Literature review influencer marketing

Married (2005) says that research shows that word of mouth (Whom) Is at least twice as powerful as traditional marketing communications in influencing sales, and given the rise of electronic word of mouth (mobile and internet word of mouth is now some 50% more influential than it was 30 years ago. This is supported by a Nielsen survey showing the most trusted form of advertising was, recommendations from other consumers, being cited by 78% of respondents. Furthermore, the third most trusted form of advertising (behind adverts in swappers at 63%) was consumer opinions posted online which was trusted by 61%.

Brand Association Maps (BAM) that plot language, attributes and Issues around a topic show that, for advertising, attributes like " false", " deceptive" and " misleading" are highly associated. The fact is that customers are seeking out opinions because they don't trust marketing as much and thus independent influences become more influential than ever before. But WHOM is not just about referrals to achieve sales, It also adds credibility to a message. A friend or family member talking about a brand or product, or an Independent commentator writing bout It, tend to be believed more readily than commercial advertisers talking up their own brands.

Terminology Online word of mouth is called viral marketing and was coined as long ago as 1996 by Rapport at Harvard. Viral marketing describes any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and Influence. It Is also defined as " an alternative marketing strategy supported by research and technology that encourages consumers to dialogue about products and services". The first viral marketing campaign

was the Hotmail launch in 1996 and it grew faster than any other company in history.

Within 18 months it had over 12 million subscribers Offline is where the majority of WHOM actually occurs and has the strongest impact and there are a number of terms that are used: Word of mouth (the emphasis here Is on personal, relationship related and spontaneous communication) Advocacy marketing (most often relates to social and voluntary sectors) Public affairs (a well- worn phrase associated with political influence) Referral marketing (a classic easiness-to-business method) Mutual marketing (the co-creation of products and services by producers and users, but also used in public affairs to describe joint activities between two or more organizations with a common cause) Influencer marketing (Influencing the mass of prospects or other groups through the influence identifies, seeks out, and engages with influences in support of a business objective. Influencer marketing can be traced back to sass when Leasehold and Katz introduced the concept of the two-step communication process and personal Influence. They stressed that some people have a disproportionate degree of influence on others and can be effective communications channels. INDIFFERENCE MARKETING According the annual marketing management survey run by the magazine PR Week, 69% of marketing managers in the US now include the targeting of influences as part of their strategy.

Despite the hype surrounding online viral marketing, it is claimed by WOMAN (the UK trade association) that 85% of WHOM activity takes place offline and that offline WHOM is more powerful because here communicator is usually

known to the recipient and thus the communication has added trust power. A similar figure is reported from the US where according to the Keller Fay Group 73% of marketing-related conversations take place in person, and only 10% happen online. So, the focus of your WHOM or influencer marketing strategy should be face-to-face (mouth not mouse), rather than mouse-to-mouse communication Central to most strategies designed to amplify WHOM is the notion of influences, which put simply means targeting those who have the greatest viral impact rather than engaging the masses.

However, the theory that there are influences that have disproportionate impact is not universally accepted, as we shall discuss later. The Word of Mouth Marketing Association defines an influencer as a person who has a greater than average reach or impact through word of mouth in a relevant marketplace. Malcolm Caldwell, a New York Times Journalist and the author of " The Tipping Point", first stressed the importance of the so-called " influential". He categories influential into three different categories: 1 . Connectors are the people who link us to the rest of the world 2. Mavens are the information specialists who accumulate and share knowledge 3.

Salesmen are the " persuaders" who possess the powerful negotiation skills Keller and Berry in their book " The Influential" categories influences by reference to the nature of their influence: 1 . Social influences (meta trends) 2. Category influences (in a sector or product area) 3. Brand influences (which brands are in and which are not) A good advocate or influencer is typically someone who has had a genuine experience of the product or service (or has been told about it by someone they know or trust) and whose

opinion is trusted by at least one other person. To make a difference on a large scale a strategy needs to plan to: 1 . Bring these advocates together in one place. 2.

Trigger their advocacy through active involvement. 3. Create more opportunities for them to influence the more easily influenced INFLUENCER STRATEGY Influencer programs are, by definition, long-term, multi-year commitments designed to build a relationship; they are not marketing campaigns. The first steps are to identify amongst your key stakeholder groups both the easily influenced (after Watts) and the influential (after Caldwell). Both approaches have merit and are not tautly exclusive. How to identify the easily influenced Many colleges and universities ask new students or business clients who they spoke specific questions about what or who influenced them and why.

It is important to identify who influenced whom rather than merely who communicated with whom. Such questions on your induction or Joiner surveys can help to reveal the connected and trusted sources (the influences) but also this can reveal who was influenced by word of mouth or personal recommendation and the analysis of this cohort may help to locate the most likely to be influenced in the future. However, the evidence is that all demographic groups are likely to recommend and be recommended to and influenced, so simple analysis based on demographics is unlikely to be very revealing. Any preparatory research also needs to map out a timeline of influence, as education markets are cyclical and seasonal.

It is critical to know when influence will be most impacting as that is when you should stimulate chatter. Keller and Berry 2003 have distilled published research into a simple screening profile for identifying connectors (influences), recently estimated by NOPE to make up 10% of a target audience based on their ACTIVE profile: Ahead in adoption Connected (socially and electronically) Travelers Information Hungry Vocal Exposed to media CONCLUSION Exactly what is included in Influencer Marketing depends on the context (BBC or BIB) and the medium of influence transmission (online or offline, or both). But it is increasingly accepted that companies are keen to identify and engage with influences.