

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND TRUST AND BRAND LOYALTY

1. The theses of this paper present a synthetic review of literatures on the role and significance of the use of social media in the marketing communication of contemporary enterprises. Literatures offer a number of definitions of social media. One of them was proposed by Philip Kotler, who defined social media as services whose co-authors are users themselves and thanks to which they can express themselves and cooperate with others [Kotler, 2010].

2. The functioning of social media services is mainly based on creating virtual communities which use communication mechanisms for the purpose of establishing relationships among their users in cyber space. According to Manuel Castells, virtual communities constitute the networks of interpersonal bonds, being a source of social life, support, information, and a sense of social belonging and identity. Importantly, from the perspective of a company, the functioning of such communities can be inspired and creatively shaped by a firm [Castells, 2003, Castells, 2009].

3. Social media are perfect tools for building a brand image and changing internet users' buying behaviours, and it can be attributed to the following [Sanak-Kosmowska, 2018]:

- desire to maintain contacts with a reference group;
- desire to act individually and be distinguished from others through expressing own thoughts, emotions and mood;
- desire to maintain a good work-life balance;
- pushing the boundaries of privacy (in relation to predecessors);
- negative attitude to mass, non-personalised advertising;
- being used to prompt action and receiving immediate feedback;
- co-sharing digital content (viral marketing).

4. The most popular social media such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok offer a number of e-marketing tools which allow for an effective implementation of marketing campaigns in the virtual environment. The basic and free-of-charge forms of brand communication in the social media environment include a profile, fan page, or a brand affiliate web. The promotion of a brand account can be based on a number of formats and types of paid advertising – ads, graphics, video, sponsored posts, special offers, and many others. Marketing messages can be appropriately targeted and personalised – addressed to people having specific demographic,

geographical, as well as behavioural and psychographic characteristics. The manner of selecting a target group in social media causes some controversy which, particular, relates to the acquisition and use of user data originating, for example, from private conversations between users, or the analyses of data of which users are not always aware. Brands in social media, as part of the implemented marketing communication strategy, also enter into cooperation with influencers who share their opinions with users.

5. It should be noted that in their marketing communication in social media brands can pursue both image- and sales-related objectives, making use of a wide range of advertising formats. Importantly, it is social media wherein the phenomenon of the “zero moment of truth” (ZMOT) frequently takes place. The ZMOT refers to the key moments when the consumer contacts a brand, and which affects his/her further behaviour [Lecieski, 2011]. In a traditional approach, it is the moment when the consumer comes across a product in a shop, followed by post-purchase experience. In the author’s opinion, the virtual environment also contains an indirect moment when e-consumers receive information about products from the web. The ZMOT scheme is presented in Fig. 1.

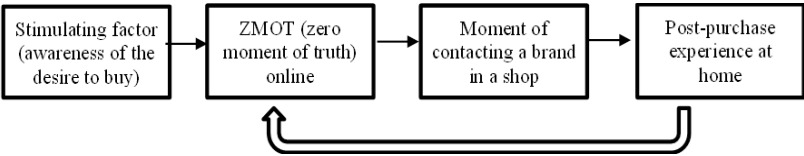


Fig. 1. Zero moment of truth (ZMOT)

Source: author’s research based on J. Lecieski, *Winning the Zero Moment of Truth*, <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/micro-moments/2011-winning-zmot-ebook/> (accessed: 10.01.2020).

6. A special case of the objective of a social media campaign is building consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). This concept regards a consumer as the main source of brand equity. It assumes the evolution of a brand from the synonym of a product to a series of emotions and associations around the brand aroused by advertising and promotion. Ultimately, brand value and brand equity originate directly from consumer behaviour because it is consumers who decide which brands represent a greater value (through purchase decisions) [Villas-Boas, 2004].

7. Consumer-based brand equity is defined as the total effect of the use and consumption of a brand along with associations expressing functional and symbolic associations. Another definition points to the fact

that consumer-based brand equity is a set of consumers' associations with and attitudes to a brand, which represent a value for them [Vasquez, Rio, Iglesias, 2002]. Literatures present five levels of *consumer-level brand equity* [Keller and Lehmann, 2005]:

(1) awareness – the lowest level, reflected in brand recognition and spontaneous recall of a brand in the buying situation,

(2) associations – material and non-material perception of the components of a product or service,

(3) attitude – reflected in the level of brand acceptance: from acceptable to desirable,

(4) attachment – it can take the form of brand loyalty or brand addiction (to brand x),

(5) activeness – frequency of purchases and consumption, and engagement in brand marketing activities.

8. Research studies indicate that consumers' engagement in brand relationships in the social media environment has a positive impact on brand evaluation and brand personification, and it reduces a sense of uncertainty during the purchase decision process [Hudson, Huang, Roth, Madden, 2015]. The research conducted by the Authors in France, the UK and the United States explicitly show a positive correlation between the use of social media channels in marketing communication and the quality of consumer-brand relationships. This phenomenon was observed particularly in the case of brand anthropomorphism, i.e. attributing human properties to a brand. Importantly, social media observation and interactions reduce uncertainty accompanying purchase decisions and lower the level of post-purchase dissonance, which implies that apart from image- and sales-related objectives, building consumer-based brand equity in social media may play a central role in the entire purchase process.

9. In summary, it should be noted that a dynamic development of ICT and, in particular, the expansion of social media has placed the discussed component of brand equity among the key elements of contemporary branding. Creating their identity, brands simultaneously build relationships not only with individual consumers but with a community, thereby building their consumer-based equity. This process is stimulated by online marketing tools focused on the exchange of opinions, consumer recommendations and creating brand affiliate websites.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIG DATA – POSSIBLE USES IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

4. The theses of this paper present synthetic reflections on the use of artificial intelligence and big data in marketing communication. Artificial intelligence (AI) and, in a broader sense, digital technologies pose new and increasingly difficult challenges for all social and business systems, which can be treated both as opportunities and threats. All these challenges are widely discussed in world literatures, and the number of papers in this field – to quote Moor's Law of 1965 – grows exponentially.

5. AI and its implementation in the economy – the AI economy, integrates a number of tools, structures, information technologies and components of an IT ecosystem: AI, Big Data, IoT, Business Intelligence, M2M, and others. AI is present in all areas of social life, economy, businesses and marketing, and at all levels: global levels, macro- and micro-levels, institutional levels as well as at the level of people's personal lives. The digital transformation is *signum temporis* of the contemporary world. Digitalization, including AI and Big Data, is an irreversible process. It relates to all types of marketing activities [Ph. Kotler et al., 2018], which implies the reliance of market strategies on IT foundations, the combination of the vectors of the revolution of digital technologies and the market behaviour of consumers fascinated by opportunities offered by digitalization and "digital lifestyle" (S. Jobs), but also those who fear the AI world.