

14.6: Social Media and Retail

Learning Objectives

- Explain why social media is a crucial part of any current retailer's IMC mix

Social Media can be a powerful element of the IMC Mix for three (3) important reasons:

1. Consumers opt-in to engage with the firm, its brand or products
2. The firm, its brand or products can optimize their message for the channel
3. Social Media allows for two-way communication and a multiplier effect

The importance of the first factor cannot be over-stated. Consumers who opt-in to engage with a brand communicate a level of interest that marketers cannot determine through traditional media. That is, when a consumer “comes to you” and expresses interest, marketers should be confident that they have an interested prospect who can be developed into a customer.

Second, social media can provide platforms for the firm, its brand or products to communicate in a natural way with consumers and its customers. That is, firm owns the medium, whether Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. Thus, they can curate their content for more nuanced or expansive messages. Unlike television or radio or even print, which have physical limitations, e.g. time or space, social networks allow firm and brands to message in the way that best suits them, e.g. long form storytelling, video, imagery. Further, brands can express their personality, confident that the majority of their social media followers are loyal customers and supporters. Think about the positive reaction Wendy's has gotten from their Twitter activity.

The final consideration is that social media supports the consumer, giving them a platform with which to engage the firm or brand directly. In fact, one of the emerging benefits of Twitter is that firms are using it as a Customer Service platform, monitoring critiques, complaints issues in real-time to resolve concerns. But, this doesn't have to be limited to current customers and failures of service. Instead, potential customers can also use social media to ask questions and solicit feedback from current customers. This is where the multiplier effect comes into play. There is the organized firm/ brand response, but also the content creation from loyal and engaged consumers.

Practice Questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/9310>

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