

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on Social Media, Customer Relationship Management and Their Important Role in Online Communications

Vincent Dutot, ESG Management School, Paris, France

Both the development of information technology and communication and the emergence of e-business have changed existing business models. Competition is no longer focused on winning market share or increasing demand, but on customer relationships and retention. A deep change of behaviour is necessary for companies in order to focus on transparency, honesty and conversation. At the same time, customer expectations are evolving towards more interaction and personalization. Internet and social networks have become THE channel for a successful one-to-one customer relationship management strategy.

Never before have firms been able to get so close to their customers and engage with them in such a timely and relevant manner. Thanks to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia or blogs, customers can interact with any company and express their opinions whenever they want. Moreover, social media seem to offer benefits to companies no matter what sector they evolve

in. Even though these benefits are difficult to translate into financial terms (assessing the ROI of a YouTube video, or precisely linking a tweet to a sale seem almost impossible), they are focused around the idea of increasing ‘customer insight and engagement’.

This idea of improving relationships with customers by using social media is called social customer relationship management (SCRM). SCRM is about people and relationships, and requires a customer-centric approach for the organization. Even if this concept is quite new, studies have shown the link between SCRM and knowledge transfer within firms as well as the importance of adapting its strategy.

This special issue aims to contribute to the growing body of literature examining social media, customer relationship management and their important role in online communications. More precisely, the five articles presented in this special issue contribute to (1) the understanding of customers and their use of social media and

(2) also develops the impact of social media on e-reputation and M-commerce.

More precisely, Lichy and Kachour try to understand the culture of young Internet users by explaining their behaviour on social media. Dutot complete this view by studying adoption of social media based on age. The third article develops the impact of social media on M-commerce.

The last two articles apply social media regarding the customer point of view. They

focus on e-reputation. Stenger highlights the link between social media managers' actions and e-reputation. Finally, Castellano et al. give us an application of social media and e-reputation within the sports industry.

Vincent Dutot
Guest Editor
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Vincent Dutot is an associate professor and co-Head of Chair D-Cube at ESG Management School, Paris, France. He holds a Ph.D from Laval University (Québec). His areas of research are in social media, IT strategy, strategic alignment of information technology, electronic commerce, and knowledge diffusion. He published in journal such as International Journal of Information Management, International Business Research, International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management or European Journal of Innovation Management. He also worked as an IT consultant for SME, government and in private sector for almost 10 years.