

How does social media help public relation offices to increase awareness of their...

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Personal Experiences and Perspective](#) \n \t
3. [Locating Research Literature – Search Strategy](#) \n \t
4. [List of Keywords](#) \n \t
5. [Literature Review](#) \n \t
6. [Research Questions and Hypothesis](#) \n \t
7. [Research Purpose and Audience](#) \n \t
8. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Social media or social networking tools often come in the form of internet platforms because firstly, they are based on the internet and secondly, such platforms enable users and members to communicate to other users through virtual means. One of the biggest and perhaps the most popular social media platform today is Facebook. Social media may also be defined as the act of remotely interacting with people by doing activities such as creating contents, sharing contents, and or basically exchanging any form of ideas and information in a practically virtual community of friends and other people . According to social media experts Michael Haenlein and Andreas Kaplan, social media is “ a group of applications based on the internet that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2. 0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated contents” . If the

primary mode of communication during the era of the old world was through writing letters and sending post cards, which was eventually followed by sending text messages and giving calls, voice mails, and then later on by the processing of electronic mails , one of the latest developments in the field of communications is perhaps the use of social media and its integration in older forms of communication devices such as the cellular phones and notebook computers .

Personal Experiences and Perspective

In this section, I will discuss my ideas and perspective regarding the use of social media and how its use contributes to public relations offices and the customers' awareness of a certain brand. Therefore, this section will be divided into two: my personal ideas, perspectives, and experiences about the topic as a researcher and then as a student.

As a student. As a student, I can say that I have been fairly exposed to the different purposes, uses, and features of the different social media platforms available today. One social media platform that immediately comes to mind is Facebook. Over the years, Facebook as a premiere social media platform has turned out to be a huge success, especially since it is already being supported by hundreds of millions of supporters which are also members. I can say that one can find everything that he expects to find in a decent social media platform in Facebook. Based on the definitions of social media provided above, a social media platform enables its members and users to communicate with other people and perform social activities, but in a virtual environment. Facebook, through its wall posting, liking, sharing,

commenting, and chat-box features, has that feature. Secondly, social media platforms such as Facebook also has the capability to increase the public's awareness of certain things such as brands, events, and basically anything that one can be aware of. This is one of the major reasons why most marketing and advertising professionals have turned to social media platforms for help in their marketing and advertising campaigns. Using social media for practices and operations that are related to public relations can be considered a good idea, although there is a limited availability of literatures that specifically discuss that gap in research, because being a member or a user of a social media platform basically grants him or her instant access to thousands, if not millions of people, some of which he or she does not even know. As a student, I have experienced exposing myself in this kind of platforms. I even created an account and tried experimenting. Indeed it can be viable public relations, marketing, and or advertising tool, provided that certain conditions are met.

As a researcher. A wise researchers would normally not engage or believe in something that has not been fully proven yet by objective means of investigation or simply through research, regardless whether he already had some first-hand experiences of that particular thing, which in this case would be the use of social media for public relations purposes such as increasing the market's awareness of a certain brand, or otherwise. As a researcher, I would investigate further into the topic, gather a significant number of literature which I think has the highest likelihood of answering my research question, make a decision whether I need to conduct a personal investigation or study on the topic by myself or not, and then after all that,

finally determine whether I will believe that social media indeed helps public relations offices raise the market consumers' awareness of a certain brand or not. In this case, I honestly believe that there are only a limited number of evidences that suggest so and to be able to academically prove my point, a study has to be done.

The chosen research topic was “ The Effects of (Answers the question How) Social Media on Public Relation Offices and in the process of Improving Brand Awareness”. This research is still in the process of being proposed and so the author of this paper expects that some amendments or revisions to the originally suggested topic and field may be in order. To make a narrowed down research question, the topic of perceptions on new social networking sites were selected, which should explain how the author came up with the topic “ How does social media help public relation offices improve a certain company's brand awareness”

Locating Research Literature – Search Strategy

In order to obtain the valid and accurate sources that will be used as the basis of some of the principles and assumptions in the research paper being proposed, a comprehensive literature search strategy will have to be employed. For the purpose of locating research literatures, the author of this paper has come up with a list of possible keywords that can be used in searching in university library catalogs, and premium academic research databases such as EBSCOHOST. The author has also decided to include Google Scholar from the list of research databases to search literatures on.

In the act of searching for literatures, the Boolean search strategy will be used to make the search strategy faster and more efficient

List of Keywords

This list of keywords should, in theory, get a decent number of hits and lead the researchers to a reliable pool of literatures that they can use to support their study.

Literature Review

Most public relation office managers who have the aim of improving their target market's awareness to the brand they are marketing (it can be that they are marketing their own or other company's brand) know that one of the best and most efficient ways to achieve both their short-term and medium-term goals would be to create a social media strategy and then stick with it until such time that a new marketing and promotional tool replaces it . This is not really a problem; in fact, it can be considered a positive thing. What we can consider a problem is the fact that those public relation office managers, despite already knowing what to do, still choose to do nothing about the current lineup of their strategy. According to literatures, the reason behind such ignominious idleness is their lack of knowledge what to do and worse, where to start. Using social media for personal communication purposes may be easy but using it to promote and increase the public's awareness of a brand can be totally different.

In a research paper authored by Schlinke & Crain (2013), they attempted to identify different factors that business professionals should consider before creating a social media strategy and finally implementing it. According to

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them “ social media tools are, at their core, a means of marketing and communicating to an audience and as with any other business endeavor, there should be an understanding of the following key considerations prior to committing company resources to a social media presence.”

There were four factors that the two authors looked into in their paper and those were: goals (what is the firm or individual trying to accomplish?); strategy (is there a content strategy in place to ensure content and consistency for the audience; how will the brand be perceived in the social media landscape?); tools and implementation (what tools and resources are available and how are they implemented?); and lastly, risks (what are the threats and costs associated with using social media?). It can be asserted that once a public relation office manager is already confident that the company’s investments would still be in good standing after carefully considering those four factors, that would be the right, if not the perfect, time to create and then later on implement a social media strategy.

According to Brenner (2012), social media tools can be useful in connecting with clients and prospective clients, and like other business initiatives, they can be best utilized if they are thoroughly planned. It can be used to inform and educate, and even start a conversation with an entire community. These are simple but very powerful things that a social media tool can perform and if the goal is to establish a higher level of brand awareness, then there should really be no reason for the public relations office to fail, especially when everything has been planned and when all possible miscalculations have been mitigated .

Gone are the days wherein business product and service marketers and

advertisers use news release and media kit preparation and distribution in their campaigns. Today, businesses and their target consumers are more sensitive to marketing and advertising tools that are more relevant to a social media environment. What the author is trying to point out here is that there has been a recent change with the business and market behavior and preferences when it comes to marketing and advertising practices. In a way, it suggests that public relation offices focus less on more traditional forms of brand awareness campaigns and focus on ones that are more relevant to a social media environment. Waters, Tindall, and Morton authored a paper in 2010 about a phenomenon they call Media catching and its impact on the changing practice of media and public relations. According to them, Media Catching is basically a process wherein the traditional media relations' communication patterns get reversed. The authors have confirmed that "no longer are journalists passively receiving news releases and media kits from practitioners wanting to get publicity for their organization; instead, journalists are throwing their own needs at practitioners through social media outlets", which means that the entire mass media industry itself is growing more fond of using social media tactics, which can be an indicator that public relation office managers should follow the same trend. In the end, the authors have acknowledged that social media outlets can indeed be useful tools in making the lives of journalists, especially those who are fond of using traditional marketing, advertising, and reporting methods that are not in any way related to posting in social media outlets.

Overall, all the literatures reviewed suggest that social media indeed has a great potential to be an effective tool in improving a public relation office's

brand or the brand of another company that it is trying to promote, and that since its early years, has been an effective tool for improving brand awareness .

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research paper proposal has been made under the assumption that social media indeed helps public relation offices improve their or other company's brand awareness. What the research paper would try to address is the question how social media helps such organizations fulfill their goals in terms of brand awareness. To be specific, the research question, which also happens to be the research title in this paper is: How Does Social Media Help Public Relation Offices to Increase Awareness of their Branding?

Research Purpose and Audience

The target audiences for this research proposal are the students, instructors, and professionals working in the field of communications, media, advertising, marketing, public relations, and other professions which may have a direct or indirect connection with social media. The purpose of this research is to enlighten the audience on the different areas and facets where creating and then later on implementing a social media strategy could help improve a public relation office's brand awareness or that of another company that it is trying to promote. Clearly, based on the volume of studies conducted and published that have a similar topic but with distinct differences, the number of sources or literatures still cannot be considered as abundant. In fact, in most researchers reviewed by the author, there were technical, procedural, sampling, and even statistical loopholes. Another purpose of this research

paper under proposal is to update the target audiences about the latest trends used by marketers, advertisers, and public relation officers; whether they are using social media-related strategies in their campaigns, and what results those professionals were getting.

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