

COMMUNICATION MODEL BETWEEN FIRM AND SOCIOCULTURAL GROUPS IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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Abstract

The development of technology, the emergence of new ways of conveying information, the dynamism of global economic processes have lead to the need to revise existing methods and tools of communication. If a firm is going to communicate via social networks, it is essential to know exactly with whom the firm is going to interact.

There is a contradiction between the level of knowledge of this sphere with an emphasis on social media and the dynamics of its development. Mechanisms of marketing interaction with consumers have not yet been fully studied, in addition, there is no single methodological approach to understanding the nature and characteristics of social media marketing nature.

The purpose of this work is the development of theoretical and methodological framework that will determine the model of firm's communication with sociocultural groups through social media.

Based on the results of the study, the company's SMM model was presented. During experts interview and case study the connection between some SMM tools and the perception of different sociocultural groups based on values and specific streaks was revealed.

Key words: social media, SMM, sociocultural groups, Internet marketing.

JEL Code: M31, M37

Introduction

Marketing has been a problem in the past. The product is made, and then there is no understanding how to sell it or who to sell it to. Nowadays companies first of all think of who is going to be a customer and after organise a manufacturer process.

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existing methods and tools of communication. If a company is going to communicate via social media, it is essential to know exactly with whom the company is going to interact.

Many researchers study social media marketing today. Guesalaga R. offers research which draws on interactional psychology theory to propose and test a model of usage of social media in sales, analyzing individual, organizational, and customer-related factors. The author finds evidence of synergistic effects between individual competence and commitment, which is not found at the organizational level (Guesalaga, 2016).

Sihi D. and Lawson K. think that social media is increasingly used as a branding and engagement tool by individuals and organizations. With blurring boundaries between personal and professional social media use, the objective of their research is to examine marketing leaders' use of social media accounts which connect their personal and professional identities. The authors investigate the motivation, benefits, and challenges in maintaining an account which is both personal and professional in nature (Sihi, 2018).

In study of Carim L. and Warwick C. authors sought to explore the implications of social media for organisations' business functions, to help inform organisational approaches to challenges presented by social media (Carim, 2013).

Toffoletti K. and Thorpe H. demonstrate that, in a social media environment, female athletes are adopting new strategies for identity construction that capitalise on tropes of agentic post-feminist subjecthood to market themselves, including self-love, self-disclosure and self-empowerment (Toffoletti, 2018).

Fischer E. and Reuder A.R. posit that Twitter-based interaction can trigger effectual cognitions, but that high levels of interaction via this medium can lead to effectual churn. They also posit that there is one factor, perceived time affordability, that predicts the level of social interaction in which an entrepreneur engages via Twitter (Fischer, 2011).

In the third quarter of 2017, advertising budgets in Russia aimed at the Internet became equal to the advertising budgets spent on television. According to the Association of Communication Agencies of Russia (ACAR), the volume of the Russian advertising market for the nine months of 2017 increased by 14% and reached 285-287 billion rubles. Television and the Internet remain the main advertising media: they totaled 81% of the total market in January-September 2017, and also showed the highest growth dynamics: Internet – 23%, television – 13%.

In the Urals Federal District, according to the TNS Web Index, the audience of social media is enormous, among which 3,785,000 people are a month-long unique audience of Vkontakte, 2,535,000 people are in Odnoklassniki and 1 403,000 people are in Facebook. All

this audience are potential customers of various business sectors, which, thanks to the targeting tool in social networks, can be separated and get right advertisement message.

Companies often say that their audience is too broad. So, they don't take into account the needs, interests and lifestyle of different sociocultural groups of this large audience. However, they are truly different. Describing the audience, it is important to divide it into groups, highlighting something in common.

Social media enables specialists to target their message within the SMM campaign to the necessary sociocultural audience. However, the logic of building this segmentation is poorly described in scientific sources.

Methods

The object of this study is the company's SMM model. The subject of the study is the company's communications with sociocultural groups through marketing in social media.

The objective is the development of theoretical and methodological provisions that determine the model of company's communication in the marketing of social media depending on the characteristics of sociocultural groups.

For development of the SMM model was used Uspensky's classification of communication models and his interpretation of communication model in Internet «many-to-many» (Uspensky, 2003). In addition, there was used the theory of generations of W. Strauss and N. Howe – a theory based on an understanding of the generation of a group of people associated with three characteristics: a single historical era, common values and social characteristics (Strauss, 1992).

As research methods the authors had selected the following:

- 1) study of theories of communication models' formation that was conducted on the basis of universal methods of cognition, including analysis and generalization;
- 2) with the help of an expert interview, the specifics of the SMM model in a public, state and commercial institution were revealed;
- 3) the case study method was used for a more detailed study of the relationship between the characteristics of sociocultural groups and the formation of the SMM model.

In view of the fact that marketing of social media is the part of integrated marketing communications the authors of the article suggest to consider how SMM tools and channels can be different during building communication with different sociocultural groups. To begin with it is necessary to understand the definition of marketing in social media.

Research

Marketing in social media is a set of actions aimed at promoting the brand in social networks and building relationships with target groups (Dragunova, 2017).

There are 4 main advantages of social media marketing over other ways of building relationship with target audience: virality, interactivity, nonadvertising format and targeting (Halilov, 2013).

Users tend to share interesting information with their environment. And in social networks this factor works really well. With the right approach this feature can be used for the widest possible spreading of information. So-called viral marketing is built on this advantage of social media – the creation of brand-bound info-guides, content, interactive applications that users themselves distribute in their environment. Among the most frequently used virus formats are video clips, infographics, virus sites, and so on (Zlobina, 2015).

In the process of analyzing scientific sources in the modern model of Internet communication, the following main elements were singled out: communicator (addressee) and communicant (addressee) (are both senders and recipients of information), the communicator's purpose, channel, tools, message, code, information environment (which can be a source of interference) and effect.

The empirical study was conducted which was implemented through expert interview of SMM-specialists of various organizations. According to them the relationship between the main elements of the SMM-model was determined and the hypothesis that the target audience influences the choice of the purpose of the SMM-campaign was proved false. Moreover, all experts have confirmed the finding of the target audience and the objectives of the SMM-campaign are parallel processes where, after selecting each of these elements, a chain of aligning the dependent elements for the target and the target audience are formed. For example, the purpose of the SMM-campaign determines the set of tools, and the characteristics of the sociocultural groups can affect the choice of a communication channel, an advertising message, a type of content, a format of content and that will be laid in the SMM-campaign.

So, it was revealed that within the framework of the communication model the company builds its communication with respect to a certain target audience. This communication is built for a specific purpose which is the goal of the SMM campaign. Thanks to the true goal of the SMM campaign, it is possible to select a tool box: covert,

engagement tools and conversion tools, each of which has a specific set of tools used at the discretion of the SMM specialist. Nevertheless, in the process of research, instruments were identified that are better perceived by certain sociocultural groups.

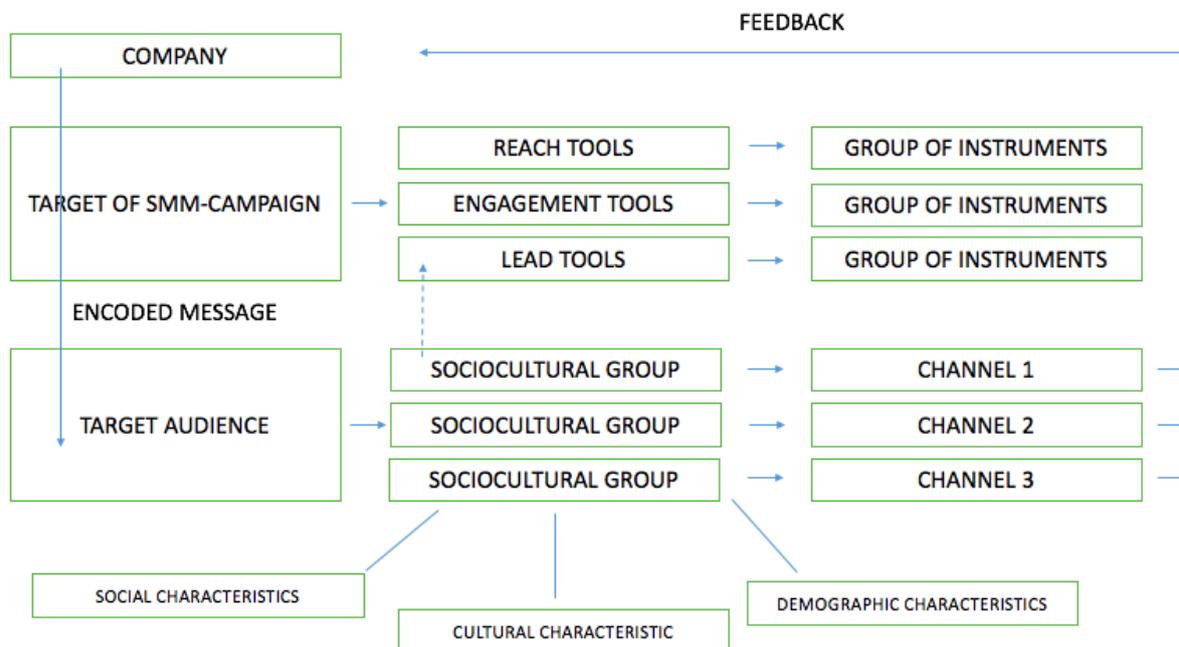
To build a more fruitful communication, the target audience is divided into sociocultural groups unlimited in number groups, representing a set of social relations and connections between people and cultural aspects, including social values, norms of behavior. Interaction in this group is carried out by the mass media.

The characteristics of the sociocultural group can influence the choice of the communication channel, as well as the elements of the SMM model such as the advertising message, the format and type of content into which the message is encoded.

The success of the SMM-campaign can be tracked through feedback, which the sociocultural group is able to convey—through which it is possible to measure the effectiveness of the conducted communication.

All communication takes place in the information environment – the Internet. Thus, the authors's SMM-model was formulated (see Figure 1).

Fig. 1: SMM-model with sociocultural characteristics



Source: formed by authors

To successfully interact with a sociocultural group you need to determine what your given cell is looking at, reading, listening to. When developing and sending an advertising

message, it is necessary to take into account the different features of the target audience (habitual ways of obtaining information, value orientations, behavior model, demographic characteristics, etc.).

Sociocultural group includes social characteristics, cultural, and it was decided to add demographic characteristics. Thus, it was determined that these characteristics, if properly analyzed, could affect the formation of the SMM-model.

After carrying out the case study, a relationship was made between the way the information was provided by the advertisement and how the sociocultural groups perceived the message.

So, in order to receive a positive response from the necessary sociocultural group, companies need to invest in the promoted content of the values of these sociocultural groups. When choosing a channel for building communication, it would be more appropriate for brands to be guided by the peculiarities of the perception of information of sociocultural groups, as well as their shares in social networks.

Taking into account the models of information perception and the model of purchasing behavior, companies can define a more suitable format for providing information for a sociocultural group.

So, it was revealed that when building communication with a younger audience, companies tend to interact through Instagram and VKontakte (Russian social media), while a more adult audience is searched through Facebook and Odnoklassniki (Russian social media).

More detailed patterns identified in the analysis of the scientific literature, as well as testing of the acquired knowledge through the case study method, can be seen in Table 1.

Tab. 1: Matrix of the influence of characteristics of sociocultural groups on the formation of the SMM-model

| | Generation of baby boomers | Generation X | | Generation Y | |
|---|---|--|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | | 45 – 54 | 35 – 44 | 25 – 34 | 25 – 18 |
| Channel | Odnoklassniki (21%) | Twitter, Facebook (M); Odnoklassniki (W) | Facebook, Instagram, Twitter | VKontakte, Instagram | VKontakte, Instagram |
| Platform | Desktop | Desktop/ Mobile | | Mobile | |
| Tools with influence of characteristics of sociocultural groups | Banner advertising | | | Native advertising | |
| Other tools | In the framework of the study, SMM tools were not identified as dependent on the characteristics of sociocultural groups. | | | | |
| Format of content | Video, infographic, | Video | | Ephemeral content, video format, graphic forma, article | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | long text | | |
| The length of content | Long slow video, long structured text. | Not found | Video up to 40 seconds Short/Long text |
| Type on content | News | Selling News Educational | Entertaining Communicative Promo Educational |
| The message on which the message should be based | Health and prosperity Status Being young forever Comfort Warranty Team spirit Self-realization Expert estimates | Time Individuality Emotions (astonishment) Competence Remuneration Caring for family Individualization Service Right to choose | Sustainable socio-economic and environmental development Harmony More than service Communication Freedom Promoting yourself Saving money with taste Public opinion Trends Equality |

Source: formed by authors

Analysis

Thus, thanks to the conducted research, it can be concluded that the characteristics of sociocultural groups can really affect the company's SMM-model, as well as the success of the built-in communication.

So it was confirmed that the demographic characteristics of sociocultural groups can be of decisive importance when choosing the channel of the SMM-model. Also, thanks to the conducted research, it was revealed that the values of sociocultural groups embedded in the advertising message have a positive effect on the response desired by the target audience.

The relationship between the perception of the content format between generations and partly the type of content was partially revealed. Unfortunately, there was no definite regularity between the length of the message and the characteristics of sociocultural groups, so despite the fact that the length of the message decreases when targeting a particular sociocultural group, no direct relationship was found. In the process of research, some tools were identified that were better perceived by a certain generation, in comparison with another. So, generation X takes banner advertising rather than native, and generation Y on the contrary reacts much more actively to native posts than posts with aggressive selling.

Moreover, the most part of visitors among Generation Y came from mobile advertising.

As part of the SMM-campaign, there was no regularity in the choice of message length in the marketing of social media, depending on the sociocultural characteristics of the

audience, but it was noted that the SMM specialist adapted content for various social networks.

Thus, the regularities revealed in the analysis of scientific sources were confirmed empirically, and the use of the content format depending on sociocultural groups was revealed.

Conclusion

As a result of the work done, the following tasks were accomplished: first of all, the history of the formation of theories related to the formation of the company's communication model in social networks was studied. Based on the analysis, the main elements of the SMM-model were identified and their place in the SMM-model was determined.

Further, thanks to the expert interview conducted, the relationship between each element and their sequence and influence on the remaining elements was revealed.

Based on the results of the study of existing scientific sources and expert interviews, a case study was conducted, on the basis of which the formed matrix of characteristics of sociocultural groups was tested.

To sum up, based on the results of the study, the company's SMM-model was presented.

The scientific novelty of this research is the formation of the authors's SMM-model of the firm that determines the basic elements of the company's communication with sociocultural groups through social media marketing and the relationship between these elements. Moreover, it shows the influence of the characteristics of sociocultural groups on the formation of elements of the SMM-model. This model is an initial stage in building communication with sociocultural groups, that takes into account their perception of social media.

The practical significance of this research lies in the fact that the developed SMM-model of the firm can be used in commercial structures interested in optimizing communication with a potential target audience.

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