratory character.

Research Question1

Which insights can be drawn from current literature on social media, regarding brandawareness?

Social media can be used to increase brand awareness and to get into a long term relationship with your customers, according to Carlsson (2010). There are a variety of social media platforms that can be used by a company to increase brand awareness. A company can for instance use a blog to initiate in conversations with the target group, while raising credibility as well. Using a blog allows your followers to spread and refer to your social media activities as well, potentially further increasing your brand awareness. It should be noted here however that using social media will only be successful if a company engages and participates in conversations made on social media platforms. Other social media platforms such as YouTube, forums and Facebook provide the same opportunities and should be used in the same way.

Research Question2

What is the difference with social media from traditional media to increase brandawareness?

Considered by Mayfield (2007) as interpersonal media, social media allow more engagement with the customers. Participation, conversation, community, clarity and unity are described as the key characteristics of social media. Increasing brand awareness using social media needs to address these key characteristics in order to be successful. Traditional media do not offer ways to engage with the public, important to understand their views on a brand. The two-way communications nature of social media however provides an excellent platform to engage in conversations with your target group.

Research Question3

What advantages does social media offer to increase brand awareness?

It is argued by Weber (2009) that social media allows a company to build a community around itself. Offering a variety of advantages, namely more contact moments with your customers. Having more contact with your customers allows you to have a better understanding of what your target group is looking for. Matching the exact wishes of the consumer can result into the one of the strongest forms of increasing brand awareness, word of mouth. Word of mouth is one of the best tools in creating brand awareness as it uses the credibility of your customers to spread the word and recommend the brand to others. In this thesis an investigation will be made among the interviewed companies to see what they feel are the advantages social media has to offer them.

Research Question4

What disadvantages should be reckoned with when using social media to increase brandawareness?

Kelleher (2008) argues that the hype of social media makes it increasingly difficult to increase brand awareness using said social media. Having multiple social media platforms to engage with the customer will result in a split focus, ultimately lowering the opportunities of building a proper community. Carlsson (2010) also states that starting with social media will raise the transparency of the company. Therefore it is important to

figureout to what extent a company wants to open up to the consumers on social media. Finding a delicate but acceptable balance is essential as a too strict policy will result in uninteresting information on the social media. However a too open policy can feel uncomfortable for the companies, as it offers more insight to your competitors as well, potentially stealing ideas.

3.3 Developed framework

The following developed framework is based solely on the theory and literature review and is developed to give a theoretical insight on how to increase brand awareness using social media for consumer electronic companies in Morocco.It is clear in the literature review that social media provide new ways to increase your brand awareness. The analysis will mostly be based on the insights of Weber and will show that aggregating customers is one of the most important things that can be done when increasing brand awareness using social media.

It is also shown that having a different strategy from using traditional media is important to increase your brand awareness using social media. As you try to achieve a community on social media let go of the traditional way of pushing information to the customers. Instead engage in discussions and conversations with your audience, making the customers feel like their voice is being heard.

The two-way communication nature of social media provide an excellent platform to engage into conversations with your targeted audience. Key difference from using traditional media however is the way in which the audience finds you. Using social media requires the audience to find you instead of you coming to them, as is the case with traditional media. Therefore it is important to have a small follower base that can spread your word to others, potentially creating more followers, increasing brand awareness.

Another key element that is being shown in the literature review that increases brand awareness is the use of social media as an information channel instead of sales channel. The reason for this is that people are more active in sharing information then sharing sales deals. Sharing is exactly what you want if you look to increase your brand awareness as more people will look at the information you provide. Therefore it is important for a marketer to provide a variety of updated market content, the more information you provide, the higher the chance is that it interests people. More interested people equalsmore followers, which in turn means an increase in brand awareness. Just as

important as offering a variety of updated market content is the ability to have a consistent flow of information. Offering a consistent flow of information, for example each day at 10 am, will allow your users to count on you to provide them with information, key in creating followers. However in the literature review it is unclear what is the optimal number of consistent updates each day/week, but it is shown that consistency is key.

Having the customers feel like their voice is being heard is also closely related to your reaction on your follower's opinions. Any opinion, good or bad, should be listened to and acted upon to improve your brand. Showing to the world the customer's opinion matters, is key in creating a community, ultimately increasing brand awareness.

Following this framework allows you to aggregate customers in the two ways described by Weber (2009): providing updated content of interest and thus creating an environment customers want to visit, and engaging and participate in the discussion and conversations in public; the social media platform. Creating an environment to which customers want to belong is done not by segmenting on demographics, but by segmenting on people's attitudes and interests. A marketer should therefore look at a potentially large group of people with the same interests and attitude that can be engaged with using socialmedia.

Done properly will result into what Weber (2009) describes as the highest level of brand awareness, word of mouth; customers recommending the brand to others due to the high level of brand awareness. Other levels of brand awareness are based on the traditionalview by Aaker in the following order. Very strong brand awareness known as dominant (the only brand a customer can remember). Strong brand awareness known as top of mind (the very first brand a customer can think of). Medium brand awareness known as recall (a customer can recall the brand). Low brand awareness known as recognition (a customer has heard of thebrand).

In order to reach the highest levels of brand awareness this thesis will follow Aaker's ideas that coordinating messages across all different media is essential. Aaker argues that building a brand is hard and requires a brand to pass through all different levels of brand awareness. Getting to the highest levels of brand awareness can be done through aggregating communities in which the companies are able to engage into discussion and conversations.

Methodology/datasources

Introduction

In this chapter of the thesis the used methodology is explained to gain a better understanding how the research information is collected and used. Described will be how the philosophical view of this research is used and a clarification will be given on the data collection. A qualitative/interpretive approach will be used in order for the researcher to argue on the frameworks needed in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco.

Research Philosophy

In this chapter the researcher explains the used research philosophy in order to gain a better understand of the research philosophy used, as the researcher is known with the different approaches that exist. In order to add knowledge to the existing field of social media and brand awareness research, an interpretive approach is used. Using an empirical view the researcher tries to combine desk research and interviews to a new conceptual framework to increase brand awareness using social media.

To create a consistent and valid research this thesis will be using the constructivism (interpretist) view. "*Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in."* (Brooks, 2001) The researcher focuses mainly on the meanings of what is happening and tries to understand why and how people act in this way. These ideas and understandings are developed through examination of the collected data. Using interviews as data collection the researcher establishes different views and uses small samples (6 companies) for in-depth investigation.

The philosophy used in this thesis is the inductive approach. Using a number of questions about social media and brand awareness the qualitative data of interest to the researcher is collected. The in-depth interviews are used to understand the underlying drivers of using social media to increase brand awareness of six companies in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco.

Research Approach

Using social media to increase brand awareness is a new area in the academic and business context. This research aims to give a clear understanding on the drivers for the usage of social media in the consumer electronics industry to increase brand awareness in Morocco, while contributing to existing literature aswell. The gap noticed by the researcher lies between the knowledge of using social media to increase brand awareness and the actual in real life implementation by consumer electronic companies in Morocco. In order to tighten said gap, this paper offers a best-practice model that can be used by consumer electronic companies when using social media to increase their brand awareness in Morocco. Due to the relatively new platform of social media,research on the subject of social media and brand awareness is constantly adapted. Therefore this thesis tries to interpret the subject in its own way and add content to the existing knowledge andliterature.

The philosophy used in this proposal is an inductive approach, binding the research question to context. The in-depth interviews will be used to gain qualitative data (approximately 50 minutes per interview) and is used to evaluate and assess the strategies used by the companies on understanding the drivers for the use of social media to increase their brand awareness. As it is unlikely for established or accepted theories to be available for this study; according to Remenyi *et al*, the inductive reasoning is applicable to business and management studies, like this study.

Research Strategy

For this study the importance of collecting data both during the testing and exploration phase is vital.
This report tries to identify the context of the theoretical perspective and its underlying importance in data collection through analysis. Using the phenomenological epistemology when collecting and analyzing the data, will the details of the information provided be shown. This would not be able using a far larger quantitative questionnaire as data collection method.

To create a proper framework to give insight in the drivers of companies in the consumer electronic industry to use social media to increase their brand awareness, the qualitativedata will be combined with the findings of the desk research. After data

collection is finalized, it will be analyzed to give an interpretation of the findings on the theory drawn and the observations found. The interpretation of these findings will be used to develop a best-practice model in social media usage to increase brand awareness for companies in the electronic consumer industry in Morocco.

For the validity of the report the measurements will be done after the appropriate desk research is done. This will result in a framework that can be used in businesses in Morocco.

After the findings are shaped into a best-practice framework, action research can begin. The functionality of the framework will be tested through in-depth interviews with several companies in Morocco. Afterwards any adaptions of the framework will be made where needed to put the framework into practice. Besides the framework as a recommendation, will the researcher put forward practical ways and recommendations for these businesses on how to implement the framework, thus gaining more competitive advantage?

TimeHorizon

A cross sectional time horizon is appropriate here; in the exploration phase the aim is to explore the ways on how customer experience processes in practice, whereas the testing phase will be used to acknowledge the designed methodology.

Data Collection: Validity andReliability

Using in-depth interviews as a primary source, and literature (written after 1995) as secondary source; multiple sources of evidence are used to create a synergistic view of the acquired evidence. The interviewees will be asked to validate their information as well, this way there is a chain of evidence to track the route of the data to its sources. This way the interviewer uses an interpretive view to show the truth instead of making the truth.

To make sure all the information given is valid, the questions asked and the information given are analyzed to make sure 'Halo effects', 'memory recall biases' and 'reflexivity'does not occur within this research. These threats will have special attention as well as using other inductive approaches for validation of already researched subjects.

The problem with external validity is whether the findings can be generalized into a wider context, according to Remenyi *et al* (2003). Comparing and analyzing several case studies with the aim to predict similar or contradicting results will deal with this problem. However to achieve interpretive authenticity all the interpretations made should be reviewed by the companies questioned.

With the usage of existing literature, the focus lays on the link and correlation between brand awareness and usage of social media, resulting in higher competitive advantage and a 2-way communications system to increase customer contact. Measuring this link or correlation will be done through interviews, studies and journals. Using the same questions in each interview (adjusted to specific situations where needed) will the qualitative data be reliable.

The interviewees were selected based on the researcher's judgement. Selecting interviewees based on age or gender is not relevant to this research. Leading for selection is consumer electronic companies using social media in Morocco. The following criteria were used to select the companies to be interviewed:

> *Social media activities:* Interviewees need to be involved in using social media to increase brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. *Industry:* The aim of the researcher is to understand the drivers of using social media in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco. Due to the different nature of products sold in the consumer electronics industry some different perspectives are involved. This thesis is focused solely on any sized companies active in Morocco. It is however known to the researcher that focusing on Morocco could danger the outcome of the research. However as this thesis develops an understanding for companies in Morocco only, this should be irrelevant.

Dataanalysis

The core of a grounded theory lies in the meta-interpretation used throughout the interviews. Therefore the interviewer is interpreting a truth rather then objectively seeking the truth. Using previous studies and interviews the data is being tested using different perspectives in the consumer electronics industry on the subject of social media and brand awareness. In order to evaluate relevant studies the researcher acts as an interpreter to only use previous studies relevant to the subject of brand awareness and social media. These articles will support the interpreted findings with the interviews. The topics used in the interview are explained in the literature review. Using this method provides clarity for the collected data. After the data is collected, the findings will be shaped into a framework by the researcher. Said framework will then be tested through in-depth interviews. If required, the framework will be adjusted based on the results of the interviews in order for the framework to be implemented in practice. The final framework itself will therefore be one of the recommendations made. A discussion in the end will provide managerial implications as well as a summary of the findings and interesting subjects for future research.

Ethics

In order to take the ethics of the participants into account a variety of methods are used. First, the interviewees were given clear information about the subject and aim of this thesis. Allowing the interviewees to prepare themselves and get up to date information. Second, all interviews were recorded using a voice-recorder, ensuring the exact transfer of words, from voice to paper.

This thesis will be used for research purposes only and will stay confidential.

Limitations

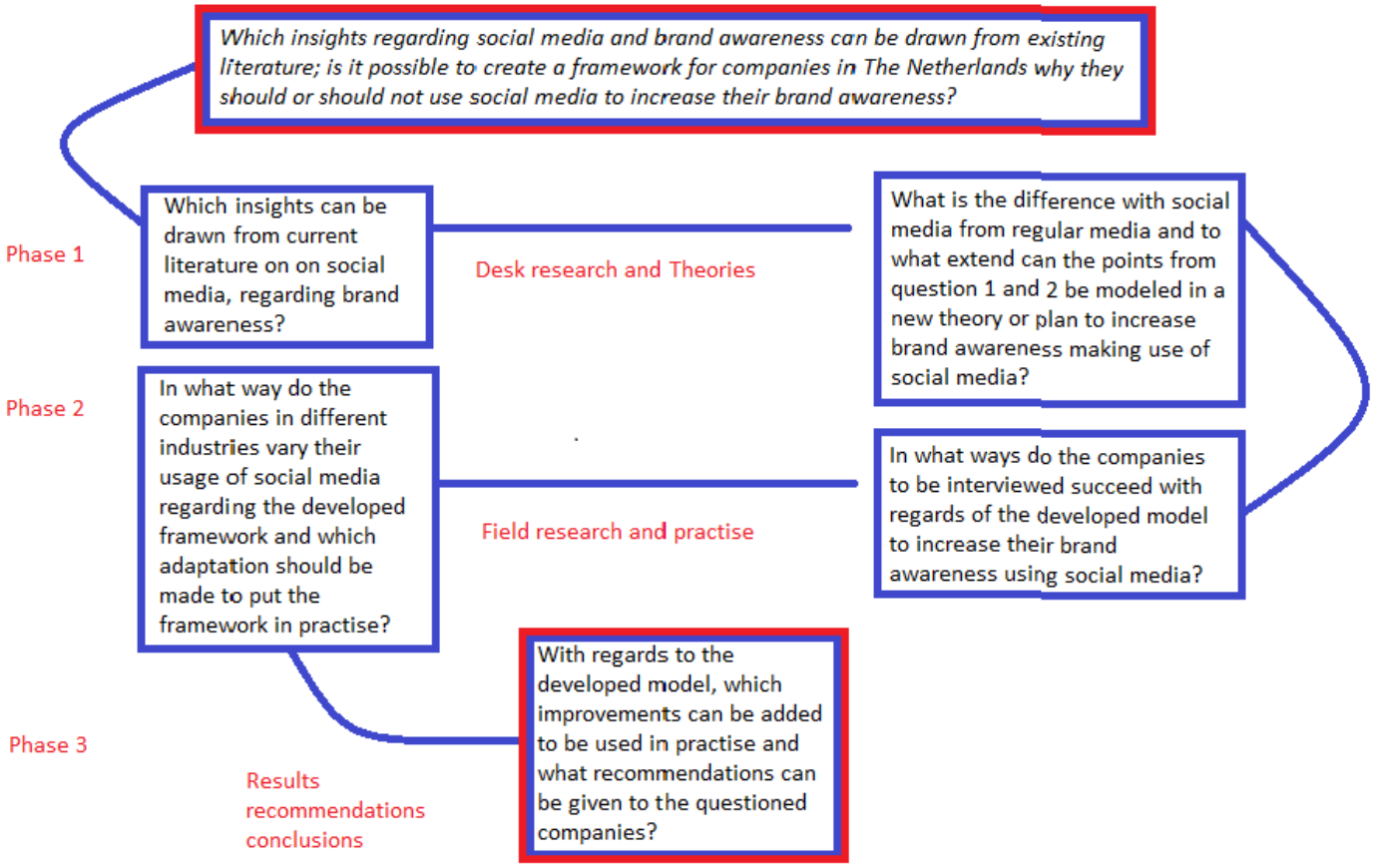
The research regarding social media is relatively new, showing ever changing ways on how social media should be used and how it can increase brand awareness. In order to limit the ever changing models on social media, has this research based most of the findings on either Weber or Aaker. This research was also limited to the collection of data through one method, in-depth interviews. Collecting data through one method can result in possible biases. It is therefore considered useful if other qualitative methods were used to support the in-depth interviews. Possible biases might have occurred during the

interviewsasdefinitions were not explained, having the interviewees use their own interpretation of the terminology used. Other possible biases might have occurred in the framing of the questions, these could have been framed differently due to the order of the interviews.

Conceptual research model

The research model below gives a clear view on how the different questions and aspects are linked together.

The research model consists of three phases. The first phase is focused on gathering the appropriate knowledge regarding brand awareness and social media in a desk research manner. The second phase will be used to create a framework with the collected information and theories. After the creation of this framework the findings will be tested and analyzed with the help of consumer electronic companies in Morocco. The third and final phase will be to analyze the findings when putting the framework into practice and make any recommendations and conclusions regarding the report.



TheoreticalRelevance

This research examines the usage of social media and its theories and literature to increase brand awareness in Morocco. The outcome of this research will be to create a best-practice model to bridge existing problems in linking practice to theory. All suggestions to and practical problems of social media to increase brand awareness will be developed within a theoretical context.

InterviewResults.

In this chapter the most important parts of the interviews are highlighted regarding their drivers using social media to increase brand awareness.

For this survey multiple companies active in consumer electronics were asked to participate. The interviewed companies are active on different fronts of consumer electronics as well as having different levels of brand awareness among the consumer. All companies are listed in Appendix C and vary from KPN to Home audio solutions.

H1: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness?

All interviewed companies see the opportunities of using social media to increase their brand awareness. Companies see social media as a part of the company's communications and are very aware that people will write about them on social media even if they use it or not.

The reasons as to why they use social media specifically to increase their brand awareness varies. Dufaco's head of sales Mr. Weisz says the main reason as to why they use social media is because they want to start a dialogue with their customers, connecting them with their brand, ultimately increasing brand awareness.

KPN however recently started using social media as people write about them whether or not KPN is using it. By starting with social media KPN tries to listen to listen to all comments made about their brand, ultimately making their customers feel like they're all listened to and make a change in the brands activities. Mr. Burgers adds "Generally speaking I agree that social media can be used to increase brand awareness. In our case however I wouldhave to disagree as we are a top of mind brand and our social media activities specifically do not increase our brand awareness."

Audio home solutions started using social media as all their competitors are using it and it's a fast and easy way to spread the word among a large audience. "We really see the strengths in using social media to increase your brand awareness. After we put out a couple of messages on both Facebook and Twitter our requested offers have almost doubled." Says Mr.Ros.

H2: Social media can be used to increase brand awareness because:

H2.1: consumer electronics target group uses social media a lot.

The interviewed companies are very aware that their target group uses social media a lot. None of the interviewed companies disagreed with the previous statement. As Belcompany's store manager Jan Willem van Oort puts it: "Recently we have seen a boast in the sale of smartphones and tablet computers, while regular phone sales have decreased tremendously. Smartphones are seen as one of the main reasons as to why social media catches on so fast". Mr. Van Oort is very aware their target group uses social media a lot, "our target group uses social media on almost any step of their decision to buy".

KPN's generic account manager Mr. Burgers agrees partly with the statement. "We know our consumer target group uses social media a lot to find out information about our company and products. I have heard stories of information being posted on Facebookabout our new pricings for the use of mobile internet, and within 5 minutes there would be people in the store asking what is going on and if this would affect their current subscription. Our business target group however does not use social media to find information about us or ourproducts."

H2.2: social media spreads fast among the target group.

All interviewed companies know that social media messages are known to spread fast among the users. Mr. van Hout, store manager Vodafone had the following to say: "Social media is known for its instant spread among thousands of users and we know our target group is among them."

Most companies also see this as a threat; “due to the fast spreading nature of social media it is almost impossible to be on top of everything. A negative message can already be spread to thousands of people before you are able to react.” says Audio home solutions owner Mr. Ros.

H2.3: cost to return is low.

Out of all the interviewed companies, four of them said the main reason why they started with social media was because of the low costs to return. All companies however agreed that using social media to increase brand awareness is perfect as the costs needed to reach a large audience are low.

Dufaco’s Mr. Weisz: “Yes, i do agree that the costs to return are low when using social media, however this does not mean using social media is as good as free. This will be the case when the amount of traffic about you on social media is low, however when the traffic catches on so do the costs. Someone needs to check the information and possibly respond in order to keep the discussion going between us and our customers”.

H2.4: give clear numbers where traditional media cannot.

Only Belcompany’s store manager Mr. Van Oort disagreed with this statement partially. “Yes social media can give a better insight in the amount of people that see a certain add or video, but it all depends on the social media and promotion used. For instance we have done some giveaways using social media to give away tablet pc. To win said tablet pc the participants had to do a variety of things on social media; like tweets, respond to articles and so on. The amount of traffic on our social media channels sky rocketed during the giveaway and plummeted when the giveaway ended. This is easily understandable but it did not give us clear numbers of people that would join our community on socialmedia”.

Mr. Van Hout added: “We can get an update every morning from the head of our social media activities Mr. Web. Allowing us to get a clear understanding of what has been said about us or how many people have read or seen a certain message. This makes it able for us to prepare ourselves for certain questions. For instance if we have just had some information posted about a new telephone, and it is noted that many people have read the message, we can prepare ourselves for specific questions about the phone.”

H2.5: social media is integrated in everyday life.

The companies are very aware that social media is integrated in everyday life. Four of the interviewed companies sell products like smartphones that help integrate social media in daily life. Audio home solutions owner Mr. Ros said the following: “Some people nowadays cannot live their lives without contact on social media. You see it all around you, people using social media like Facebook to stay in touch with friends, instead of just calling them”.

H2.6: underdogs have an effective way of promotion.

Only four companies fully agreed with above statement. KPN’s Mr. Burgers said the following “Yes, social media can prove very effective for an underdog brand to increase their brand awareness. However for those underdogs it can also prove to be very risky as big brands can start spreading counter-ads”.

Belcompany’s store manager Mr. Van Oort fully disagrees with the hypothesis. He thinks that the link between big brands and their customers is too strong to be challenged by an underdog brand. “It is plain and simple. At the start of an underdogs social media campaign there can be an increase in brand awareness, however this won’t stick for a long time as the link between a top of mind brand and its customers is too strong to be challenged by an underdog brand over the long run”.

Dufaco’s head of sales Mr. Weisz agrees but with reserve. “Yes, underdogs can use social media very effective to promote their cause and raise brand awareness among the target group. Sadly there have been cases of underdogs that use social media promotion activities to look like a better and bigger company then they actually are. So yes it can prove to be very effective but can also be misleading.”

Mr. Ros, owner Home audio solutions: “As said before we have only started this company earlier this year and we are definitely still in the underdog position in our market. We have however had great successes with the use of social media, even orders. For a company like us social media really is a great tool to get our name out there as we are able to reach a lot of people without pretty much paying a dime.”

H3: To increase your brand awareness you need to:

H3.1: Have a small follower base.

Everybody agreed with the hypothesis above besides Dufaco's head of sales Mr. Weisz. "I think it is very well possible to increase your brand awareness without any follower base. I do have to agree that it will be easier as your follower base could help you spread information, but it is very well possible to do this without a follower base to start with."

Mr. Van Oort, Belcompany store manager, said the following: "In order to increase your brand awareness you need a group of active users to help you out. I do not think that it is possible to increase your brand awareness without having at least a small follower base."

Smile Utrecht owner Mr. Vossen agrees: "The audio market we are in is very competitive. It is only because of our follower base that we consistently gain more orders and have more people finding our brand."

Mr. Ros added: "We have started our brand earlier this year and started using social media a couple of months ago. Using our friends, family and customers, we were able to have a small follower base to start with. Its all in the small things, someone notifies a "like" on Facebook from a friend and before you know it that person is a customer."

H3.2: Have a variety of updated market content.

Out of all companies interviewed only three companies fully agreed with the above statement.
Vodafone store manager Mr. Van Hout agrees "Since we started offering more information on our social media about market conditions and other interesting information, we have seen an increase, very slight, in our brand awareness."

"A variety of market content on social media can prove important but in my experience it is equally important to match that variety with the targeted interests of your target group. You want to offer as much information as you can, but keep in mind your target group." Mr. Weisz, Dufaco.

Mr. Burgers, KPN; "I think it is important to have some variety in the content you put on

your social media, however in my experience you do not want to offer too much detailedinformation. Rather keep the information a little bit more basic and then link them to you main website."

Mr. Ros, Audio home solutions; "Having a variety of updated market content can help you get more viewers on your social media, this however does not necessarily mean an increase in brand awareness."

H3.3: Have consistently updated news.

Only Belcompany store manager Mr. Van Oort disagrees with this statement: "I do not think that the key to increase your brand awareness on social media is consistently updated news. In our experience it is more important that the quality of the news is high. See it like this way, as a consumer would you rather read ten poor quality messages a day or would you rather read one message at the end of the day of high quality."

Mr. Weisz, Dufaco; "Yes consistently updated news is very important. Every day, multiple times. As a company you need to let the outside world know what is going on. It is not like you spam them with messages anyways, people can choose themselves how many times a day/week they want to read new information. This is very different from the likes of email where the message is sort of pushed towards the consumer. Consumers reading social media choose themselves what and when they want to readit."

Mr. Van Hout, Vodafone; "I think that consistently updated news is one of the most important things in succeeding with social media to increase your brand awareness. I think it is even more important than having a variety of updated content on your social media. When people can count on your news just the way they can count on a television program to start on time, you can really see the advantages of social media."

H3.4: Use social media as information channel not as sales channel.

There seems to be a lot of controversy regarding this hypothesis among the companies. Mr. Burgers, KPN; "For us it is more important that social media generates sales apart from informing people. We really feel that social media can be used to increase yourbrand awareness while offering special offers andsuch."

Belcompany's store manager Mr. Van Oort also thinks using social media as both information channel and sales channel can improve your brand awareness. "The essence lies in finding the right balance between informing and offering sales."

Mr. Weisz, Dufaco; "We have seen an increase in our brand awareness ever since we also started informing about sale offers on our social media apart from just informing."

Smile Utrecht owner, Mr. Vossen said the following: "Using social media as an information channel is so easy and so essential to increase your brand awareness. With social media you really have a platform that pretty much anyone in the world can look at. We have done some small tests in the pasts using social media to sell our products but this has only worked counter effective, losing a small amount of followers."

Mr. Van Hout, Vodafone; "To increase your brand awareness it has proven more effective using social media as just an information channel. We have however had positive experiences in using social media for special offers, but this does not mean an increase in brand awareness."

H3.5: Have a different strategy from traditional media.

Among the interviewed companies only Belcompany's store manager Mr. Van Oort disagrees with the statement above. "Having an different strategy for social media than for traditional media might be a new fresh idea, but I would rather stick with the proven traditional way of marketing. One way and one message."

"Social media is such a different platform than a medium like television or radio. The speed and spread of a message travelling on social media is so much faster than on traditional media. Just based on the speed of the message alone does social media require a totally different approach than traditional media?" Says Mr. Weisz, Dufaco.

H3.6: Use the opinions of your followers, good or bad.

All companies agreed with the above statement. Audio home solutions owner Mr. Ros said the following: "Using the opinions of your followers can truly increase your brand awareness. Especially with the bad opinions you can show how your company handles delicate situations. When done properly this can increase your brand awareness."

Mr. Van Oort, Belcompany; “Yes you should use the opinions of your followers, a good opinion of one of your customers is worth more than a hundred advertisements. Just be careful when using opinions and stay honest.”

Conclusions:

It is very clear that social media can be used to increase brand awareness. Of all companies interviewed there was no company that did not see the opportunities of using social media to increase their brand awareness. The reasons as to why companies want to use social media vary. Strictly speaking there was no company that specifically used social media just to increase their brand awareness. There are various reasons as to why the interviewed companies use social media, but it is very clear that the companies indirectly want to influence their brand awareness using social media.

Whether or not you are active as a company on social media, people will write about you. A clear difference from using traditional media to increase your brand awareness. This means that a company not using social media is losing vital customer contact moments, as social media provides two-way communications.

Social media is heavily used by the consumer electronics industry target group. After all companies in this industry selling phones or other means of communication, like tablet pc’s, are at the basis of consumers using social media more and more. Companies not selling means of communication still agree with the fact that social media is used a lot by the consumer electronics target group.

The digital age is known for its speed and spread of the messages on the World Wide Web. It is known among the companies that social media spreads information a lot faster than any other traditional medium. However some companies also see this as a threat, as negative information can reach a large audience before a company has time to react. This threat is hard to counter as the internet is as far and wide as the galaxy we live in. It is almost impossible to be on top of every social media message written about yourcompany.

Using social media to increase brand awareness is considered an effective way of targeting your audience. Among the interviewed companies it is clear that social media provide a much more cost effective way then traditional media can. For most companies it was the direct reason to start with social media. It should however not be considered a free way ofadvertising as when traffic on your social media catches on so does the contact hours

needed.

Social media does give clear numbers where traditional media cannot in terms of viewers. However depending on the type of promotion used on social media these figures do not necessarily mean an increase in brand awareness that will stay.

It seems as if social media is here to stay in our lives. The interviewed companies know very well that their target group uses social media more and more. This can prove to be vital when setting up a social media campaign. Social media is used in daily life, remember this when setting up a campaign. As the integration between your message on social media and daily life give many more abilities than traditional media.

Underdog brands in the consumer electronics might have an effective way of raising brand awareness on social media, it is however not fully in their hands according to the interviewed companies. There seems to be a link between the effectiveness of a social media campaign on raising brand awareness by an underdog brand and the reaction of the top of mind brand. If reacted accordingly by the top the top of mind brand, their brand awareness should not decrease because of an underdog promoting on social media.

Having a small follower base on your social media can prove to be a multiplier in how fast your messages spreads and how fast your brand awareness will rise. It is still deemed possible gaining brand awareness without a follower base, but having a follower base is preferable.

A variety of updated market content does not necessarily mean an increase in brand awareness. In the survey it is shown that half of the companies interviewed questions if a variety of updated market content can really increase your brand awareness. There seems to be some discussion regarding the actual content posted in the updated market content to increase brand awareness. As two companies believe that too much information can put your target group off, decreasing brand awareness. One company actually states that an increase on viewers on social media reading the variety of market content does not necessarily mean an increase in brand awareness.

Having consistently updated news seems to be one of the most vital things to do when you want to increase your brand awareness using social media. By most companies it is even considered one of, if not the, most important things you can do to succeed on increasingbrand awareness with social media. The general consensus is the more consistently updated the news the more people will follow you. However one company

has reason to believe that the quality of the message is more important than keeping a consistently updated news stream.

Recommendations based oninterviews

This chapter combines the findings of just the questionnaire into recommendations for a company willing to increase its brand awareness in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco.

To understand the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase your brand awareness in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco there are various things you need to take in consideration.
It is very clear that any manager in the consumer electronics industry whose target is to increase its brand awareness needs to understand that their target group uses social media a lot. Understanding this will prove vital when increasing brand awareness using social media, as there is no room for error.

Once a message is posted on any social media it is almost instantly spread on the internet. Meaning that once a message is posted it is impossible to edit the message afterwards. Be very wary of this as you will not be able to undo any wrong information. The person who is active in your company using social media should have the highest standards of providing accurate and correct information to the public. There are still opportunities in changing anything you have said previously due to the two-way nature of communications on social media, just remember that any message you have sent on social media will be spread.

Posting quality messages on the social media will also prove vital when increasing your brand awareness using social media. The interviewed companies really feel the necessity of matching the target groups' interest to the posted messages. This can prove to be of more importance than having a variety of updated market content. Matching the interests of your target group to your social media messages will be key in creating followers and ultimately raising brandawareness.

Having consistently updated news has big importance on raising brand awareness. Social media are very different from traditional media, people decide themselves when and whatthey read, instead of being pushed into a message. Do not misread this as: post as much as you can in one day. Instead try to find a delicate balance between the quality of the message and updating the news. Having consistently updated news does seem to be of

more importance than waiting on the highest quality message. Once you have created an environment where your followers can count on you updating news at set times, like oncea day at 10 a.m., you will notice an increase in followers and brandawareness.

Use social media mainly as an information channel. Information is more likely to be spread than sales information. After all you want your message to spread around the world. It is therefore highly recommended to use you social media channel mainly as an information channel. The random sales offer does not seem to necessarily hurt the brand awareness but it does not help it either.

Be on all the social media you can think of. Using social media is free, you do not have to pay to use social media functionality, it only costs you time. Being on all the social media out there gives two nice advantages. First, spreading your message on all social media will reach more people faster than just using one social media channel to spread your message. Spreading your message is exactly what you want, as this is the start of increasing your brand awareness. Second, by being on all social media you are able to react quickly to any comments made. You do not want a negative comment to spook around the internet for days before you are made aware of it and able to react. Instead you want to be on the case from the start, people will write about you wherever they want to, better be ready for it and actively search the internet for remarks about your company. It might cost a lot of time staying updated with the social media, it costs more time fixing any negative remarks, true or false.

Using social media as an underdog brand to increase brand awareness is effective, but challenging in retaining the increased brand awareness. Expect the bigger brands in your industry to setup advertisements to counter act your work. Depending on how you, as an underdog brand, deal with the situation after the counter advertisements have been posted, will be essential to increase your brand awareness. Do not be put down if there is a big brand with another advertisement. Just keep on promoting, an underdog brand can do just the same things on social media as a top of mind brand.

Having a small follower base on social media is very important when increasing your brand awareness. The way social media work is that people have to find them on theinternet, someone needs to guide them to the message. Very different from using traditional media such as television with a set number of channels, instead of unlimited numbers on the internet. There is little discussion if you can increase your brand

awareness on social media without any follower base. It is probably possible but will take far more time than when you start with a small follower base. Therefore it is recommended having a small follower base on social media when your objective is to increase yourbrand awareness.

6. Recommendations

This chapter combines the findings of the literature review and the interviews into recommendations for a company willing to increase its brand awareness in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco.

Using social media to increase your brand awareness needs a very different approach as when using traditional media to increase your brand awareness. Traditional media only allowed marketers a one-way communication stream, very different from the two-way communication stream of social media. It is therefore recommended on setting up an entirely different approach and routine when using social media as when using traditional media. A marketer needs to make sure he/she provides an environment to whichconsumers want to belong and actively participate in. Creating such an environment requires active participation by the marketer in order to start conversations and discussion, making your followers feel like they are being heard. Making sure your followers feel like they are being heard is exactly what is needed in order to create an onlinecommunity.

Creating an online community is essential to increase your brand awareness using social media. Creating an online community can be done in a variety of ways but the following actions are recommended when trying to achieve a community relativelyfast.

Starting of with a small follower base is recommended when creating an online community. A small follower base consists of at least 20 people, enough people to start spreading your word. Even though it is clear that the target group of consumer electronics companies use social media a lot, they still need to find you on the internet. Due to the way the internet works, consumers need to find you instead of you coming to them, as is the case with traditional media. Therefore it is recommended to start with a small follower base. This small follower base will be helpful in spreading you social media activities andas such can help you gain credibility on your social media as well. If your social media activities are of interest to your small follower base, they will most likely recommend others to follow you, using the word of mouth principle.

Having interesting social media activities is another recommendation when creating a community. It is actually these social media activities that will prove essential for your community to succeed. Being consistent is of the highest importance in providing interesting social media activities. Be consistent when you post new information, like every day at 10am. Allowing for your followers to count on you to provide new information, consequently being of more interest to them. Be consistent in the message you want to send out, have the same type of transparency in every message. Changing the transparency of information for different messages will lower your credibility, ultimately lowering the amount of followers you have. Be consistent when participating in the online discussions and conversations. If you want to be active every day, be active every day. If you want to be active only once a week, do it. Consistency is the key for people to join your community. People joining your community want to know when you are going to respond to a query or discussion, being inconsistent in your activities will result in a decreasing interest of the community in your social media activities. It should however be noted that it is recommended to be consistently active at least twice a day. If you as a marketer can be consistently active more then twice a day go for it. The more activity you show on your social media platform, the more people will see how you engage and participate in discussions and conversations with your followers, aggregating acommunity.

The content provided on social media should be of an informative nature, not of a sales nature. Even though some companies have experienced positive reactions on providing sales deals and information on social media, it could as well be a reason for consumers to stop following you. Therefore it is recommended to use your social media platform as an information channel only. The information provided could still hint towards a product, ultimately providing sales information, but this should be done in an informative nature and should never be used to push a customer into a certain direction. Putting out a quality message that matches the interests of your target group should be leading however. Matching the interests of your followers to the information provided by you as a marketer on the social media platform will be essential in creating a community and increasing brand awareness.

In the interviews it was shown that the interviewed companies feel like they should be on all social media platforms there are. It is however recommended to focus your efforts on one social media platform, as you are able to fully focus on one communication platform. Make sure that your focus is not split among different social media platforms, as this makes it harder to create a proper community. As a marketer you are pushed to look into what is written about your company on different social media, as it is unlikely that every consumer comment is posted on the social media platform of your choosing. However try to divert those questions and comments to the social media platform you as a marketer have chosen to build a community on. Diverting those questions and comments to your community can come in handy as you can then use the opinions and comments of your followers for higher credibility when responding to said comments and questions.

If you as a marketer want to increase the brand awareness of your underdog brand, social media provide an excellent media platform to do this. Any underdog brand is recommended to use social media to increase their brand awareness. In a reaction to your social media activities a top of mind brand can start with counter advertisements. The recommendation of consistent promotion stays however. Social media is a free platform to use in order to increase your brand awareness, so never be put down if a bigger brandstarts with counter advertisements. If big brands start with counter advertisements this also shows that you have some interesting things to offer, therefore making the bigger brand sweat. Thus showing you as an underdog brand that you have struck the right nerve and offer some interesting features that is not provided by the bigbrands.

Discussion

Social media can be used to increase brand awareness. In the primary research there are multiple insights on how social media can be used to increase brand awareness. However some of those insights were counter acted by the available literature. This leads to the conclusion that using social media to increase brand awareness is a relatively new platform that requires more understanding and frameworks then are provided now. Therefore companies want to try new methods to use social media and they are not afraid to try and test new ways on how social media can be used. Some of these new methods tried can actually have a negative effect on their social media activities. It is recommended to try out new ways on how social media can be used, however companies need to stay within the ground rules provided by existing literature.

One way to achieve a stronger brand awareness is the usage of communities on your social media platform. The reasoning behind this is that communities are more likely to reach the highest levels of brand awareness and as such will recommend the brand to others. There are however a variety of other ways that social media can be used to increase brand awareness, think of video's on YouTube and competition giveaways.

The biggest discussion on social media however is what platforms are best to use and how can these platforms be used in the most effective way to increase brand awareness. The experience of companies using social media and the literature provided on social media is too few in order to provide proven theoretical and practical insights and models. The different interests of the customers and the different objectives of the companies using social media changes the recommended platforms and the way these companies can use said platform. This discussion is also directly in line with the limitations of the research.

Limitations of research

This research has been limited to understanding the underlying drivers for the usage of social media for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. Therefore this thesis has been limited to an in-depth but general view on how social media can be used to increase brand awareness by consumer electronic companies in Morocco. Meaning that this research has not taken a look on how and what platforms of social media specifically can be used in the most effective way to increase brand awareness.

As the consumer electronic branch is quite large this research has been limited on providing insights that can be used by the branch as a whole. As such this research has been limited on providing specific recommendations for all companies active within this branch, and as such does not show the difference between an audio supplier and computer supplier, both active within the consumer electronic branch.

Using Morocco as the specific region of research can also be seen as a limitation of this research. Morocco have a proper online infrastructure and as such the recommendations of this research can work differently when implemented in another region.

Another limitation stems from the interpretive research strategy used, namely that the research done and the results used, are founded on this researcher's interpretation, and as such are not of an objective nature.

Due to limitations in time and money the lack of a very wide empirical evaluation can also be regarded as a limitation of this research. The developed framework was only tested in six cases and therefore different insights might have been generated given more time and money to have a wider empirical evaluation.

The amount of research done on social media and its usage can also be seen as a limitation of this research. It is generally seen that a "theory" stems from practice rather than theory. As the area of social media is relatively new, the developed framework stems from theory rather than practice, and therefore the framework and theory used were at first based onthe literature provided and not on praxis.

Future research

The results and recommendations given in this research are useful for both researchers and practitioners. For practitioners this study shows an understanding of the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness in the consumer electronics industry in Morocco. Researchers and students also benefit through a knowledge of what methods and theories are preferred, what scientific references are relevant, and an empirical understanding on how social media is used to increase brand awareness in Morocco.

As this research has developed a framework that has been drawn from theory and tested on a relatively small base, future research can test the developed framework on larger empirical data. As such the framework can be improved and implemented in further in-depth PHD studies.

Future research can also include to understand the differences in the usage of social media to increase brand awareness for different branches of industry in Morocco. Or can include the difference for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness in Morocco for different companies operating in the same branch but selling a different product. Such as the difference between an audio supplier and a computer supplier, both operating in the consumer electronics industry.

Future research can also have a look at the differences between different areas of research. This research has been limited to create an understanding for companies in Morocco, as such future research can take a look at the differences when implementing the developed framework in different area's or countries.

Another area that can be looked at in future research are what social media platforms provide the most effective way of increasing brand awareness for different kinds of industries. As this research has been limited to provide an understanding of the underlying drivers for the usage of social media to increase brand awareness, there has not been a specific research on how and what platforms in social media can be used to have the most effective results.

One other area that can be looked at in future research is the difference between the business-to-business market and the business-to-consumer market. As this research has been limited to consumer electronics and therefore to the business-to-consumer market, the outcomes might be different when looking at the business-to-business market.

Did primary and secondary datameet?

Using the secondary data as information to form the questions used to get the primary data, the question arises; did the primary and secondary data meet?
Even though the insights out of the interviews lack some detail, the data did meet on many points. It is clear in both the primary and secondary data that social media can be used to increase brand awareness. Primary and secondary data meet as expected until the third hypothesis. There seems to be a variance in the primary and secondary data regarding how social media can exactly be used to increase brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. Having a small follower base on social to increase your brand awareness is proven in both the primary and secondary data. As social media require people to find you, as was shown in the secondary data, the need to have a small follower base is also proven in the primary data.

Having a variety of updated market content to increase your brand awareness using social media is one of the points where there is a discrepancy between the primary and secondary data. The secondary data showed the importance of having a variety of updated market content, while the primary data showed that in practice companies rather see the need of matching the market content to the interests of the target group or linking the audience to the main website.

The primary and secondary data did however meet regarding the consistency in the updated news. Shown in both data's the need for consistency is high when trying to increase your brand awareness using social media.

The primary and secondary data did not meet exactly regarding the nature of the information provided on social media to increase your brand awareness. In the primary data it is shown that companies are still trying to figure out the best way on how social media can be used. Some companies argue that social media can be used as both an information and sales channel. However as not all companies agreed that social mediascan be used as a sales channel, the recommendation to use social medias as an information channelsticks.

As was shown in the secondary data it is vital to have a different strategy for social media as when using traditional media, due to the two-way communication nature of social media. The primary data showed the same understanding for the strategies that can be used on social media. Even though the empirical data does not show that the companies have an understanding of the importance on creating a community, the primary data did meet with the secondary data regarding the usage of opinions of your followers. Important when creating an online community, which in turn can have your followers reach the highest levels of brand awareness and use the word-of-mouth principle to increase your brand awareness even further.

8. Conclusions

Social media can be used to increase brand awareness for consumer electronic companies in Morocco. There are a variety of ways on how social media can be used to increase brand awareness but it is shown in this research that it is essential to build a community. Creating a proper community on your social media platform will help you increase your brand awareness as this allows you to use the word-of-mouth principle; people recommending the brand to others.

Using social media requires a totally different approach as when using traditional media. Even though the approach on traditional media has proven itself, it is based on a totally different communication system; one-way communication. The two-way communication nature of social media platforms allow for, and need, a totally different approach. An approach where the marketer participates and engages in questions and discussions, creating a community.

Starting off with a small follower base can prove vital when trying to increase your brand awareness relatively fast using social media, this allows you to start with a small butworking community. When you have a small community a marketer can start

focusingon providing interesting social media activities and information. Matching the activities to the interests of your customers is essential as well as being consistent in your activities.
Consistency needs to be implemented in all areas of your social media activities. Consistency in the transparency of your message. Consistency in the times you provide new information and activities. Consistency in your engagement and participation in the online discussion and conversations. Consistency will be essential when a marketer wants to increase brand awareness using social media.

Choose one social media platform to focus your efforts on. Even though a marketer might be triggered to be active on all social media platforms, this weakens your efforts on all the platforms in general. A marketer needs to make a choice on the social media platform he or she wants to actively participate and stick with it. Looking at what is written about your brand on other social media is still a good idea, as any information or opinions provided on those platforms should be of equal importance to you as someone voices his opinion about your brand. However try and link these people to the social media platform you are active on. A marketer can then use the opinions of his followers, good or bad, to really engage and participate in the discussions andconversations.

Social media spreads fast among the consumer electronics target group and therefore there is no room for error. A message posted on the social media platforms is saved and can spread among thousands of people almost instantly. Therefore the messages posted on these platforms should be a truth, incorrect information or plain lies will always be remembered and cannot be edited even one second after the message is posted without it being spread across the internet.

Especially for underdog brands social media can provide an interesting tool to increase their brand awareness. As social media provide said underdog brands with a free and effective way to get in contact with their target group. However social media can provide an interesting tool to any brand intending to increase its brand awareness. As social media is, as it stands now, not a widely used platform by businesses, free to use, and provides clear numbers where traditional media cannot. With nearly 20% of the online community on the lookout for new information about brands and products, and this number constantly increasing, using social media in your strategy is great for outsmarting your competitor’s marketing efforts.

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Appendix 1:

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