Foreword

Social media marketing is the business use of social media channels to understand customers and engage them in such a way that leads to the achievement of ultimate marketing and business goals. Often it is difficult to see how these emerging channels and business goals fit together and new channels have grown so rapidly that research has often lagged practice. The editor of this handbook, Dr. Nick Hajli, takes a step in the right direction in terms of integrating important research in this area in one place.

Starting from the roots of social media marketing, word of mouth, the book then speaks to the importance of social media in brand building, the role of co-creation in social media and implications for new product development and online communities. Also covered are important updates in terms of intellectual property rights and how social media use fits with overall strategy. Leadership in the firm also needs to change to effectively implement these tools and that aspect of social media marketing is covered as well.

What I particularly like is that the handbook does not ignore the roots of social media marketing, network analysis. The power of networks means that that information on the Internet spreads rapidly. Too often we ignore the fundamentals of social media marketing in an effort to be reactive to what is going on rather than plan for the future. Understanding fundamentals can help us better reach our goals.

In addition, the book has are some worthy case studies, particularly in sports marketing banking and non-profits, as well as some attention to markets outside western economies. I think that this comprehensive handbook can be used by educators in the classroom, researchers to organize their thoughts and consider future research efforts and managers in understanding the implications of this important marketing channel. Taken together, these chapters should help a for-profit or non-profit firm create its brand story and subsequent content marketing strategy through appropriate social media marketing channels.

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