

An exploration into the influencing ability of Social Media Marketing on Irish Millennial purchasing behavior

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Abstract

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Millennials are rapidly becoming the future dominating customer segment marketers are all talking about. They are a generational cohort that are responding to brands that have never been seen before and has resulted in rendering traditional marketing tactics as ineffective on them. This is the generation that has never known life without the Internet, brought up during a time of economic turmoil and are coming of age in a new era: the social revolution. Their heavy usage of communicating via social media platforms have attracted marketers to devise online strategies to grab the attention of this market and try to retain as much of them as possible. Therefore, understanding the approach that Millennials have to brands is now considered to be the primary ambition of marketers today.

This dissertation shall delve into this growing challenge that marketers are currently facing. The researcher will be overall exploring the influencing ability of Social Media Marketing on the Millennial cohort. While previous research concentrates primarily on Millennials residing in the United States, academic literature has shown to be rather light on exploring the Irish Millennial cohort. This dissertation shall also make a contribution in the sense of providing an alternative perspective by aiming to concentrate on the behavioral aspect of the customer on social media.

The research was conducted in a qualitative manner. Nine individual in depth interviews were conducted. While seven of the interviewees were considered by the researcher to meet the participant criterion, of having a high degree of social media usage, the remaining two individuals, were chosen to provide an alternative perspective who don't use social media as often as the latter.

It was found that companies should adopt a marketing approach that would be considered quite implicit. Instead of making explicit advertisements online to the target audience, companies should consider marketing by means of striving to generate a level of positive word of mouth. The interviewees of this research have shown to be quite familiar with conventional marketing tactics and as a result tend to be more dependent on the opinions their peers post online. Their heavy usage of social media over the years has groomed these Millennials into becoming highly skeptical, the advice to marketers is to approach this knowledgeable generational cohort in a more stealthily manner.

Declaration

The author hereby declares that this project is entirely his own work and that all sources used in the process of researching the dissertation have been fully acknowledged.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Many researchers that examine the concept online buying behavior discuss at some point, value proposition, which generally centers on the notion of benefits/costs that can be provided to prospective customers. Without an understanding of the numerous influencing factors affecting a customer's life experiences, the level of value proposition can diminish (Smith and Rupp, 2003). This could not be any more relevant to any other Generational cohort but the Millennials, who are consistently described within literature as value optimizers as a result of growing up in a time of economic turmoil, the global economic crisis of 2008.

Generational Theory holds that people born within the same generational cohorts share life experiences, which cause them to develop similar beliefs and attitudes (Strauss & Howe, 2000). Each generation of people differ from one to the other, making it essential for marketers to understand that they must not be treated the same (Williams and Page, 2011).

When analyzing the influencing ability of any marketing campaign, we must try and establish a comprehensive perspective on the consumer's behavior. Svatosova (2013) mentions that the task of understanding the consumer's decision-making process is essential; from the point the consumer receives the information to when the purchase is carried out. However, research has shown that customer's mindsets varies from generation to generation, this is referred to as I have mentioned previously as Generational Theory (Strauss & Howe, 2000).

Marketers are becoming increasingly focused on developing strategies that target the most recent generational cohort, Generation Y, otherwise known as Millennials. These consumers are rapidly displacing the previous generation, the baby boomers. Their purchasing power has been increasing for years and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future; hence company's no longer have the luxury of ignoring this segment. These individuals are known as the empowered consumer, essentially because of the wide scale accessibility of Web 2.0 technology at present.

Since 2005, the increasing usage of Web 2.0 technologies has and still is having a substantial impact on customer behavior and has led to an unprecedented rate of customer empowerment. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) mentions the consequences are far reaching, affecting not only the area of technology developments but also the domains of business strategy and marketing.

This research study aims in providing a clear illustration of the power Social Media is currently having on the Irish Millennial consumer. When mentioning power, the researcher is referring to an in-depth analysis of the consumer behavior, to see what it actually is that influences this generation's decision-making in the customer's minds. Academics, such as Svatosova (2013) has shown that consumers are influenced by both internal and external factors. Upon reviewing various literature, it was generally found that consumers base their purchasing decisions based on emotional motives, for example: the Summer

2015 Coca-Cola marketing campaign, "Choose Happiness". The researcher's argument within this research study is to examine the correlation between consumer behavior and social media.

A detailed explanation of the chosen research methodology will be provided in Chapter 3, followed by Chapter 4 which shall provide an account of the results that were obtained from the nine individual in depth interviews. Chapter 5 shall delve deeper into the findings by highlighting key findings and linking them back to the literature mentioned in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 - Introduction

This literature review shall consist of the theoretical framework the researcher has gathered throughout this research study (Quinlan, 2011). The first part of this literature review shall provide a detailed analysis on the concept of Generational Theory. Within this sub chapter, it shall outline the various generational cohorts. Although, it is within the following sub chapter, the Generation Y cohort will be described in detail. The third section in this chapter will outline how marketers can apply Generational Theory in targeting markets (market segmentation). Following this, the next sub chapter will reveal the timeline of marketing practices, outlining the transition that has occurred over the years from traditional marketing techniques to contemporary techniques. The researcher shall then present and critique what has been gathered to date on Social Media, following such will outline the capability social media has gathered over the years. The final section within this Literature Review Chapter will outline the academic literature gathered and critiqued on Consumer Behavior.

2.2 - Generational Theory

Generational Theory holds that generations have a cyclical nature. These four generational types can be separated into the following four categories: Idealists (Boomers), Reactive (Generation X), Civic (Millennials) and Adaptives (Strauss & Howe, 2000). Consumers who were born in the same generation have generally the same behavior patterns due to their shared experiences that influenced their childhood. This has resulted in generational cohorts developing different characteristics. Therefore, there is not only a difference in age that is prevalent but also a difference in values (Schewe and Meredith, 2004). Although these people grew up in different cultural upbringings and have a different social experience than one another, there have been certain worldwide events that has affected the cohort as a whole, such as: the global economic downturn of 2008, the wide scale adoption of the internet and particularly social media (Wilson and Gerber, 2008).

The generations can be categorized into the following by their birth dates: Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1960), Generation X (1961-1981) and Generation Y (born after 1981) (Brosdahl and Carpenter, 2011). There is still no widespread agreement on the birth dates of the Generation Y cohort but it generally varies on the birth dates in between the years of 1981 and 1999 (Bolton et al., 2013).

The most senior cohort of customers is the Silent Generation, also called Traditionalists, these people being children during Depression and World Wars. They were effectively socialized through scarcity and hardship. Whereas their children, the Baby Boomers, were socialized between the 1950s and 1960s, a time at which you could feel prosperous and safe. The children of these Baby

Boomers were brought up in a world where technology was booming, making them to have many strong technical abilities, this cohort is classified as Generation X (Eisner, 2005).

The following generational cohort, Generation Y, was raised at a time where technological advancements are occurring at an unprecedented rate (Williams and Page, 2011). As this research is centered on the purchasing behavior of Millennials, the next sub chapter shall outline a detailed description of this latest cohort, also known as Generation Y.

2.3 - Generation Y

Firstly, it shall be outlined that the term Generation Y, can be and has been used in literature over recent years in the following interchangeable terms, such as; Millennials, Echo Boomers, Internet Generation or Nexters (Eisner, 2005). There has as of yet still no widely agreed definition in literature on this Generation cohort's specific birth date years. The most common agreement on this particular issue seemed to range between the birth years of 1976 and 1990, hence meaning these people now coming of age ranging between ages 18 to 32 (Evans, 2008).

As mentioned previously, certain prominent events can affect a generation's values. Since 2008 there have been numerous events that have taken place affecting the Generation Y, not only as a person but affected their buying behavior as a customer. Some of the most prominent events identified, for example in the United States, include: the Recession of 2008, 9/11, and the election of the first African-American President (Debevic et al., 2013). As these events shaped Millennial values in the United States, differing events are occurring in each country, making a Millennial different in some sense. Bolton et al. (2013, p. 6) outlines this by mentioning that although "despite similarities within Gen Y that persist over time, there are many factors that influence an individual's adoption and use of social media".

Generation Y is the most recent cohort and were raised in a time of economic expansion and prosperity but are coming of age in an era economic uncertainty and violence. Socialized in a world that has become highly digitalized, these customers are more than "technically literate; it is continually wired, plugged in, and connected to digitally streaming information, entertainment, and contacts." (Eisner, 2005, p.6)

The Generation Y customer has shown to have a very unique attitude toward branding campaigns (Lazarevic, 2012). This can largely be attributed as this generational cohort has seen more at an earlier age than prior generations have seen (Eisner, 2005). They are constantly bombarded with advertising, which in return has groomed them into an astute market from the marketers perspective.

Millennials like to be entertained in the ads that target them and really only appreciate a marketing ad if it holds the ability to make them laugh (Gronbach,

2000). Text orientated messages are regarded to be uninteresting and prefer to be targeted with rich visual messages, illustrating their dislike to reading advertisements (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013).

Millennials are independent in nature, resulting them in becoming over the years less brand conscious and brand loyal, something that companies could rely on with the pervious cohort, Generation X (Valentine and Power, 2013). The Millennial customer has proven to pay little attention to the quality of a product or service, instead they “expect competitive pricing” (Williams and Page, 2011, p. 9). This rationale can be largely attributed to growing up during the global economic crisis of 2008.

2.4 - Potential Millennials hold for Businesses

It is expected that by the decades end that Millennials, also known, as Generation Y will displace Baby Boomers as the biggest consumer-spending group (Thau, 2013). For example, there are now over 72 million of these Millennials in the United States alone, ranging approximately between the ages of 18 and 34 (Garst, 2013). The purchasing power of Millennials has been on the increase for years and is expected to only continue increasing over time (Williams and Page, 2011).

Millennials have never experienced life without the Internet and most would not remember a time before mobile phones, hence making them into the tech savvy individuals they have collectively become today. Gronbach (2000, p. 37) addresses their technological know-how by mentioning, “This is a generation that takes the Internet for granted. It has always been a part of their lives and its importance will continue to grow.”

2.5 - Application to marketing practice

It is essentially because of these universal ideas that are present in literature that marketers can apply this to the business perspective. Blackwell et al. (2006) mentions that Cohort Analysis is integral for any organization wishing to develop a greater understanding of the ever-changing consumer markets. Marketing Professionals are now equipped with the knowledge of the general up bringing of the targeted demographic, hence enabling a more specific targeted marketing strategy to be devised. When a customer cohort is targeted, marketers can now identify cross-cultural similarities but also allowing “room for localization in order to be more market responsive and culturally sensitive” (Lazarevic, 2012, p. 47).

2.6 - Evolution of Marketing Practices

As the world is becoming increasingly reliant on technology, it is affecting everyone and everything in the global context. It is evident that Generation Y

customers are rapidly displacing the Generation X cohort of customers (Thau, 2013). Hence understanding the approach that Generation Y has to brands has become a key issue of concern for many organizations in today's global context.

Whitler (2014) mentions that a transition is taken place within marketing practices, as marketers are no longer focusing on the four P's but rather the three E's. The four P's, comprised of: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. These essentially were the marketing mix and are used by many firms to analyze what they can do to influence the demand for their product (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). The three E's that many marketers are now focusing on include: Engage, Equip and Empower.

Millennials, the future dominating customer segment, are responding to brands that have never been seen before. Their resistance to traditional marketing techniques has becoming increasingly apparent over recent years (Lazarevic, 2012). This cohort is influenced by the new media techniques, so typical marketing efforts will not be as effective on these Millennial customers as compared to the Generation X customer (Evans, 2008). Patino (2012) agreeing with Evans suggests with the "advent of computer networks and entertainment programs, traditional media, including television, have lost viewer- or readership and the power of advertising has been reduced."

According to Chaffey (2015), the concept of Web 2.0 is a collection of web services that has the ability to facilitate the interaction between web users to create user-generated content encourages behaviors such as social network participation. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) mention that the Web 2.0 term has been around since 2005 and that these technological applications represented a new step in the evolution process of the Internet in the marketing environment.

"Web 2.0 presents businesses with new challenges but also new opportunities for getting and staying in touch with their markets, learning about their needs and opinions of their customers as well as interacting with them in a direct and personalized way"

(Constantinides and Fountain, 2008, p.233)

However, Lazarevic (2012) argues that these traditional marketing tools can still be used in today's environment but suggests using these tools in a new technological manner. These tools, such as, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and branding can be utilized in a new alternative way that can target Millennials, in the aim of gaining a certain degree of brand loyalty (Lazarevic, 2012).

If this relationship can be established to a Millennial, the outcome for the company can prove to be very profitable argues Faris (2013). In order to create content that people feel is relevant to their lifestyle and worth sharing upon their social media profiles the marketer need to stop behaving like studios that charge by the hour and more like newsrooms that charge by the word (Faris, 2013). These new methods of targeting an audience can enhance the experience, as the customer will feel valued. Levitt (1960) argues that companies can fall under two

main categories of either being, Product-Orientated or Customer-Orientated. He found that the companies that are more willing to concentrate on meeting the needs of the customer rather than the continual shifting of product, tend to perform better as the customer tends to feel an increased sense of value (Levitt, 1960).

2.7 - Social Media

Today the Internet has become the backbone of our society; there is now widespread access in obtaining information through the use of various electronic devices. Information is no longer just flowing from major corporations or governments; it now flows across people as well. Soloman et al. (2013, p. 14) describes this as the “horizontal revolution” and describes social media as the catalyst for such a revolution to be taking place.

Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” These online media platforms allow users to collaborate and communicate on a global scale and this can include though many different forms, such as: text, images, audio, or video (Turban et al., 2012). According to Constantinides and Fountain (2008) social media can be divided into five categories: Social Networks, Blogs, Content Communities, Forums and Content Aggregators.

Social Networks

These applications enable a user to build a personal website, which can then be accessible to other users, hence facilitating for peer-to-peer communication to take place (Chaffey, 2009). Facebook is currently the market leader amongst this category with a recorded 1.4 billion active users by March 2015 (statista, 2015).

Blogs

This allows users to create their own web logs or journals online. Blogs have become the most known and fastest-growing category of Web 2.0 applications (Constant and Fountain, 2008). These personal websites can also be open to the public to view and comment, allowing communication to take place on a certain topic or issue that the “blogger” has posted. Microblogging differs from typical blogs, in the sense of limiting the post to a certain extent, for example Twitter which only allows the user to tweet a message consisting of up 140 characters (Walaski, 2013).

Content Communities

These sites are more about the user sharing content rather than interacting with one another. The most common example of this would include the website Yahoo, where users can actively edit content by enhancing or disputing if they feel the already supplied information is inaccurate (Walaski, 2013).

Forum/ Bulletin Boards

These sites enable users to communicate to each other online, by exchanging information usually around special interests. (Constant and Fountain, 2008)

Content Aggregators

These applications allow the users to fully customize what he/she can have access to. Sites, such as NetVibes and Yahoo are able to carry out this service to the user by employing a technique onto their website known as Real Simple Syndication (RSS).

Digital Business has been experiencing a surge in growth of social media within recent years, in particular social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Google+ and Twitter (Chaffey, 2015). While Facebook is currently experiencing to be the top social networking site in terms of user numbers, this does not necessarily mean it is the most effective site that can influence the purchasing behavior of a consumer (Guimaraes, 2014). By putting a "Follow us on Twitter" link on a website may add no value to the consumer or help the marketer in achieving any objectives but instead prove to be a wastage of time and wage costs for the company. Dann and Dann (2011, p. 344) agreeing with this state that it is not what "the marketer thinks is great, but what your customers will respond to."

Instagram, a social networking site that enables users to share photos and videos to one another, has begun to displace rivals, Twitter and Facebook, among Millennials residing in wealthy households (Guimaraes, 2014). Before an organization launches a social media strategy, they must first ask themselves; out of all social media platforms at their disposal, which platform will best reflect your mission (Helmrich, 2015).

2.8 - Power of Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing can be defined as "the use of social media platforms such as networks, online communities, blogs, wikis, or any other online collaborative media for marketing, market research, sales, CRM, and customer service" (Turban et al., 2012, p.336)

Starbucks is considered to be one of the pioneers in area of social media strategies. These benefits shall be clearly outlined later within this literature review. Marketers must know exactly how the Millennial customers use media, which media they use, and when they use it (Williams and Page, 2011).

One of the key reasons a company should devise a social media marketing campaign is the relatively low cost associated with it. Launching a "viral campaign can produce many more engaged customers than a television campaign at a lower cost" (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014, p.331). 360i, a New York based digital advertising organization illustrated to the world at how cost effective social media marketing can provide to be, at the 2012 Super Bowl. Oreo Cookie posted on twitter an image accompanied with the phrase, "You Can Still Dunk In The Dark". While other companies were paying \$4 million for a 30

second time slot on television intervals, the tweet proved to be a much more cost efficient method (Stampler, 2013).

By posting to a social media network, “Oreo didn’t need to reserve air time or print space in advance. It was able to move at the speed of the news” (Farhi, 2013). This was made possible due to the fact that the middleman was not involved in the process, unlike traditional marketing practices. Having the ability to deliver a message in such a short space of time, enables the marketer to use something that is actually going on in the customer’s live in order to grab their attention.

Another key incentive for an organization to adopt a social media initiative is the increased ability to reach out to a larger audience (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge of 2014 clearly illustrates the influencing ability a social media campaign can have on the public. Sipress (2014) mentions donations to the charity almost quadrupled in just over a week as the campaign became viral on social media platforms, such as Facebook.

This highly successful campaign provided marketers with a lesson of the extent of potential customers that can be reached throughout a social networking site. Between “June 1st and August 17th, over 28 million people have joined the conversation about the Ice Bucket Challenge including posting, commenting or liking a challenge post...and 2.4 million videos related to the challenge being shared on the social network” (Olenski, 2014).

The concept of developing a stronger bond with the customer has been around for many years and is regarded as a process of Customer Relationship Management. CRM enables an organization to “discover who its customers are, how they behave, and what they need or want...while also enabling the company to respond appropriately, coherently, and quickly to different customer opportunities” (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 41). Marketers must comprehend that the social media revolution is centered on the concept of “community: the participation of members who together build and maintain a site” (Solomon et al., 2013).

This traditional marketing practice is now being applied to social networking technologies. Social CRM tools allow an organization to connect customer conversations and relationships from social networking sites to CRM processes (Laudon and Laudon, 2016).

Baird and Parasnis, (2011, p. 30) state that companies must embrace this new shift in marketing practice as it “recognizes that instead of managing customers, the role of the business is to facilitate collaborative experiences and dialogues that customers value.” Whilst 80% of businesses are using social media, only 15% of these companies respond to questions by their fans and customers (Rezab, 2012). Although a company may use a social media platform as an alternative medium for streaming their product/ service-related news, they must also understand the potential it holds as being a key customer care channel.

The Millennial's purchasing behavior has been known over the years to have no brand loyalty. By making this transition of adopting the application of technology to traditional CRM practices the company holds the possibility of forging a successful relationship. Having the ability to establish a relationship with a millennial customer can prove to be very profitable for the organization (Faris, 2013).

Since Millennials collaborate online more frequently than any other generational cohort; it has been found that for every Millennial customer gained, there is a strong possibility you'll acquire another two for free just from their positive word-of-mouth endorsement on social channels (Faris, 2013). Chen et al. (2013) agrees with Faris (2013) as he mentions the strong influencing ability it has gained over the years and that researchers and practitioners are becoming more interested in the new field of word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing, otherwise known today as word-of mouth marketing (WOMM).

The popularity of WOM has been increasing over the years but with such recent developments in Web 2.0 technology, social connectivity has become a lot easier than ever for customers to do your marketing for you (Whitler, 2014). This can be shown in literature as Reichheld and Sasser (1990) mentions the influencing capability of WOM is twice as effective as advertising, years later, Hogan et al. (2004) contested the importance as they found WOM to be 3 times more effective than advertising.

Burton and Khammash (2010) found that not only do the customers acquired through WOM have a higher contribution margin but also they tend to have a higher retention rate than those who are acquired through traditional media advertisements. When a company's post is either liked or shared by the users' mutual friends, this usually will appear within that users newsfeed, accompanied with a link to the company's Facebook page. Lipsman et al. (2012) found that Millennials spend at least a fourth of their time on Facebook, either consuming or interacting with their Facebook Newsfeed.

Social Media has shown in the past to drive sales because when the individual visits the company's social media webpage, it is likely they search for the official webpage, which can then lead to an online sale being made (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). This encompasses the necessity of having an even stronger social media presence. Dell has over 1.5 million followers on Twitter and revealed in 2009 that the company made "\$6.5 million in revenues through links on the micro-messaging site" (Bunz, 2009).

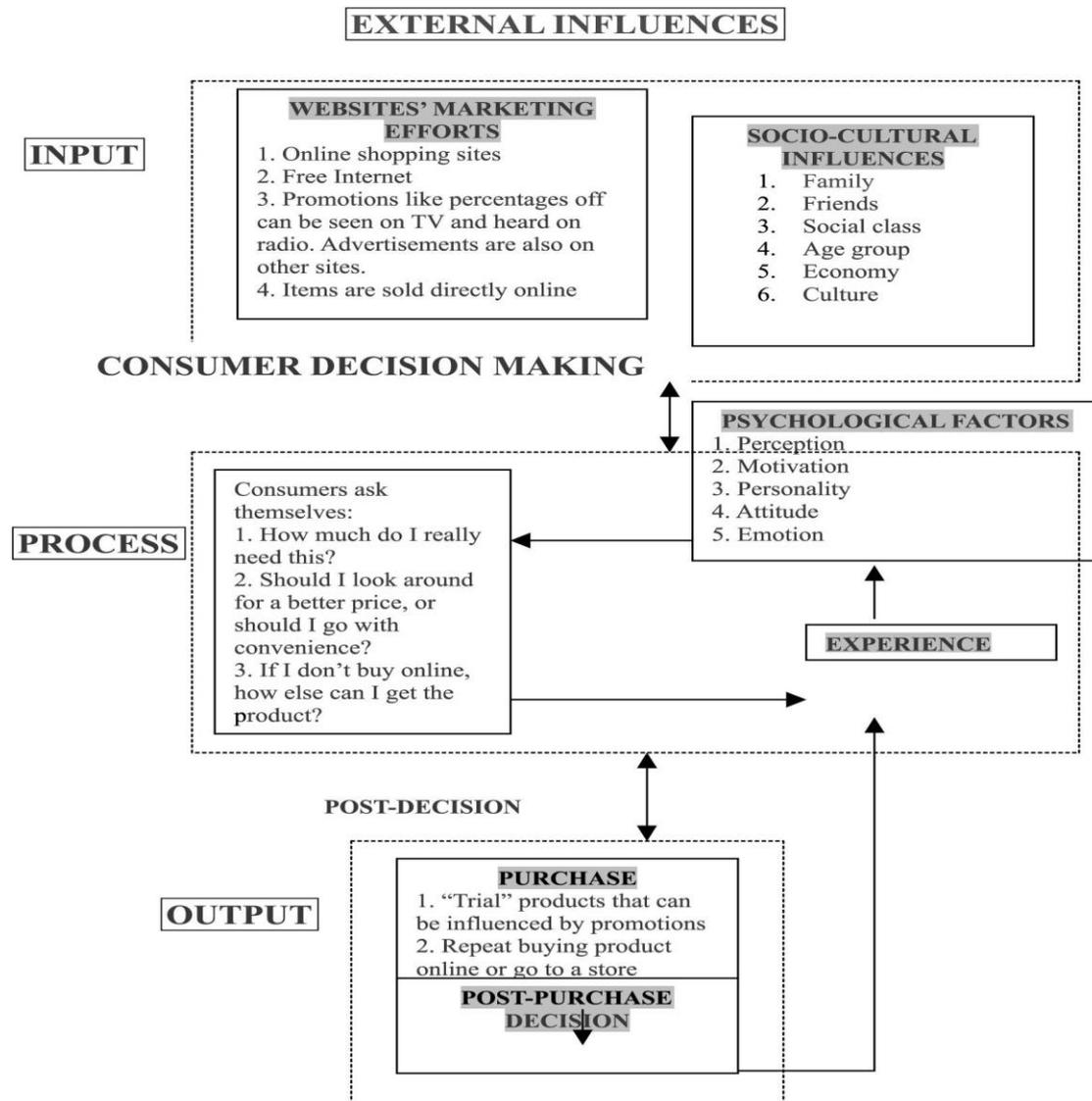
Each Social Media platform differs in the sense of how you approach your market. For example, Samuel (2011) mentions that web spaces is not about trying to push and sell products on the consumers, the web space is an invitation to connect with the customer. Marketers must comprehend that establishing a social media presence should not be treated as a billboard, where you can buy and empty space and put your message on. Instead, you are engaging in a form of conversation with your customer.

Urban Hilton Weiner devised one of the more creative social media strategies in 2013. The campaign was centered around Twitter, where the consumer could avail of a \$10 coupon if they tweeted a selfie trying on a dress accompanied with #urbanselfie while in one of their stores (Casinelli, 2013). By doing so, the company was gaining widespread publicity through the means of positive word of mouth on the social networking site and instead of pushing the product on their audience; they invited them to be actively partaking in the marketing campaign.

2.9 - Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior can be defined as “activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services” (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2006, p. 4). The influencing factors affecting a consumer’s purchasing decision can be divided into either being Internal or External. The task of any marketer is to understand the decision making process in the customer’s mind, starting from the moment the customer receives stimuli from the outside to the point of making the purchasing decision (Svatosova, 2013). The following figure 1 illustrates a model of consumer decision-making.

Model of Consumer Decision-Making



(Source: Svatosova, 2013)

The model of consumer decision-making refers to how and essentially why individuals behave as they do so. In order to gain a perspective on this, the model can be examined in the following four views; Economic View, Passive View, Emotional View and Cognitive View (Schiffman, 2008, p. 75). ****come back to****

One of key advantages of the Internet is worldwide connectivity between users, which has resulted in peer communication on social media platforms to be on the increase since the Web 2.0 revolution. This increased use of peer communication is taking place through social media and is now considered to be a new form of "consumer socialization," which has "profound impacts on consumer decision making and thus marketing strategies" (Vineranet et al., 2013, page 66).

Consumer Socialization theory is defined by which an individual acquires the *“skills, knowledge, attitudes and experiences necessary to function as consumers”* (Schiffman, 2008, p. 330). A wide variety of research has been conducted to establish how children develop their consumption skills. It was found that their consumption learning stemmed from observation of their parents or other siblings who they regarded as role models. In contrast, teenagers are tending to look at their friends as models of consumption behavior (Schiffman, 2008).

Social Media, especially social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are proving to be a highly effective virtual space for individuals to communicate, which marketers are now seeing to be an important agent of consumer socialization to take into consideration (Vineraner, 2013).

Trust is major issue centering around the Generation Y customer today. Growing up in a media-saturated world has made them aware of the differing marketing tactics and “hype” (Schiffman, 2008). Information provided by the supplier of a good or service is now no longer the major factor influencing their purchasing decision. This shift is a result of “different social media, like review sites, individual weblogs, Facebook accounts and Twitter messages” (Brooner and Hog, 2014, p. 52). Agreeing with this, Bolton (2013) mentions that Millennials tend to value others’ opinions on social media as they see it as an unbiased point of view and it also gives them an opportunity to provide feedback whereby they feel a sense of importance for their contribution.

Facebook, the dominating social media platform in terms of number of overall users, allows a company to display a review section on the Facebook Account. This section allows consumers to write a comment and issue a range of stars on the level of quality of the overall experience of using the company’s product or service. Potential consumers can comment under these reviews, which generally leads to a conversation thread to occur on that particular experience.

Linehan (2008) mention the motives of a consumer’s decision to purchase a product or service can be further divided into; rational motives and emotional motives. Consumers are continually seeking goods that can satisfy their needs. However the assessment of satisfaction is a highly personalized process based on the individual’s need structure, which has been influenced in the past by certain social and behavioral experiences (Linehan, 2008). Hence, illustrating the importance of taking these major social events into consideration before fully implementing the Social Media Strategy.

When analyzing the consumer’s motivation to purchase, marketers take into consideration the theory of Plato’s divided soul (Wright, 1999) Products are bought for different reasons, such as: intrinsic, impulsive and rational. Research shows that as much 70 to 80 per cent purchase for emotional reasons. Hence, the need to establish a connection (forge a relationship) with the customer through a Social CRM initiative is becoming even more important when appealing to the Millennial consumer (Wright, 2006).

Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a “hierarchy of biogenic and psychogenic needs that specifies certain level of motives” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 195). The implication of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is that an individual must first satisfy their basic needs, such as their physiological needs, in order to move up the ladder and ultimately gain self-actualization.

Marketers have now adapted Maslow’s theory in order to gain a better understanding behind customer motivations. The theory’s perspective enables marketers to specify the certain types of product benefits people may look for, depending on their level or stage of mental development or on their economic situation (Solomon et al., 2013).

Consumers develop attitudes towards all the advertisements, products and services in which they encounter. Linehan (2008, p. 111) describes an attitude “as a lasting, general evaluation of people, objects, advertisements or issues.” A belief can develop into an attitude and has been shown that the stronger the belief the stronger the attitude, which in return increases the likely hood of affecting the behavior of the customer (Wright, 2006). Agreeing with this, Svatosova (2013, p.14) mentions, “attitude can be considered one of the most important concepts in the study of consumer behavior as, according to the literature, it is the direct determinant of this behavior.” By establishing the connection with the customer through the use of social media, the consumer may develop a positive attitude as they feel a sense of contribution to the organizations activities.

The consumer’s mood will have an impact on the purchasing decision. Solomon et al. (2013) identify two dimensions whether an individual will react positively or negatively: pleasure and arousal. In general, a mood state, either being positive or negative, biases judgments of the product in that direction. Simply, consumers like things better when they are in a good mood. This can therefore explain why companies prefer when marketing their products on social media, through an imbedded YouTube link, that an automated setting of the video to be displayed at the quality of 720p. This enables the individual to experience the advertisement in a more superior fashion as sound and clarity is significantly enhanced. The second the video starts, the individual will more likely be in a much greater state of happiness for the duration of the advertisement. Source Credibility is becoming a major issue within the social revolution; people are becoming increasingly inquisitive regarding the trustworthiness of new companies they encounter. As a result if this celebrity endorsements are highly popular marketing tactic from major corporations, as the celebrity may hold the potential in reinforcing credibility amongst the target market. Solomon et al., (2013, p. 316) states that marketers nowadays are known to be “trying to hard” and have caused the “corporate paradox” – which is essentially when companies are too much involved in the dissemination of news regarding its products and services, making themselves less credible to consumers.

Buzz is word-of-mouth that is viewed having some form of credibility as it is spread though the consumers, whereas, hype is viewed to be corporate propaganda resulting in the customer to be quite skeptic. “Consumer word-of –

mouth is typically the most convincing kind of message”. This has resulted in the challenge to corporations to get the word out without looking like they are trying too hard.

2.10 - Conclusion

Overall, the research gathered has shown that consumer behavior differs depending on the generational cohort. Millennials tend to be less loyal in comparison to the previous generation. Although this is the case, companies can still try and encourage loyalty amongst this generation, as once they are willing to adopt contemporary marketing techniques, of which include the use of Web 2.0 technology. Also, the fact remains integral that understanding consumer behavior should never be ignored. If a company develops the ability of understanding the correlation between social media and consumer behavior it can prove to be an overall profitable experience.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 - Introduction

This chapter will illustrate the methods that were utilized in the gathering of the information and also of the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research. The topics that shall be outlined within this chapter shall include: the research question and objectives, the theoretical reasoning behind choosing the methods, an overview of the research design, the sample that was targeted, the ethical consideration measures that were undertaken, and the method of data analysis that was conducted.

The overall aim of this research is to conduct an exploration into the influencing ability of social media marketing on Irish Millennial purchasing behavior. The research objectives, specific to this research, are stated below.

Research Objective 1: To examine the impact the new form of consumer socialization is currently having on Irish Millennial consumer behavior.

Research Objective 2: To explore the optimum method via social media technology in approaching the online Millennial consumer.

Research Objective 3: To explore the positive and negative attitudes Irish Millennials have formed to date in regard of the social revolution.

3.2 - Research Philosophy

Quinlan (2011) mentions that a philosophical framework underpins every research project, which essentially represents the worldview within which the research is situated. The methodologies in which we choose to pursue relates to the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work and consequently to the researchers theoretical perspective (Crotty, 2005). When analyzing an appropriate research philosophy to pursue, we are looking at the various epistemological considerations. This is an issue that concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline, explains Bryman and Bell (2015). Three epistemological positions are identified by Quinlan (2011), these being; Positivism, Social Constructionism and Interpretivism.

The overarching research philosophy that is carried out within this research study is one of Interpretivism. Bryman and Bell (2015) state that interpretivism is concerned with the emphatic understanding of human action. This philosophy advocates that it is important for the researcher to comprehend the differences that exist between humans in our role as social actors. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) agreeing with Bryman and Bell (2015) stresses the importance for the researcher to adopt an emphatic stance in this certain research philosophy.

A positivist approach is deemed inappropriate for this research study as it is concerned with one objective reality. Instead, the interpretivist holds that reality is unique to each person depending on their own set of circumstances and differing life experiences (Quinlan, 2011). It is then further mentioned by Quinlan (2011, p. 105) within the framework of interpretivism the research project “will explore the thoughts and feelings and beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation.”

While this research study is concentrating on the consumer’s behavior, Saunders et al. (2012) mentions the appropriateness of the interpretivist perspective in the case of certain fields of study, such as: organizational behavior and marketing. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 137) states, “The challenge here is to enter the social world of our research subjects and understand their world from their point of view.” A research project can be designed to either develop a theory or test a theory. This research study will follow an inductive approach as it allows the researcher to “explore a topic and develop a theoretical explanation as the data are collected and analyzed” (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 48).

3.3 - Research Design

When recognizing the nature of the research design, one must ask their self the question you wish to answer and your research objectives. This research study is an exploratory study. Saunders et al. (2012) mentions this type of study is a valuable method in asking open questions in discovering what is happening and to gain a deep understanding on the topic of interest. Exploratory Research initially begins with a broad focus but as research progresses and develops, this focus becomes increasingly narrower. Agreeing with Saunders (2012), Cooper and Schindler (2014) mention initial concepts develop more clearly throughout the research, adding to an improved final research design.

There are two types of data, mentions Quinlan (2011), that the researcher can gather, these being Quantitative data and Qualitative data. This research study is qualitative in nature. The rationale for choosing a research method depends on the nature of the research study as well as the researchers philosophical preferences (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) mentions many qualitative studies are exploratory in nature as the data is gathered through observation or interviews. The qualitative methods used in this research, to determine the consumer’s behavior on social media, includes a series of individual-depth interviews. These types of interviews are an interaction between a single interviewee and interviewer and will be conducted in a semi-structured fashion (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Through a series of open-ended questions, the participant is encouraged to provide a detailed perspective and their feelings on social media and how it affects them as a consumer.

Most qualitative research relies on unstructured and semi structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews commence with the interviewer asking a few open ended questions, which then allows the interviewer to follow up new tangents that the participant brings to light (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The rationale for choosing open-ended questions, as oppose to close ended, remains with the fact that asking open-ended questions are generally used when exploring “understandings, feelings and beliefs” (Quinlan, 2011, p. 293). These responses can largely be attributed to factors such as; the proximity of the interviewer to the participant and the fact that it is only one response the interviewer has to concentrate on. All of such factors contribute to a rich dialog between the interviewer and participant (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

Saunders (2012, p. 171) mention one of the methods of carrying out exploratory research is through the means of conducting in-depth individual interviews, “because of their exploratory nature, these interviews are likely to be relatively unstructured and to rely on the quality of the contributions from those who participate.” The interviews were conducted face-to-face, benefit of being able to observe and record nonverbal behavior. The semi-structured approach has been adopted in the sense of allowing the respondent to do most of the talking in the interview, which may also provide for the opportunity for the interviewer to ask any new questions the respondent has brought to light.

Each interview consisted of a list of 20 pre-determined questions. The duration of the interviewers ran for the average duration of 20 minutes. Each interview differed, as new questions could be included in the interview questionnaire that was brought to light in the previous interview. A total of nine individual in depth interviews were conducted.

3.4 - Research Sample

Cooper and Schindler (2014, p. 84) mentions a sample “examines a portion of the targeted population, and the portion must be carefully selected to represent that population.”

There are two kinds of sampling; Probability Sampling and Non- Probability Sampling. This research was conducted using non- probability sampling. After careful consideration of the various types of non- probability sampling, the following were deemed to be the most appropriate for this research study: Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling. (Collis and Hussey, 2009)

Using the purposive sampling technique the researcher decides, or makes a judgement, about who to include in the research. The other technique will include Snowball Sampling, which was regarded by the researcher in this study as the primary technique of sampling. The rationale for choosing Purposive Sampling is because it allows the researcher to decide about whom to include in the research. Quinlan (2011) highlights that the individuals chosen to be included in such a sample would be regarded as key informants. These sample members are hence selected to conform to some criterion (Cooper and Schindler,

2014). The criterion the interviewer was looking for in this purposive sampling was an individual that was a frequent user of online social activity, these individuals aided in the gathering in a more superior collection of data.

Initially the researcher adopted a Purposive Sampling approach in order to find a key informant, to commence the individual in-depth interviews; this participant was regarded as a “key informant.” The participant, who had already fitted the criterion to participate in the research study, was asked at the end of interview if they would oblige in recommending another participant for the next interview, this is known as Snowball Sampling (Quinlan, 2011).

Saunders et al. (2012) addresses the issue of determining a suitable sample size, mentioning the high level of ambiguity centering around the topic as it differs and is dependent on the researcher’s questions and objectives. Bryman and Bell (2015) argue this as well, stating it depends on each research study until theoretical saturation has been achieved. A researcher achieves saturation when there are no new thoughts, attitudes and feelings brought to light (Quinlan, 2011). The Snowball Sampling was hence considered to be an appropriate method in this research study as the initial person met the criterion and hence could recommend any individuals who would have a similar high degree of social media usage but would differ in the sense of providing this research with an alternative perspective.

Typically when a researcher attains the saturation point in the interview phase they feel no new views or opinions are being brought to light. Instead, of waiting to reach saturation point, the researcher in this research study decided to pursue a strategy that enabled him to conduct the first two interviews consisting of individuals who use social media quite often. The second two interviews were conducted with individuals who would not use social media to such an extent. This strategy enabled the researcher in gaining two alternative perspectives, which he could use to the advantage of investigating in the remaining five in depth interviews.

The recording of each interview consisted of both note taking and audio recording. The interviewer took a number of written notes and throughout each interview, although the audio recording device was considered as the primary instrument in recording the interviews. The reason for this lies with the fact of the ability of the audio recorder in capturing the richness of the interview (Quinlan, 2011), which was later transcribed into a text format.

The age range of the participants were in the age range of 21-28, the reason for each participant to meet this specific part of the criterion is essentially based on the research question of the generational age range of Millennials today. The researcher found, the more interviews conducted, the more lead on questions were introduced, as previous interviewees provided new perspectives. Two of the in depth interview transcripts were chosen at random and are located in the Appendices. The additional transcripts are available on request. Please refer to the Appendices to see the sample questionnaire that was used in the interviews.

This study involved gaining insights from two alternative perspectives. In order to gain the alternative perspective, the second interviewee was asked if they would oblige in recommending a person who would also be a social media user but would not use it to such a degree as they would. This enabled the researcher to gain an insight from, as Quinlan (2011) regards as an industry expert and also from the differing perspective from a user that would not use social media as frequent. Although, the researcher may not reveal the exact address of each participant, due to the consent forms confidentiality agreements, the researcher can reveal that the demographics of each participant differed. This issue is a major influencing factor as history has shown built up metropolitan areas are provided with better infrastructure resulting in the availability of a superior internet connection to consumers (3G and 4G connectivity), as oppose to the connectivity rural areas provide, where internet connectivity would not be as strong. The developments in consumer online activity can largely be attributed to greater connectivity mentions Butler and Peppard (1998).

3.5 - Ethical Considerations

All research studies should exhibit ethical behavior. Cooper and Schindler (2014) mention the goal of ethics in a research study is essentially to ensure that there is no harm caused to anyone and that no one suffers from the activities of the research activities. There were certain measures the researcher had to take in the collection of data for this research study in order for the study to be deemed ethical.

Saunders et al. (2012) identifies two prevailing and conflicting philosophical ethical positions, these being; the deontological view and the teleological view. While the teleological position is based on deciding whether an act of conduct is justified, not by a set of predetermined rules. This research study is conducted in a deontological manner; this position “is based on following rules to guide the researchers’ conduct (Sanders et al., 2012, p. 227).

Consent Forms were sent out by the researcher in advance of the interviews taking place in order to allow the interviewee sufficient time to analyze the distributed consent form. The purpose of the consent forms were not only to obtain a written informed consent (which the participant is free to withdraw from at any stage he/ she wishes to) but mainly because of the fact that any potential participant has the right to a clear understanding of the research study they will be participating in (Horn, 2009).

Provided with each consent form, shall consist a declaration that anonymity and confidentiality is assured all participants. Such considerations can prove to be highly beneficial for this exploratory study as Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 45) mention by assuring your participants that their identity shall not be revealed with any of the opinions they provide, this “may contribute to a higher response rate and increased honesty.”

3.6 - Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used in this research study consists of Thematic Analysis through the use of key words. Thematic Analysis is the analysis of data through the use of keywords (Quinlan, 2011). First, the researcher will group various concepts together around the research objectives. These will then be grouped into themes. Key themes will then also be obtained from the analysis of the interviewees feeling and perspectives. The most common occurrences of feelings will be coded and then can be distributed into the relevant themes that will answer that specific research objective. The level of relevancy to the objective will also be noted.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) mentions when analyzing the data for themes, they recommend the researcher to look for: similarities and differences, repetitions, metaphors and analogies, missing data and theory-related material. The idea behind this form of analysis is to construct an index of central themes and subthemes (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 - Introduction

This chapter shall outline the key findings the researcher obtained from the series of in-depth interviews that were conducted. The findings of this research will be illustrated to the reader in the form of themes; these themes enabled the researcher to answer each specific research objective. Although, before the findings shall be outlined, there is a small segment based on the backgrounds of the interview participants, in order for the reader to first gain a sense of where the following responses are coming from.

4.2 - Participant Backgrounds

All interviewee participants were from a mix of backgrounds, some from metropolitan regions while others from suburban and rural regions also where the level of connectivity differing in each region, thus affecting the degree to which social media platforms are used. Seven out of the nine interview participants would be classified as heavy users of social media. By the seventh interview the researcher had found that saturation point had now been attained and by continuing with the snowball sampling technique, the seventh interviewee was asked could they recommend an individual they know who would not use the online social media platforms. This enabled the researcher to gain a differing insight on social media marketing.

Interviewee 1 is a male from a suburban region and is working with one of the worlds leading phone manufacturers. The participant was very keen in contributing to this research study due to the fact his heavy usage of social media and also because this is his line of work. Interviewee 2 is a male and can be described as an average user of social media and is currently a student studying at 3rd level. Interviewee 3 was the first of the two individuals from the sample to provide the alternative perspective. Interviewee 3 is from a rural region in Ireland, working full-time as a primary teacher and would not use social media to a great extent. Interviewee 4 was the other individual recommended to provide the alternative perspective, in terms of not being a frequent social media user. This individual is female and from a suburban region and is in the in final year of 3rd level studies.

Interviewee 5 is male, resides in a busy metropolitan area and is studying an MSc in Marketing. Interviewee 6 is male, lives in a suburban area, works part-time in hospitality and would also be described also as an average user of social media usage. Interviewee 7 is a male, working full-time graphics designer in a printing company in a busy densely populated region. This participant's previous employment was at working as a Website Designer and website administrator, which he revealed in the interviews some interesting insights into how much is actually being moderated on a website. Interviewee 8 is female from a metropolitan region, currently studying at 3rd level and would be use social

media quite often on a daily basis. The final participant, interviewee 9, is also female, resides in a suburban region, completed a degree in Psychology and is currently working full-time in customer service.

Research Objective 1

To examine the impact the new form of consumer socialization is currently having on the Millennial consumer behavior through the use of social media platforms.

- Peer Communication
- Ideas
- Sharing
- Trust

4.3 - Peer communication

This theme proved quite prevalent throughout the interview, when asked what social media platforms the participants used the most often and also their primary purpose of use. This question was placed within the initial questions to act as an “icebreaker” as to avoid any sense of confusion occurring from the start and so the participant would feel more comfortable in answering the more detailed questions that were following.

The results showed interviewees have a strong reliance on social media for the key purpose of maintaining contact with friends and family. When questioned on which and why social media platforms they use, the overriding theme was the need to keep up to date with everyone at the same time.

4.4 - Ideas

When questioned on the various social media platforms the interviewees used, it was found that many of the interviewees, particularly the females, that a significant portion of their knowledge on fashion is being derived from the use of social media platforms. For example, one of the interviewees was questioned on their thoughts of Pinterest, “Oh yeah, you could go on and see what other people has pinned and you can then take ideas from them.” – Interviewee 4.

Another interviewee participant mentions a similar use for social media and stated one of their main reasons for using Instagram, “I just like the way it is very visual. You can see the product straight away and see models wearing it and then links in to celebrities wearing the clothes as well” – Interviewee 8.

4.5 - Sharing

When asked on sharing a company's advertisement of a product or service the interviewees mentioned that if they were to share such a post and tag a group of friends, the friends would be individuals with common purchasing interests. As a result of this, respondents have mentioned that, "Yeah I would like include people that are related to that, for example, something we did together or it's a product we both like" – Interviewee 9.

Another respondent also mentioned when sharing a post and tagging friends, they would not tag just any of the people listed in their social media profile but specific people, who they feel would appreciate the notification, "It would include friends with similar interests. So, for example, I shared one the other day, which was tag a friend that might like, it was a facial mask, and I was talking with my friend about this only the day before so she tagged me" Interviewee 8.

Another participant mentions that the information on social media can prove to be a great channel of communication for businesses as people don't have to go searching for information, the information comes to the consumer if that consumer's social media friends are liking and sharing posts..."so it would pop on the persons newsfeed, if their friend liked it so it would in way be coming to them rather than the person having to go to the website and scroll through the website looking for stuff" – Interviewee 5.

4.6 - Trust

When queried on the issue of reviews on the Internet, an emerging theme was identified, which was the issue of Trust. While a significant portion of the sample mentioned that they would not personally write a review on social media, they stated however they still would go a social media page for an accurate review. One of the participants mentioned why they would prefer a review on social media, rather than on the company's website, "It's more honest. I think if its on their official website sure they can put up that information themselves, whereas if you go onto their social media profile, you can see what other people wrote about them." – Interviewee 4.

Another participant, Interviewee 7, who has experience in working as a company's website administrator revealed the following when asked the same question, "I would have to choose Facebook I guess. Because one of the things I did in my last job I had where I had to make their websites but then make up testimonials.... its just a publicity thing which you can never trust them" – Interviewee 7.

Research Objective 2

To explore the optimum method in approaching the online Millennial consumer via social media technology.

- Visual
- Viral
- Engagement

4.7 – Visual

Another key theme that remained highly prominent though analyzing the interview results was that of visual based advertising on social media. When questioned on the type of advertisement the interviewee would most likely respond to, many responded to the idea of image-based and video-based, as oppose to a text orientated online advertisement. Facebook was a key player in this area, as well as Pinterest and Instagram. One of the participants mentioned, “Eh, definitely video-based. I think videos are becoming more and more what people want to see on social media. You can really get more of a sense of the product and whereas with some of the image, advertisements they can be very photo shopped. So, when you see it in video you can get more of an authentic sense of the product.” – Interviewee 8.

One of the interview participants mentions that video based advertisements online has more of an ability to appeal to the consumers emotions of getting them “excited” about the advertisement. In this example the participant relates to the over whelming affect a video he encountered on Facebook, when a European festival was advertised, “I also like video based, for example a festival called Tomorrowland, when they are really trying to promote a business, it gets you really pumped up whether you are going to go it or not” – Interviewee 7.

4.8 - Viral Campaigning

The primary aim of many social media marketing campaigns are to generate online positive word of mouth amongst users via sharing, liking and tweeting their online post. One of the optimum ways of doing this is by creating “hype” around their online post. When the participants were initially asked do they engage in online sharing a company’s post, the majority revealed they do not. Although when later asked about a viral campaign they encountered and whether they shared it or not, the response had differed. The different campaigns that were mentioned to the researcher in the interviews showed that they clearly had a positive lasting affect on the social media user, which then entices them to share amongst friends. One of the participants recalled a viral campaign they encountered on Facebook, “there is another one with the eye brows in the Cadbury add, with the music in the background, that was a fun add, and its more upbeat adds that makes it stick in my mind” – Interviewee 8.

Another viral campaign that a participant encountered via social media was where a celebrity was asked to be the face of the viral campaign, “there is one add that comes to mind and its probably because they have a famous actor Jean Claude Van Damn. It’s a Volvo add and in the add its just himself talking about him about how famous he was over the years and eh two trucks, Volvo trucks,

plain to see, and they keep it a nice and simple add and its just easy to remember because of the famous actor and they have the Volvo sign throughout the add” – Interviewee 2.

4.9 – Engagement

Engagement was another prominent theme amongst the Millennial sample. When queried about the degree to which a company interacts with their consumers via their social media pages many of the participants regarded this to be of key importance.

Twitter had been regarded to be the most effective and quickest social media channel in obtaining a response, “If you are looking for a reply on your comment it can take a while, whereas Twitter seems to be more quicker” – Interviewee 6.

One of the participants recalled a situation where his neighbor had encountered an issue with his bins and took to social media to remedy it, “An example of this would be my neighbor who had a problem with his bins and he couldn’t get through to anyone on customer service. So he decided to Tweet them and in literally 5 minutes he had a reply and had everything sorted out” – Interviewee 1.

Research Objective 3:

To explore the positive and negative attitudes Irish Millennials have with social media marketing.

- Confidence
- Privacy

4.10 – Confidence

One of explicit themes explored in this study was the level of reliance a consumer places on a company’s social media profile. When questioned on the importance of a social media webpage, many participants revealed the more up to date the content is on the company’s social page, their level of confidence in the overall brand increases. One of the participants mentioned, “Yeah, like if a company online social presence seemed to be out of date, I would probably question whether they are still in business. Or I would definitely be a bit reluctant in handing over my credit card details. So definitely it would impact my decision.” – Interviewee 4.

Another interview participant, who had previously worked as a website administrator revealed in the interview the following, “That’s one of the things I was asked to do was leaving testimonials on the website and at the end of it I was always told to leave the date as it shows people you are interacting with the website” – Interviewee 7.

4.11 – Privacy

Another theme that was explicitly examined in the interviews was that of Privacy. However, as the researcher had wanted to explore this theme, it was not expected to reach the level the researcher had anticipated. Throughout the series of interviews the researcher found that people were not checking-in (for example sharing your location on Facebook) as much as they used to. Their high level of usage on social media has made them aware of the threats the system now poses. One interviewee mentions, “I feel you cant really be hiding anymore; everyone knows where you are now” – Interviewee 7.

This theme was then further explicitly examined within each interview as each interviewee participant was asked whether they found these new specific targeted marketing capabilities either: intrusive or beneficial. Many of the participants revealed at how disconcerting at how tailored their Facebook Newsfeed section has become. One participant mentioned, “Yeah it is a bit intrusive, like they were advertising the exact pair of runners I had just bought so it was like how did Facebook know I bought this a few days ago..... But it just makes you wonder at how much information is being saved on these social media sites” – Interviewee 8.

Another participant mentions their experience using another social media site, Pinterest, mentioning at how specific the marketing has become, “It shows how much information they actually know about you, and they are continually gathering about you, em, even without your knowledge” – Interviewee 4.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 - Introduction

The overall aim of this research study is to explore the influencing ability of social media marketing on Irish Millennial purchasing behavior. This chapter shall discuss how the overall research question and sub objectives have been answered. In effect this section of the research study shall combine the current thinking within the academic literature reviewed with the responses obtained from the in depth interviews. Furthermore, this chapter will initially highlight the key findings that were obtained within the findings and then, in some cases, illustrate details of lesser sub-findings.

5.2 - Trust

This was a key revelation amongst the results that were gathered. When queried about the type of reviews they would believe to be the most authentic, the reoccurring response from interviewees were their reliance on social media websites. The credibility of company reviews on their official websites has shown to be diminished. Many of the participants were aware at how fabricated, such reviews and testimonials have become as oppose to social media sites, which they believe to be a more transparent channel in regards to reviews.

Schiffman (2008) believes it is because Millennials are growing up in a media-saturated environment that they have become aware of these differing marketing tactics and hence resulted in the formation of trust becoming an integral part amongst Millennials. Bolton (2013) concurs with this by mentioning that Millennials tend to value other's opinions on social media as they see it coming from an unbiased perspective. This is the reason Solomon et al. (2013) stresses his point that marketers nowadays must understand that social media is centered on the pivotal point of community, where it essentially evolves the participation of members who together build and maintain a site.

Interviewee 8 had mentioned that pictures are often photo shopped on a company's official webpage, whereby making certain alterations enhances the original image. Interviewee 5, used restaurants and bars as an example, mentioned that reviews and photos displayed on social media pages hold more of the potential of capturing and portraying the atmosphere of the establishment.

5.3 - Visual

Visual was another dominant factor expressed throughout the interviews. When the research was trying to establish the optimum method in approaching the online Millennial consumer, the interviewees were asked about the type of advertisements they would regard themselves to be most responsive to. The reoccurring answer was that of visual based, the respondents preferred image

based and video based advertising over text-orientated. When questioned further on visual advertisement, many of the participants revealed they would much prefer to be see a product or service being advertised within a video as oppose to an image advertisement.

This overall response from the participants coincides with the perspective from Gronbach (2000), who states that Millennials like to be entertained by advertisements that target them and really only appreciate these if they hold the ability to make them laugh, again this demonstrates the necessity to appeal to emotions of the consumer in the most positive way possible. When asked about the various social platforms the participants would encounter these social media video advertisements the people had responded Facebook as the key player. This is strongly associated with ability to link a YouTube link to a company's social profile or post a Facebook video (limit of 20 minutes), as oppose to Instagram, which is constricted to a 3 – 15 seconds limit. Thereby, Facebook enhances a business's opportunity at displaying its offering to the consumer via social media. Viswanathan and Jain (2013) stresses the importance in targeting Millennials with rich visual advertisements as oppose to text orientated messages, which are nowadays deemed as uninteresting by the Millennial cohort.

5.4 – Ideas

It was important for this research study to identify the new form of consumer socialization that is occurring throughout social media today. As previously defined in the literature review, consumer socialization is the means by which an individual gathers their knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences necessary to function as a consumer. (Schiffman, 2008) When we mention the “new’ form of consumer socialization, we are referring to the use of social networking sites, which are proving to be an effective virtual medium for individuals to communicate and hence are becoming the import agent of consumer socialization. (Vineraner, 2013)

Consumption learning is usually transcended down from parents or other siblings, who are regarded as role models. In contrast, this research study has shown that teenagers are tending to look at their friends as models of consumption behavior. (Schiffman, 2008) The female participants of this research study revealed one of their main reasons for using social networking sites can be attributed to the availability of attaining knowledge of current fashion trends. The overall response from the sample was that Facebook was used primarily for peer communication, while Pinterest and Instagram were considered to be the more superior channel for acquiring knowledge about brands.

5.5 – Confidence

Confidence was another major revelation amongst the participants. It was found that the more up to date content posted on the company's social media webpage, the consumer's confidence in the brand increases. Many of the Millennials interviewed were on a common ground in stating that it is not mere enough to just have a company social profile but it must be continually updated. Gronbach (2000) mentions that these Millennials are a generation who takes the Internet for granted, as it has always been apart of their lives and it's importance will only continue to grow.

Interviewee 3 stated how such a lack of social online presence would have an influence on his purchasing behavior; by mentioning "I would probably question whether they are still in business. Or I would definitely be a bit reluctant in handing over my credit card details."

Another participant, mentioned a very insightful illustration of the hospitality industry, where he felt the necessity for a business to have an undated social media page,

"I've recently went onto a private holiday company's profile and their last post was in May and we are currently in August and completely there and then did not look into them any further" – Interviewee 6

5.6 – Engagement

Engagement was another major revelation in the findings of this research. While the respondents have shown to primarily use Facebook, Twitter had been identified as the social media channel for engaging with consumers. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) identifies one of the key opportunities of Web 2.0 is for companies to stay in touch with their market, learn about their needs and opinions through interacting with their customers in a direct and personalized way. This coincides with Whitley's (2014) point of view that marketers must make the modern transition from concentrating on the four P's to the three E's: Engage, Equip and Empower.

As one of the interviewees had previously mentioned of his neighbor's predicament involving their bins, after taking to social media, the issue had been resolved in seconds. Companies are now embracing this latest shift in marketing practices, whereby the role of the business now is to facilitate collaborative experiences and form dialogues that customer's value (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). While 80% of businesses are currently using social media, only 15% are engaging in online conversations with their consumers, this undermines the capability social media currently has, which is that of a customer care channel (Rezab, 2012).

When a company engages with their audience through a social media platform, they are effectively forging a relationship with the Millennial consumer. When a successful relationship is established, it can prove to be quite profitable for the

organization. Millennials are known to collaborate online more freely than others, it has been found that for every Millennial acquired, chances are the organization will acquire another two Millennials free from just their positive word-of-mouth endorsements on social channels (Faris, 2013).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 - Conclusion

The area of social media and the potential it holds for business opportunities certainly proves to be an intriguing topic of research nowadays. Many businesses have yet still to come to terms that a shift has taken place in terms of marketing practices. In recent years, developers have produced new social media sites and the user numbers on the social platforms already established are continually growing. Therefore making Social Media Marketing more of a priority than it has ever been before. Although, in order to devise an effective online strategy, the marketer must first understand the targeted market and at current there is no bigger nor more profitable market than the Millennials. Specifically, relating to this Millennial cohort, this research has discussed existing theoretical assumptions and has made certain contributions which shall be mentioned below as conclusions.

The study has revealed that Millennials are very concerned over certain trust issues on the Internet. Evidence has been provided that consumers tend to respect other online user's opinions rather than a product description or a review on a company's official website. This notion supports previous literature mentioning at how tech savvy this generational cohort have become, which has in return rendered them quite astute when it comes to marketing capabilities. They now only trust each other. Therefore, businesses need to consider placing their social media profile as the fulcrum of their marketing initiatives.

This research has also shown a clear delineation of how much Millennials have become responsive to visually based advertisements. Text based advertisements have almost no effect anymore on this cohort; instead it has been found that these individuals prefer to be entertained. In order for an advertisement to be constituted as entertaining, it must be able to appeal to the emotions of the consumer. The optimum approach of doing so has shown to be by primarily displaying advertisement within short videos. Facebook has proven to be the main contender in amongst the social online channels whereby the consumers can actually gain an authentic sense of a product or service.

In regards to exploring the new form of consumer socialization that is currently having on the Millennial purchasing behavior, it was shown that these individuals are now looking at each other's social media profiles or their own social newsfeeds in other to gain their knowledge and skills to function as a consumer. Many of the female participants had revealed social media as a magnificent source for acquiring knowledge on the latest fashion trends. Online social users now have the ability by the touch of a click to like, share, tweet, pin a picture etc. which are all contributing to this new phenomenon of consumption behavior.

With respect to engagement levels on social media, it was found that although consumers primarily use Facebook, many found Twitter as the superior social

channel in seeking a response from a company's official social media page. The level of engagement a business has with its audience is becoming a growing issue. When engagement levels are high on a company's social media page, the more relationships tend to form. As these relationships become established with the online Millennial user, literature mentions the profitable potential it holds because of the positive word of mouth that it tends to generate.

Many of the consumers revealed at how integral an updated social media profile must be for an organization. It was found that the level of confidence a Millennial places on a brand correlates with the frequency of which a company updates their social media profile. This level of expectancy derives mainly from the highly technological background these Millennials have been raised in. This is a generational cohort that has never known life without the Internet and would not remember a time before smartphones. Some of the participants in this research study outlined this is a major factor they take into consideration when it comes to the area of foreign hospitality. For example, if a hotels social media profile was not regularly updated, particularly during peak season, it was found that this would affirm their doubts and to pursue accommodation arrangements elsewhere.

While the participants have shown at how effective advertisements on Facebook can be, they tend to view Twitter as the primary social media channel for receiving a rapid response to a query. Pinterest and Instagram were found to be the key leaders in promoting fashion ideas. The difference between the fashion leader social channels and Facebook marketing was that, while Facebook pushed products onto people, Pinterest and Instagram attracted company attention in a more implicit manner. By implicit, the researcher means the user finds a product or service inorganically online, the company relies on the means of, for example celebrity endorsements, to generate a buzz. In social media terms this refers to a post that is worth sharing and liking.

6.2 - Limitations and Recommendations

The following were certain limitations and recommendations the researcher found in regard to this research study. The participants from the individual depth interviews were from many differing locations around the Leinster province, as time and budget constraints prevented the researcher from travelling to areas outside Leinster.

Future research, however, could adopt an alternative methodological approach by initially sending out short surveys through social media channels, querying the social media users on their social media usage. When the data is finally gathered from the online surveys, the researcher may be in a better position in assessing oneself whether they are asking the adequate questions for the next phase, the qualitative method (for example; in depth individual interviews or even a focus group interview).

The researcher found that the majority of the interview participants were primarily Facebook users. It would be interesting to pursue an alternative way of purposive sampling, whereby the criterion the sample would have to meet to participate in the interview would be, for example, they should be primarily Twitter users or Instagram users. As mentioned in the Literature Review, Guimaraes (2014) found that the type of person differs, in terms of their social class, the social media platform they use. Therefore, this may provide an insight at how the different social classes respond differently to social media marketing, an issue that would concern all businesses to pay heed to.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questionnaire

1. How would you describe yourself as a customer, in terms of predominantly being an in-store shopper or an online consumer?
2. Which Social Media platform would you use most often and why?
3. Would there be any companies you would regard to have a particularly noticeable online social media presence?
4. Do you have any social media apps downloaded to your phone? If yes, what apps?
5. In regards to seeking information about an organization, have you or would you consider using a social media platform to obtain the information you are seeking as oppose to using a search engine website? For example, Store Location, Opening Hours, About etc.
6. How often would you engage in online sharing a company's post? For example: Retweet, Share, or Tag a friend in such a post, for example to be placed in a competition draw? -And these friends you would select, would these be friends who you feel would have a similar interest in this online post, or would it be anyone.
7. Have you ever provided a review of a company or service on Facebook, issuing them a number of stars based on the level of overall service?
8. Would these reviews have an impact on your purchasing decision?
9. Which of the following would you select as the more superior method of gaining authentic information regarding a company's product or service? Method A: The reviews on the company's official website or Method B: The reviews on the company's social media profile.
10. In terms from a more consumer perspective, which social media platforms have you experienced that the companies engage most frequently with their audience?
11. Finding a company's online social profile and seeing that their posts are not relatively up to date. Would this lack of online social media presence make you question the success/authenticity of this overall establishment?
12. If you had to name a viral campaign that you encountered on social media, what would this be?
13. Which of the following type of advertisements would you consider yourself to be most responsive to: text based, image based or video based?

14. Do you find, depending on the brand, it varies the social media platform you use?
15. How often do you click into online banner ads displayed on social media websites? For example, the sponsor ads, Facebook has on the sides of the Newsfeed section?
16. If yes, how safe would you feel in terms of Internet security or would this be an issue at all?
17. Do you find these new specific targeted marketing capabilities intrusive on your privacy or beneficial?
18. Which of the following devices would you use to access social media: desktop, smartphone, tablet, or some other form of electronic device?
19. How often would you check-in on Facebook? And if yes, would you tag your group of friends as well?

Appendix 2: Interview 5

- Friday, 14th August 2015

Andrew: First question, how would you describe yourself as a customer, in terms of predominantly being an in-store shopper or online consumer?

Interviewee: I would be more so of an in-store shopper.

Andrew: And why would you be more of an in-store shopper rather than online?

Interviewee: Eh, I think its easier in a shop to get exactly what you need. Like for example, sizes, if you are buying clothing because I think you visualize things a lot easier. You know exactly the things you are getting.

Andrew: Okay, would you have any concerns about the Internet security?

Interviewee: Yea I'm a bit worried about using my Visa Debit card online. So, security would probably be an issue.

Andrew: Question 2, which Social Media platform would you use most often and why?

Interviewee: Eh, I would say Pinterest.

Andrew: And what aspects do you like about Pinterest?

Interviewee: I can visualize things better. It helps me in getting ideas for different things, like flowers, clothes etc. And it really handy you have different folders, helping you gain to visualize things for ideas.

Andrew: So would there be any other social media platforms you would use?

Interviewee: Pinterest, would be the big one.

Andrew: Question 3, would there be any companies you would regard to have a particularly noticeable online social media presence? In this case it would be Pinterest.

Interviewee: Yeah on Pinterest, I would say Etsy.

Andrew: And what they specialize in?

Interviewee: Eh, everything really. They would have clothes and in relation to even a wedding, you could have gotten your wedding dress, shoes, accessories but then you could also get decorative things, like Candles. Literally, they have everything online.

Andrew: Question 4, do you have any social media apps downloaded to your phone? If yes, what apps?

Interviewee: Em, I have WhatsApp, the 42 App for sport, also Pinterest obviously. Em, they would be the main ones.

Andrew: Okay, question 5, in regards to seeking information about an organization, have you or would you consider using a social media platform to obtain the information you are seeking as oppose to using a search engine website?

Interviewee: No I would use Google the whole time.

Andrew: Okay, question 6, how often would you engage in online sharing a company's post? For example: Retweeting, Sharing, or Tagging a friend in such a post, for example to be placed in a competition draw? In your case, would Pinterest provide you with the opportunity to do something similar in regards to sharing?

Interviewee: Em, yeah you can Pin a post, for example if you like a picture, you can pin it and then other people can like your pin. But I would only do that every two or three weeks.

Andrew: But you would be able to see other peoples Pin?

Interviewee: Oh yeah, you could go on and see what other people has pinned and you can then take ideas from them.

Andrew: And say perhaps someone pinned a company's photo...

Interviewee: Yeah I would go onto that company's page then, its actually a great way for finding, say for example, you are looking for a dress and you see it in someone's Pin. Then you would wonder like oh I wonder where did they get that dress and then you see a new company. It's a great way for finding out new shops, new companies, like particularly clothing boutiques its brilliant for.

Andrew: Okay, question 7, have you ever provided a review of a company or service on Facebook, issuing them a number of stars based on the level of overall service?

Interviewee: No.

Andrew: Is there any way you can provide a review on Pinterest of a company?

Interviewee: I'm not sure.

Andrew: [Question 8 is not applicable to this participant as not on Facebook] Okay, so this leads me onto question 9, which of the following would you select as the more superior method of gaining authentic information regarding a

company's product or service? Method A. The reviews on the company's official website or Method B the reviews on the company's social media profile.

Interviewee: I would say the social media's profile.

Andrew: And why would you say this?

Interviewee: It's more honest. I think if its on their official website sure they can put up that information themselves, whereas if you go onto their social media profile, you can see what other people wrote about them.

Andrew: This now leads me onto question 10, in terms from a more consumer perspective, which social media platforms have you experienced that the companies engage frequently with their audience the most?

Interviewee: The fact that I'm not really on Facebook and Twitter, I wouldn't really know.

Andrew: Okay, question 11, finding a company's online social profile and seeing that their posts are not relatively up to date. Would this lack of online social media presence make you question the success/authenticity of this overall establishment? Do you feel most/if not all companies, should have some form of online presence if they are targeting your market

Interviewee: Yeah, they should have some form of online presence. I think its very important for companies to be constantly updating, like I think if you have a business you should be posting something online nearly everyday to be hitting the markets. Because if they haven't posted anything in a few day or more, you being to loose interest.

Andrew; Okay, question, if you had to name a viral campaign that you encountered on social media, what would this be?

Interviewee: Eh, I think the one with the Ice Bucket Challenge, that's the one thing that stand out in my mind.

Andrew: Okay, question 13, which of the following types of advertisements would you consider yourself to be most responsive to: text based, image based or video based?

Interviewee: Eh, image based.

Andrew: And why would you say image based over just words or even the video form?

Interviewee: I think image literally it attracts you straight away. Text is a little bit boring. We are constantly surrounded by text, whereas with Image its more powerful and then with Videos, are lives are so busy nowadays, are you going to click on the video and wait for around three to four minutes, like when you are

on it then it has the power to be effective. But I think the most effective is image because its just quick.

Andrew: Okay, question 14, do you find, depending on the brand, it varies the social media platform you use? Now I know you are on only one social media platform, what kind of industry would you relate to Pinterest?

Interviewee: Pinterest has everything. Like it has just images of everything and then when you click onto the image it can then link you to the different websites where you can get those different things on. But really it's a big category of things.

Andrew: Okay, question 15, how often do you click into online banner ads displayed on social media websites? For example, the sponsor ads, Facebook has on the sides of the Newsfeed section?

Interviewee: No, never. I avoid those.

Andrew: Question 16 then leads onto the Internet security aspect of this, how safe would you feel in terms of Internet security?

Interviewee: I don't feel safe at all.

Andrew: Okay, question 17, do you find these new specific targeted marketing capabilities intrusive on your privacy or more so beneficial that they are more tailored to your marketing needs?

Interviewee: I'd say it's intrusive because its using your private information for their companies.

Andrew: Okay, question 18, which of the following devices would you use to access social media: desktop, smartphone, tablet or some other form of electronic device?

Interviewee: Eh, smartphone. Mainly because it's...[long pause]...what's the word I'm looking for...

Andrew: Convenient?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's it. It's in always in your pocket, in your bag. It's at your disposal the whole time.

Andrew: And this finally leads us onto the last question, have you or would you ever check-in on Pinterest? Or is such a feature available on this platform?

Interviewee: Eh, no I don't think so.

Andrew: I think that's everything [pause] actually could I ask you one more question please, I know as you are on Pinterest, and you saw one of your friends

had Pinned a certain picture, would seeing this entice you to go to then the company's profile and then scroll through the pictures they have?

Interviewee: Yes it definitely would. Like, when you see other peoples pins that you have common interests with, if say for example my friend had pinned a nice dress online, I would definitely go onto the company's website. Because you would feel they must have a good reputation if someone you know has bought something from them, I think it's great how you can share ideas.

Andrew: Okay, that seems to be everything. Again, thank you very much for participating in this interview and this now concludes this interview.

END OF INTERVIW

Appendix 3: Interview 8

- Sunday, 16th August 2015

Andrew: Question 1, how would you describe yourself as a customer, in terms of predominantly being an in-store shopper or online consumer?

Interviewee: I would definitely be an online consumer. I work a lot during the week and also work on a Saturday as well so I wouldn't really have time to go into the stores shopping so I would do most of my shopping online.

Andrew: And what main shops would you use online?

Interviewee: Mainly ASOS, Miley's Beauty and River Island online, it's easy because it can get delivered to the shop and you can return things in the shops and there no fees associated.

Andrew: Which Social Media platform would you use most often and why?

Interviewee: I would mainly use Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and sometimes Twitter. Instagram would be the main one I would use.

Andrew: What aspects do you like about Instagram?

Interviewee: I just like the way it is very visual. You can see the product straight away and see models wearing it and then links in to celebrities wearing the clothes as well. And with the whole hashtag thing, it will bring up things that are related. For example if you put in #australia, it will bring up things you will have an interest in that regard.

Andrew: And say for example you saw a particular model wearing certain clothes, would they ever hashtag the maker?

Interviewee: Yeah, they would yeah. And there are some bloggers that would be paid to hashtag certain brands, so if they are linked to River Island, they would be paid every time by the company as they are in a way promoting their clothes.

Andrew: Okay, question 3, would there be any companies you would regard to a have a particularly noticeable online social media presence?

Interviewee: Eh, well I suppose a lot of the food and drink companies. They have put a lot of money in their advertisements so they usually come up on your newsfeed quite a lot. Then there are certain ads that have the catchy songs and quotes etc. for example the Evian company with their famous ad.

Andrew: Okay, question 4, Do you have any social media apps downloaded to your phone? If yes, what apps?

Interviewee: I have Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat.

Andrew: Question 5, In regards to seeking information about an organization, have you or would you consider using a social media platform to obtain the information you are seeking as oppose to using a search engine website? For example, Store Location, Opening Hours, About etc.

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. I think social media is a great way for coming about information, especially if your not quite sure where to go looking for the information it usually presents itself on social media. So, I wouldn't really go onto a search engine much, it would usually be on Facebook where you will click onto one thing and then onto the other.

Andrew: Okay, question 6, How often would you engage in online sharing a company's post? For example: Retweet, Share, or Tag a friend in such a post, for example to be placed in a competition draw?

Interviewee: I wouldn't do it too often. But if I was I would share a post on Facebook but I wouldn't really retweet something, and its normally to win a realistic prize. I would never enter to win the competitions that for example are going to Las Vegas because I feel that I'm not going to win it. But if it was to share a post to be in with a chance a bottle of perfume I would be more likely to share that.

Andrew: Would you ever see online hen they do actually post up the winners?

Interviewee: No I never see that. You never seem to know who won it and it makes you wonder is it all just a scam and are people actually winning the prizes.

Andrew: Okay and say for example you were sharing such a post, the friends who you would select to tag, would these be just any friends or people with similar interests?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely, it would include friends with similar interests. So, for example, I shared one the other day, which was tag a friend that might like, it was a facial mask, and I was talking with my friend about this only the day before so she tagged me. So we ended up tagging each other, so there would be a better chance for us winning the competition.

Andrew: Okay, question 7, have you ever provided a review of a company or service on Facebook, issuing them a number of stars based on the level of overall service?

Interviewee: No I never really engage with online reviews. There was one company that I remember that said do a review to win a product but when I looked online, no one had really done reviews, so I didn't really bother.

Andrew: Question 8, would these reviews have an impact on your purchasing decision?

Interviewee: Yeah, like a lot of people are doing YouTube videos doing reviews and I would look at that a lot to see, for example, first impressions of opening a box and trying a product on. I think these come across more realistic because you can actually see the reaction and see what type of person they are also.

Andrew: Okay, question 9, which of the following would you select as the more superior method of gaining authentic information regarding a company's product or service? Method A: The reviews on the company's official website or Method B: The reviews on the company's social media profile.

Interviewee: Probably, social media profile because on their official online website they can probably choose what goes on and what does not go on. So, I suppose with social media they might not be able to filter the responses as much, so I feel you get more of an honest opinion as to what people actually thought because normally on their official website they always just have great things, they're not going to put a bad review on it.

Andrew: Okay, question 10, in terms from a more consumer perspective, which social media platforms have you experienced that the companies engage frequently with their audience the most?

Interviewee: I say more so Twitter. Twitter has more celebrity followers. If they engage with a celebrity and the celebrity endorses their product they would more likely have a more successful product. And I suppose it's easier to retweet something as well, whereas on Facebook you have to type up a comment.

Andrew: Okay, thank you, question 11, Finding a company's online social profile and seeing that their posts are not relatively up to date. Would this lack of online social media presence make you question the success/authenticity of this overall establishment?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. For example, you went onto their social media website and it was full of pictures and comments, you would more likely see that it's a popular product, whereas if it had not been updated in a while, maybe you would think that no one is really interested in this product anymore so why would I be.

Andrew: Okay, question 12, if you had to name a viral campaign that you encountered on social media, what would this be?

Interviewee: As I said before, the Evian one really sticks out in my mind, where the adults see their reflections of themselves as children. It's a real happy ad and it always cheers you up when you see it on television so... I don't know if it makes you go out and buy the water but it would ...

Andrew: It would help make you have an attitude toward it?

Interviewee: Yeah. And also there is another one with the eye brows in the Cadbury add, with the music in the background, that was a fun ad, and its more upbeat adds that makes it stick in my mind.

Andrew: Question 13, which of the following type of advertisements would you consider yourself to be most responsive to: text based, image based or video based?

Interviewee: Eh, definitely video-based. I think videos are becoming more and more what people want to see on social media. You can really get more of a sense of the product and whereas with some of the image, advertisements they can be very photoshopped. So, when you see it in video you can get more of an authentic sense of the product.

Andrew: Okay, question 14, do you find, depending on the brand, it varies the social media platform you use?

Interviewee: Yeah, I never really thought about that but yeah.

Andrew: Question 15, how often do you click into online banner ads displayed on social media websites? For example, the sponsor ads, Facebook has on the sides of the Newsfeed section?

Interviewee: I would never really click into them. For some reason, I have it in my head that they are viruses because I know I once bought Converse runners online and then suddenly they were on my advertisements on Facebook all the time, so I didn't know if they were a virus or not so I just wouldn't click into them.

Andrew: Okay, that actually leads onto question 16, in terms of Internet security and how safe you feel. So question 17, do you find these new specific targeted marketing capabilities intrusive on your privacy or beneficial?

Interviewee: Yeah it is a bit intrusive, like they were advertising the exact pair of runners I had just bought so it was like how did Facebook know I bought this a few days ago. But then again, it would entice you to click into them and see what other products they have. But it just makes you wonder at how much information is being saved on these social media sites.

Andrew: Okay, question 18, which of the following devices would you use to access social media: desktop, smartphone, tablet or some other form of electronic device.

Interviewee: Eh, smartphone because the laptop can take too long to turn on, iPad can be quite big and bulky, whereas with you iPhone its easy for example when your lying on your bed and just scrolling on your phone.

Andrew: Okay, question 19, how often would you check-in on Facebook? Tag the group of friends as well?

Interviewee: I would log in about 10 times a day but check-in maybe once every two months, not very often.

Andrew: And when you would check in you would also check in the person with you?

Interviewee: I would yeah.

Andrew: Just another question, when you experience these viral campaigns on Facebook, would this make you talk about it offline?

Interviewee: Yeah, if it was funny or the song was catchy and you showed it to your friend you might say yeah that was a good add, for example, did you you like that song.

Andrew: Okay, brilliant, well that concludes the interview, thanks again for participating.

Interviewee: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW